

NATIONAL NETWORK FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES



OCCASIONAL WEBINAR SERIES

Doing More With Less: The Role of Strategic Law Enforcement in the Group Violence Reduction Strategy

Center for Crime Prevention and Control
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
New York, NY

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SAFE COMMUNITIES**



The National Network for Safe Communities, launched by the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City in 2009, supports cities around the country in implementing, sustaining, and advancing two specific, proven crime reduction strategies:

- Group violence reduction strategy (GVRS), first implemented as “Operation Ceasefire” in Boston in the mid-1990s
- Drug market intervention strategy (DMI), also known as the “High Point Model,” after the North Carolina city that pioneered it in 2004.

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The National Network strategies

- reduce serious violence
- eliminate overt drug markets
- reduce incarceration
- empower disadvantaged communities
- use existing resources

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KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Law Enforcement
- Community Leaders
- City /State Officials
- Social Service Providers
- Ex-offenders / Street Outreach Workers
- Scholars

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- More than 70 jurisdictions nationally implementing one or both of these strategies.
- A national community of practice.
- Guided by the Leadership Group of key jurisdictions working together to address the National Network's mission.

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Doing More With Less:
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Group Violence Reduction Strategy

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GROUP VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY

THE BASIC FRAMEWORK

- Wide-ranging partnership: law enforcement, community, services
- Very small target populations
 - Violent groups
- Direct, sustained communication with offenders *as groups*
- Simple, unified message
 - The community needs this to stop
 - We'll help
 - We're not asking: consequences are certain
- Meticulous follow-up

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THIS IS ABOUT GROUPS AND GROUP DYNAMICS

- Groups are at the core of the problem
- Doesn't matter if they're "gangs" – and most aren't
- Group dynamics drive things – groups are different than individuals
 - Groups carry the street code
 - Vendettas and rivalries

So: identify and engage with these groups

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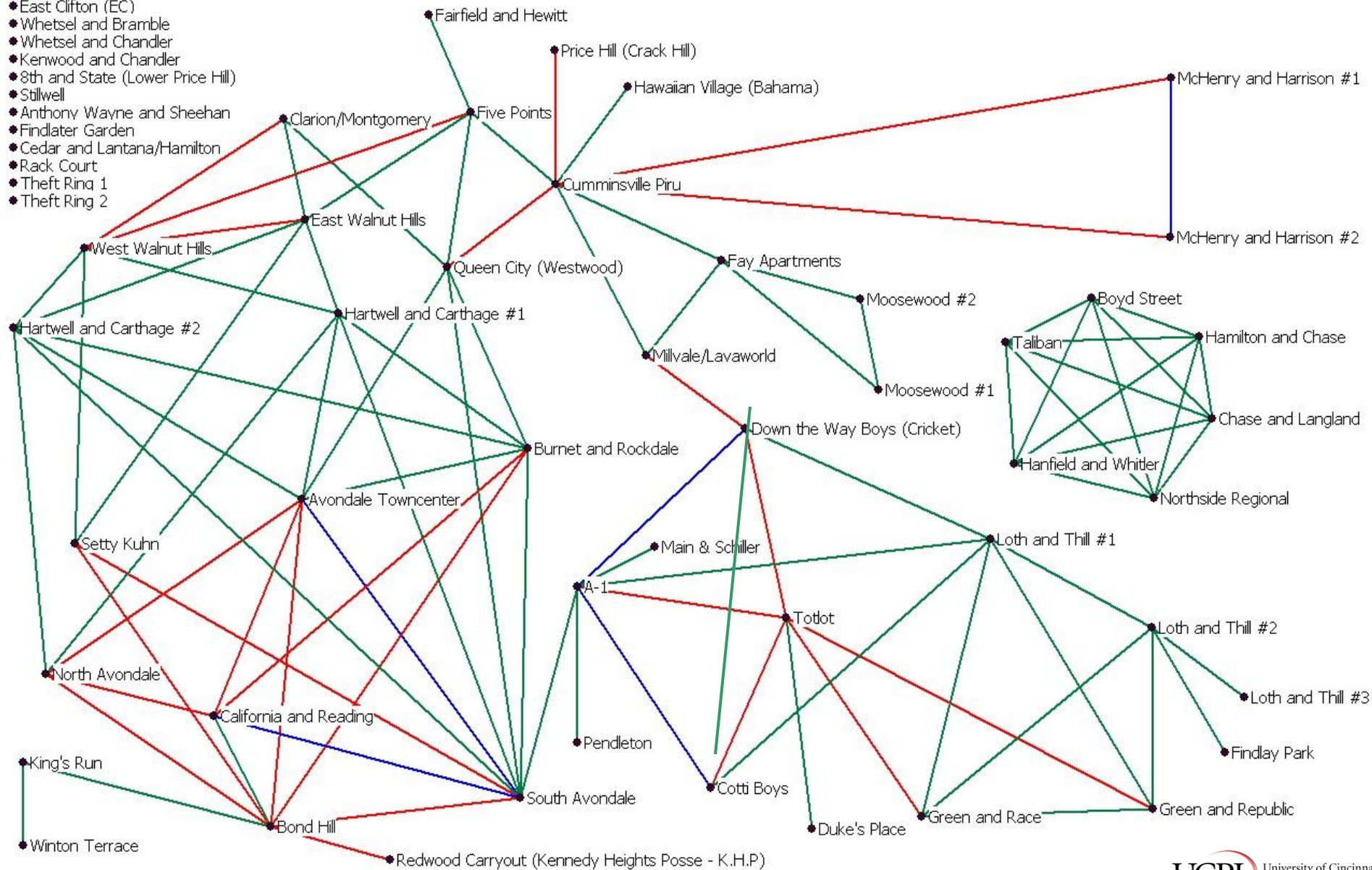


