

The Bureau of Health Equity Webinar Series

Youth Health



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health



Partnership for
Healthy Communities
A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE



Dr. Michelle Ratcliff

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Licensed Social Worker

Meet the Speaker

- **Dr. Michelle Ratcliff is a social worker with 25 years of social work experience in child welfare, schools, and shelters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**
- **Currently, Dr. Ratcliff is an associate professor at Delaware State University in the Social Work Department.**
- **Dr. Ratcliff is also a therapist providing therapeutic intervention for women, children, and families who have endured trauma.**

Objectives



Participants will recognize the importance in youth programming to decrease health disparities of youth in marginalized communities.



Participants will change their perceptions regarding the outcomes of youth behaviors and violence.



Participants will be motivated to increase programming for youth in other inner cities and communities where the cycle of violence is perpetuated.



Participants will understand the importance of incorporating youth in inner cities in the problem-solving decisions that affect their communities.

What is Youth Health?

- **Adolescence** is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood (ages 10 to 19).
 - There is rapid physical, cognitive and psychological growth between these ages.
- **Youth Health** is established by having and promoting good behavior and patterns of good behavior in the following categories: Eating well, Dieting, and Physical activity (World Health Organization, 2024).
- **Youth Health** is dependent upon making decisions, interacting within society, having age-appropriate sexuality education, safe and supportive environments, and maintaining good relationships.



As An Adolescent, Have You Ever?

- **Been bullied?**
- **Been jumped?**
- **Been shot or know a friend who was shot?**
- **Been stabbed or know a friend who was stabbed?**
- **Had a one on one fight?**
- **Fought over a girl or boyfriend?**
- **Witnessed domestic violence, interpersonal violence?**
- **Came from a trauma impacted family?**
- **Been stuck up or robbed with a weapon?**
- **Been assaulted (physically, sexually, emotionally, verbally)?**
- **Bad anger issues?**



Critical Issues That Affect Youth

- ✔ Over 1.5 million adolescents and young adults aged 10–24 years old died in 2021. This is about 4,500 every day.
- ✔ Young adolescents aged 10–14 years have the lowest risk of death among all age groups.
- ✔ Injuries (including road traffic injuries and drowning), interpersonal violence, and self-harm are the leading causes of death among adolescents and young adults.
- ✔ Half of all mental health disorders in adulthood start by age 18, but most cases are undetected and untreated.
- ✔ Early onset of substance use is associated with higher risks of developing dependence and other problems during adult life, and younger people are disproportionately affected by substance use compared with older people.
- ✔ Globally, there were 42 births per 1,000 to girls aged 15 to 19 years in 2021.