VERY SMALL POPULATION

- Even in hardest-hit neighborhoods, typically less than 5% of young men in high-risk age group
- Even fewer “impact players”
- Enormous impact on community, next age group

CIRV – Network Analysis of Street Sets

- East Clifton (EC)
- Whetsel and Bramble
- Whetsel and Chandler
- Kenwood and Chandler
- 8th and State (Lower Price Hill)
- Stillwell
- Anthony Wayne and Sheehan
- Findlater Garden
- Cedar and Lantana/Hamilton
- Rack Court
- Theft Ring 1
- Theft Ring 2



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CONSEQUENCES

- Group accountability for homicide: group dynamic, group sanction
 - Last resort
 - Explained ahead of time
 - By any legal means: “pulling levers”
 - Most serious sanctions on impact players
- Careful promise: sanction on next homicide; on most violent group
- Reversal of pro-violence peer pressure
- “Honorable exit”

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CORE ACTION

- Distinctive group-focused enforcement action
 - In accord with partnership promise
 - Rises to crucial threshold: reaches group in way other groups won't want
 - Traditional legal and enforcement tools used in unusual ways
 - Nearly always a coordinated interagency operation
 - Nearly always existing resources redeployed
 - Doesn't normally need new resources

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PARTNERSHIP PROMISE: WHAT'S SAID AT THE CALL-IN AND ON THE STREET

- You get to set the terms
- Promise is **designed** to limit operational obligations
- Precise, limited, narrow
- Doesn't limit your other work: this is just the *Ceasefire* promise

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FOR EXAMPLE:

- Call-in promise: "We will go after the next group that kills someone."
- **That's all you have to do.** You get a dozen homicides in the month after the call-in, you only have to respond to one
- That action, combined with call-ins, and with the call-ins and crackdown repeated as necessary, can shut a whole city down: nobody wants to be the first gang to kill someone

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WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO AND DON'T WANT TO PROMISE

- We'll go after every gang for all gang crimes anybody may commit
- We'll crack down on every gang that kills somebody
- We'll "dismantle" every gang that kills someone
- We'll track everybody in the room at the call-in
- Don't sell drugs
- Don't carry guns
- In reality, no jurisdiction can back these up.

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CORE CEASEFIRE PRINCIPLE

- “Never write a check you can’t cash.”
 - Stop overpromising and lying: “We know everything you’re doing.”
- Taking responsibility for every gang crime guarantees that we lose: that’s the normal situation, one Ceasefire is designed to change
- You can lower the bar over time: first no killing, then no shooting, then no violence, then no selling drugs in public, etc.