General Youth Health Disparities

**Mental
Health**



**Health
Literacy**



Education



**Substance
Use**

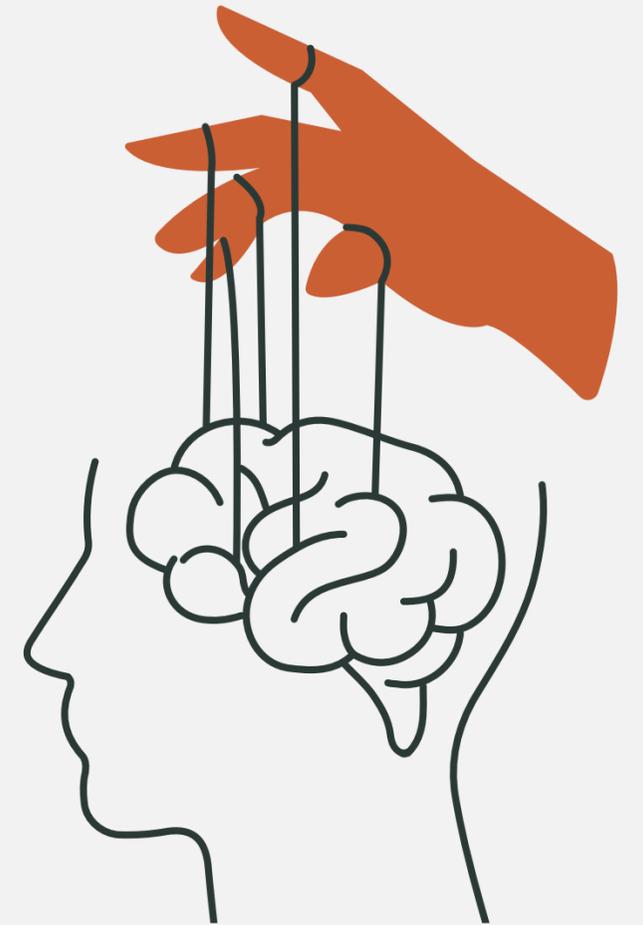


**Violence,
Injuries, and
Gun Use**



Youth and Mental Health

- **Globally, one in seven 10 to 19 year olds experiences a mental disorder, accounting for 15% of the global burden of disease in this age group.**
- **Depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents.**
- **Suicide is the third leading cause of death among those ages 15 to 29 years old.**
- **The consequences of failing to address adolescent mental health conditions extend to adulthood, impairing both physical and mental health and limiting opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as adults.**



Youth and Substance Use

- **15% of high school students reported having ever used select illicit or injection drugs – cocaine, inhalants, heroin, methamphetamines, hallucinogens, or ecstasy.**
- **14% of students reported misusing prescription opioids.**
- **Drug use is associated with sexual risk behavior, experiencing violence, and mental health and suicide risks (CDC, 2024).**
 - **Injection drug use places youth at direct risk for HIV, and in a broad sense, drug use places youth at risk of overdose.**
 - **Youth opioid use is directly linked to sexual risk behaviors.**
 - **Students who report ever using prescription drugs – without a doctor’s prescription – are more likely than other students to have been the victim of physical or sexual dating violence.**

Intersectionality



Many adolescents have multiple marginalized identities, which are shaped by their simultaneous membership within multiple interconnected social categories. Intersectionality and interconnections across different social categories can create overlapping systems of disadvantage (Krenshaw, 2017).

Recent research has demonstrated that identification with multiple marginalized social categories is associated with adverse psychological health outcomes, poor mental health trajectories, greater exposure to risk factors, and less access to protective factors (Phillips, 2009).



Youth and Trauma

**In trauma, we are taught not to ask,
"What is wrong with them?" but
instead, "What happened to them?"**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study



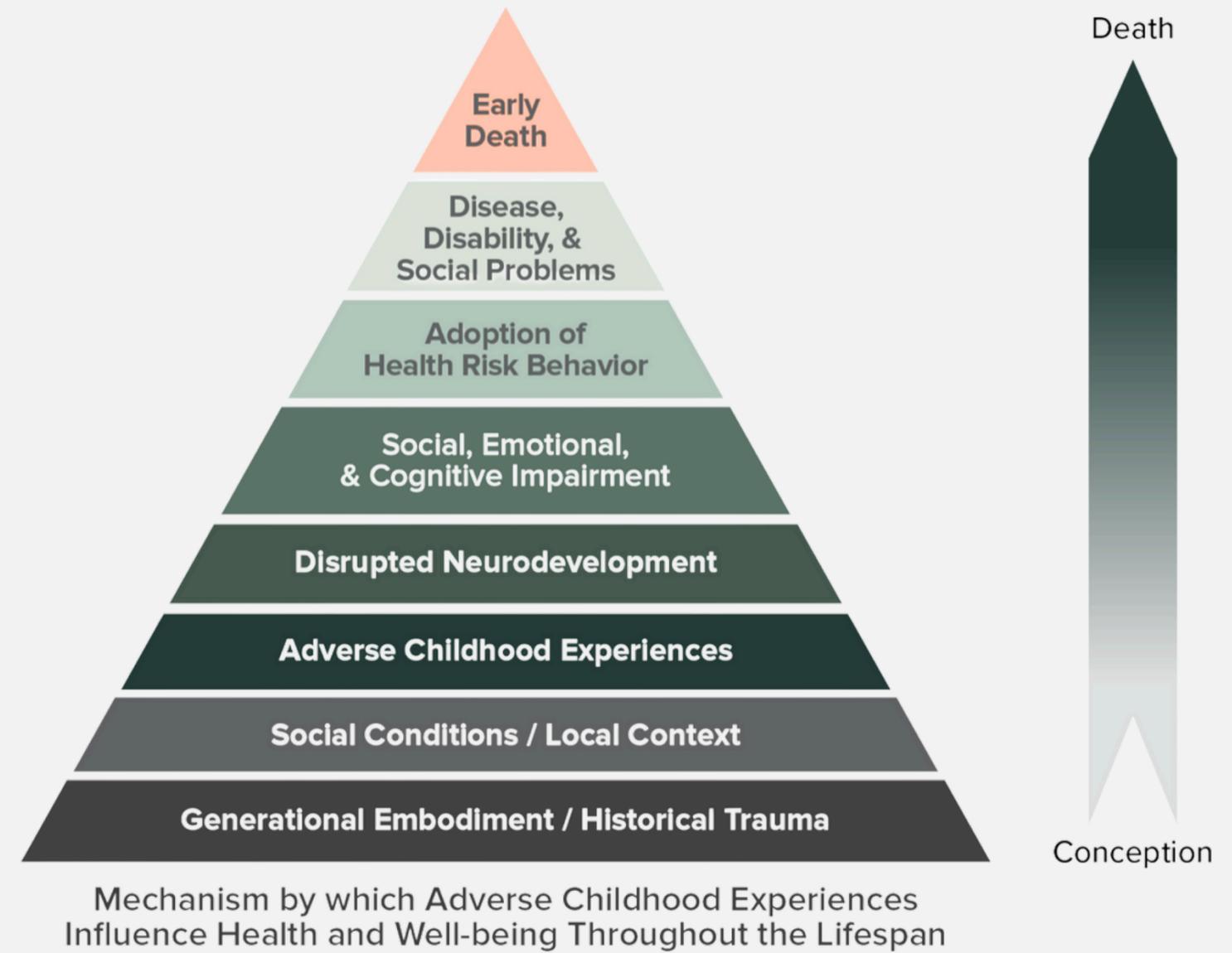
The CDC–Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study is one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and household challenges and later–life health and wellbeing.

The original ACE Study was conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997 with two waves of data collection. Over 17,000 health maintenance organization members from southern California receiving physical exams completed confidential surveys regarding their childhood experiences and current health status and behaviors.



ACEs Screenings

- Screening for ACEs involves asking children and their caregivers about exposures to the emotional stresses known to impact their health.
- Screening with these 10 Yes/No questions generates the child's 'ACE Score', by giving one point for each 'Yes' answer.
- With an ACE score of:
 - 4 or more, an adult's risk of developing heart disease or cancer doubles
 - 5 or more, there's an eight times greater chance of alcoholism
 - 6 or more, an adult will die on average 20 years earlier



Youth Violence Defined



The intentional use of physical force or power to threaten or harm others by young people ages 10–24 years.

- ✔ It can include fighting, bullying, threats with weapons, and gang-related violence.
- ✔ A young person can be involved with youth violence as a victim, offender, or witness.

Youth Violence Statistics

- **Firearm homicide is a leading cause of injury death in the United States.** Currently, in the United States, children and youth are exposed to gun violence daily in schools, neighborhoods, homes, and on social media.
- **Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2020, 92.3% of the total homicides of youth in the United States ages 15–24 occurred due to firearms.**
- **Thousands of youths are intentionally or unintentionally shot by peers, family members, strangers, or suicide.**
- **On average, almost 100 people die each day in the United States from gun violence (Bauchner, Rivara, Bonow, 2017).**
- **The youth are getting younger with the possession of firearms and are committing crimes in broad daylight.**

CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS
SCENE DO NOT CROSS

Youth Violence Health Disparities

- **Youth violence remains a continual public health problem in the United States, disproportionately impacting communities with low socioeconomic status throughout the country, exposing the huge health disparities of youth in underserved communities.**
- **The health disparities associated with inner city youth involved or affected by violence are cumbersome, challenging, and complicated.**
- **Health disparities form from a disadvantaged life of youth and their communities that affect physical, social, and mental well-being for the youth and their families.**