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THE BEST PROMISE

- “We’ll go after the next group that kills somebody; we’ll go after the most violent group.”
- Means two enforcement actions at any given time: one usually short/medium term, one typically longer

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BOTTOM LINE

- Every jurisdiction, under the worst circumstances, has the capacity to do these two crackdowns at any given time
- It's not resources that keeps this from happening: it's focus, management, and accountability

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IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT

- It never is
- Some incidents are hard to respond to; some groups are hard to respond to
- You can always make reasonable substitutions
- The streets don't audit you
- Close is good enough

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WHAT DOES "THRESHOLD" MEAN?

- What's good enough?
- Judgment call: this is art, not science
- Usual answer: reach as much of group as possible in way other groups won't want
- There can be exceptions: sending one or two key figures to federal prison or the equivalent can be more than enough; "notifying up"

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“WAR ROOM”

- When decision is made to go after group, set up interagency ops group to get job done
- Agency management needs to 1) protect them from other demands, and 2) make sure they're moving quickly enough
- Clear historical lesson: standard interagency coordination mechanisms can't be relied on to work
- Police department should NOT take on all this alone. Work with other LE partners

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THREE BASIC OPERATIONS

- Quick, mix-and-match interagency “street” op: probation, parole, warrants, open cases, cold cases, street drug enforcement/market disruption, unregistered cars, child support, outstanding fines, bail review, special prosecutorial attention, etc.: 30-60 days
- Medium-term drug and other investigation: undercovers and CIs, largely state-side, possible federal adoptions: 60-90 days
- Federal takedown: substantial federal charges, CCE, RICO, etc. State gang, wire, conspiracy etc. sometimes possible as well. Six months – two years.

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THE FEDERAL ROLE

- Comprehensive federal takedowns very powerful but rare and slow
- DO NOT promise that everything will go federal
- One or two adoptions from a given group action send very powerful signal
- “Out of guideline” actions send very powerful signal: the “one bullet” cases focused on impact players. Will not be routine; can be very symbolic and effective

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CAN THEN LAYER IN OTHER APPROPRIATE ENFORCEMENT

- Every jurisdiction is doing a lot in this area: explain that in call-ins
- Gun prosecutions
- Drug prosecutions
- Gang prosecutions
- Federal adoptions
- Ceasefire doesn't have to have made it all happen. Say, when it's true, "We did this because of the violence."

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UNDERUTILIZED CAPACITIES

- “Notifying up:” find impact player over group, get their attention
- Lowell, Cincinnati
- IRS, wire, postal, asset, bail review, etc.
- Probation and parole alcohol, drug, area, association GPS/bracelet monitoring. “Somebody in your crew shoots somebody, nobody on paper gets to have a beer for the next six months.”

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BETWEEN THE CALL-INS

- Group warnings, impact player notifications
- Follow street intelligence on what's hot, reach out with face-to-face contact
- "We're watching, it goes no further."
- Historically very powerful
- Need to be ready to back it up

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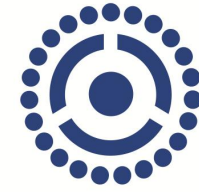


THE RESOURCE REALITY

- Every agency in every jurisdiction is doing a great deal of work in the name of violence prevention and enforcement
- Most of it is wasted. We do a huge amount of work that simply does not pay off in actual violence reduction
- General gang enforcement
- General drug enforcement
- General gun enforcement
- Area enforcement

- STOP IT. This works. When resources are scarce, stop doing the other stuff and do this.

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STICK TO THE STRATEGY AND STAY FOCUSED

- Top agency management responsibility
- In particular, PD responsibility
- PD needs to stay on track, not get distracted, mobilize other partners
- PD needs to organize so its work is directed and coordinated across intelligence, investigations, patrol
- May need new project coordinator position

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“WE DON’T HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES” MEANS...

- We’re not doing this.
- We’ve grafted this on to what we’ve always done and we’re not giving it priority
- That won’t work

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CONCLUSION

The Ceasefire logic is not a challenge in a time of limited resources.

It is the solution to the problem of limited resources.

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