Youth Violence Health Disparities

- **These disparities can cause prolonged and profound effects on youth and contribute to mental, medical, and physiological issues.**
- **These issues are substantial, resulting in poverty, limited access to resources, and school and community violence.**
- **This exposure has created the development of ACEs, which have been linked to long-term negative impacts on health and well-being (CDC, 2024), resulting in chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic stress-related conditions.**



Youth Violence Rates

- **The rates of youth involvement in violence, whether as perpetrators or victims, are disproportionately high in many marginalized communities.**
- **The lack of resources, opportunities, and support systems significantly contributes to this crisis and creates enormous health disparities.**
 - **Health disparities cause mental illness, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), violence, and poor academic performance.**
 - **Youth and young adults in low socioeconomic communities are at higher risk for homicides, fights with injuries, and aggravated assaults, with a higher number of ACEs (Sheats et al., 2018).**



Youth Violence Rates

- **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and experiences associated with youth violence increases the risk for future violent perpetration, retaliation, and victimization.**
- **These staggering numbers of physically harmful forms of violence are associated with the increase in coronary heart disease, poor physical health, mental illness, and drugs and alcohol use.**



Gun Violence

Gun violence and violent behavior of youth in inner cities have increasingly become a phenomenon that negatively affects organizational climate, community safety, students' educational experiences, and quality of life.

Critical Issues Impacting Youth

- **Youth violence is a critical issue impacting many communities in Delaware, particularly in underserved areas.**
- **In an average year in Delaware, 127 people die from guns. With a rate of 13.0 deaths per 100,000 people.**
- **Delaware has the 36th-highest rate of gun deaths in the US. Firearm violence has been concentrated in Wilmington, which has a population of approximately 70,000 people.**



Research Studies on Youth Violence Exposure and Risk Behaviors



The effects of witnessing community violence were investigated in urban neighborhoods in a study conducted by Guerra, Rowell Huesmann, and Spindler (2003). They used a diverse sample of 4,458 children living in urban neighborhoods.



Conclusion: They found that prior exposures to violence had a significant effect in increasing children's aggressive behavior, thoughts, and fantasies about aggression.



In a more recent study conducted by Simon Et Al. (2022), suggests that a substantial proportion of high school students carry guns, especially those who have experienced violence, who have substance abuse issues or have engaged in suicidal attempts.

Youth ACEs Exposure

In recent years, research has identified adolescent delinquency as an important negative repercussion of greater ACE exposure, highlighting the importance of ACEs prevention programs, proactive screening, and early-childhood interventions in developmental crime prevention efforts.

Mentality of Youth

- Youth who do not participate in gun violence are **scarred emotionally and physically** by the ongoing gun battles, media depictions of violence and the effects of losing family and friends to violence.
- Youth are **afraid to participate in extracurricular activities, community events, or neighborhood activities** for fear of being the next unattended or attended victim.
- Consequently, some youth **feel that they need to also carry a firearm to protect themselves** while walking in their community.
- These youth who have exposure to violence are more likely to carry a firearm.
- Additionally, increased community violence was shown to be related to the use of negative coping strategies and increased violent behaviors.



JJAG Report on Youth Violence



- **In 2022, the Delaware Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG) reported that the number of juvenile arrests totaled 1,680 (800 arrests per 100,000, 8 arrests per 1000 youths).**
- **Reporting that Kent County has a slighter increase of 9.56 youth arrests per 1000. In response to this report the following items were recommended by JJAG.**

JJAG Report on Youth Violence

- 1) Investing in prevention-based services for youth.**
- 2) Directing appropriate resources to this population to treat and prevent further violence effectively and efficiently.**
- 3) Create an inventory of existing resources, facilitate coordination between agencies, increase public awareness of resources, and create a centralized, easily accessible location for this information.**
- 4) Exploring new evidence-based practices, while also enhancing and expanding evidence-based practices, to facilitate sustainable positive change and success for youth and their families.**
- 5) Examining the role of adverse childhood experiences and resilience assessments within programs designed to assist youth in the juvenile justice system.**
- 6) Identify state and federal resources to help tailor services and support for youth who experience disproportionate juvenile justice contact (Delaware Criminal Justice Council, 2023).**

Youth Violence Ted Talk



Q: What do you think of his plan?

Hypothesis

From a recent study conducted by Ratcliff (2023), it was hypothesized that if youth are involved in activities and conversations about violence and its origins, then they are better equipped to make decisions to participate in nonviolent behavior in the future.

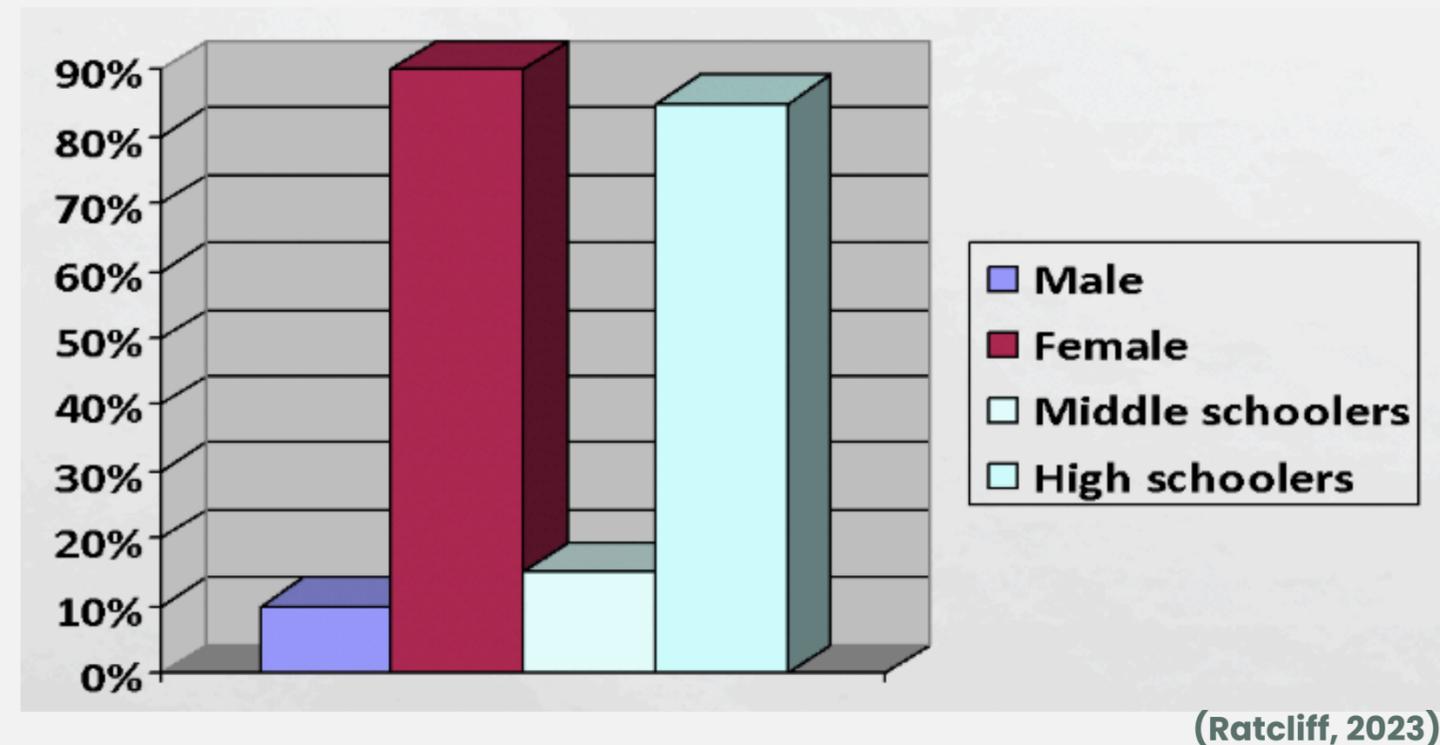
Study: Be Well Philly

- **The Be Well Philly Program, located in the inner city of Philadelphia, PA**
 - **Provided 60-minute trauma informed workshops, held bi-weekly with youth ages 13 to 17 years of age, for two hours.**
 - **Violence related topics such as urban violence, gun violence, introduction to trauma, mental health, identifying triggers, and understanding emotions were discussed.**
- **Presenting the information to the youth provided an outlet for open discussion on the origins of violence, allowing opportunities for a change of perceptions, understand former participation in past violent behaviors and learn how to use tools acquired from the workshops to have positive (nonviolent) outcomes.**

BeWellPhilly

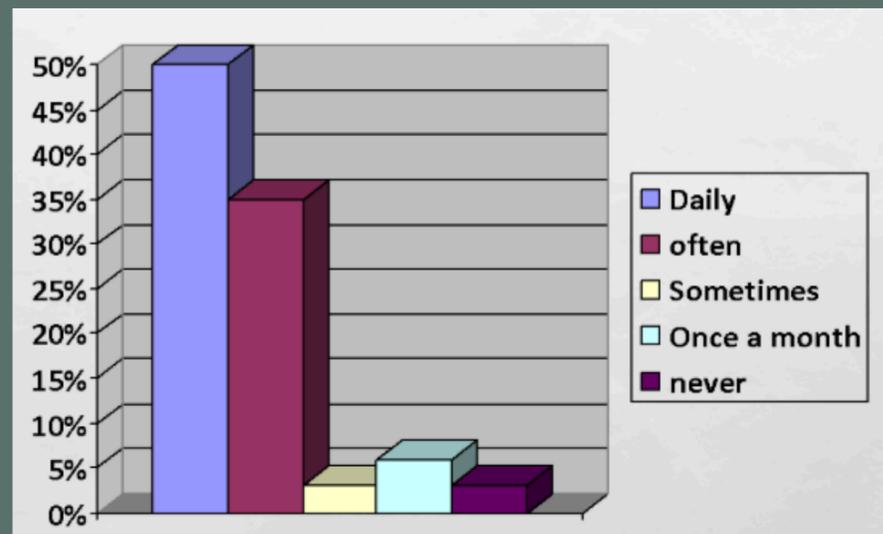
Study: Participants

- **32 teenagers, 13 to 17 years of age participated in the six-week program.**
- **Many were from the southwest and west Philadelphia communities attending schools citywide.**
- **Several of the participants attended the neighborhood church and were familiar with each other.**

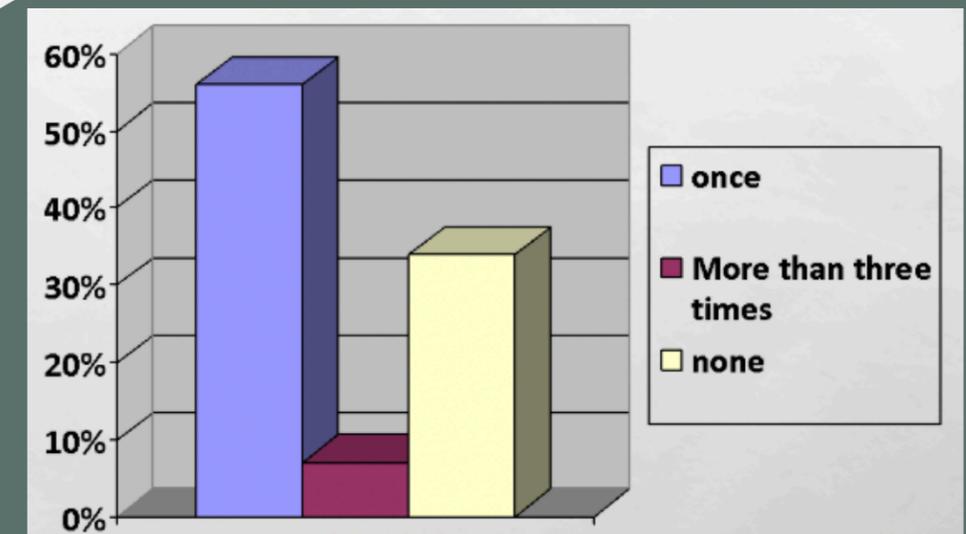


Study: Survey

Participating youth were given a survey at the end of the six-week workshop series. Questions:



(Ratcliff, 2023)



How frequently do you hear about violence in school, community or work?

How many times have you committed violent acts (fighting, shooting, stabbing, stealing)?

Study: Results



- **Presenting the information to the youth provided an outlet for open discussion on the origins of violence.**
- **Allowing opportunities for a chance of perceptions, understand former participation in past violent behaviors and learn how to use tools acquired from the workshops to have positive (non violent) outcomes.**
- **90% of the youth (N=32) responded that the workshops, outlets and facilitated conversations about the impact of violence helped them in making more positive (nonviolent) choices in the future.**

Youth Programming in Delaware



Currently unique and innovative approaches to combating youth violence which will significantly decrease the violent behaviors of youth in the state of Delaware are being developed.



The coming projects, which emphasizes proactive skill-building, will utilize a combination of evidence-based interventions and community driven innovations centered around youth programming geared at exploring and focusing on the root of violent behaviors and promote nonviolent behaviors.





How Can Professional Work Together for Youth?

- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** Essential for building rapport with young people, parents, and colleagues.
- **Mentoring:** Sharing knowledge, experience, and providing guidance to young people.
- **Collaboration:** Working effectively with other professionals, volunteers, and community members.
- **Problem-solving:** Assisting youth in navigating challenges and developing solutions.
- **Leadership:** Guiding and inspiring young people to reach their potential.
- **Cultural Competence:** Understanding and respecting diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
- **Trauma-informed Practice:** Providing support with an understanding of the impact of trauma.
- **Technical Skills:** (such as CPR, First Aid, and computer skills) May be valuable in certain roles.
- **Other Skills:** Depending on the specific context, skills like facilitation, curriculum development, emotional intelligence, patience, resilience, and integrity are all valuable assets.

Delaware Youth Resources

- **Health and Wellness:**

- **Delaware 211**: A helpline connecting individuals to various health and human service programs, including mental health services. You can reach them by dialing 211, or texting your ZIP code to 898211.
- **Delaware Guidance Services**: Provides behavioral health services for children and teens, including outpatient therapy and crisis response.
- **SUN Behavioral Delaware**: Offers outpatient treatment services for mental, emotional, or substance use problems in young people.
- **The Trevor Project**: Provides 24/7 support and resources for LGBTQ youth, including online communities and counselors.

- **Educational and Supportive Programs:**

- **Delaware Futures**: Supports at-risk youth in becoming college-ready through academic enrichment, skill-building, and mentorship
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware**: Creates and supports mentoring relationships to help youth reach their full potential.
- **Delaware State Parks**: Offers youth engagement programs, including day camps and educational initiatives.
- **Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV)**: Provides financial assistance for eligible youth to pursue post-secondary education or training.
- **Parent Information Center (PIC) of Delaware**: A resource for families of children with disabilities, offering both educational and non-educational support.

Delaware Youth Resources

- **Crisis and Safety:**

- 24-Hour Child Abuse or Neglect Hotline: For reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- Delaware Youth Crisis Response: Provides 24/7 crisis intervention services for children and teens, including on-site counseling.
- Safe Arms for Babies 24-hour Hotline: For safe haven situations.
- Delaware State Police: Offers assistance and resources for victims of crime, including children.
- Division of Child Support Enforcement: Helps establish and enforce child support orders.

- **Other Resources:**

- Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF): Provides a wide range of services for children, youth, and families in Delaware, including child welfare, juvenile justice, and behavioral health.
- Community Resource Directory: A comprehensive list of resources for Delaware families, including information on child care, health, and education.
- Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc. (DAPI): Provides services for pregnant and parenting adolescents.
- A Resource Center for Youth (ARC): Provides counseling, educational, and medical services for adolescents.
- Delaware State Parks Youth Conservation Corps: Offers summer job and environmental opportunities for young people aged 16-21.

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Thank you for joining!

Time for Q & A

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