

NATIONAL NETWORK FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES



Saving Lives, Saving Communities

WEBINAR SERIES:

**ENGAGING
THE COMMUNITY'S
MORAL VOICE**

SEPTEMBER 20, 2010

Center for Crime Prevention and Control
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
555 W57th Street, Room 601
New York, NY 10019
www.nnscommunities.org



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- A national strategy to reduce violence, eliminate drug markets, reduce incarceration, and promote racial reconciliation.
- Launched by the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, in June 2009.
- Bringing together:
 - Law enforcement
 - Community leaders
 - Mayors
 - State officials
 - Service providers
 - Street workers
 - Ex-offenders
 - Scholars

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Supporting jurisdictions around the country in institutionalizing and sustaining two highly effective crime prevention strategies:

- Group Violence Reduction Strategy
“Ceasefire”
- Drug Market Intervention
“High Point”

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES



- The levels of violence in America are unacceptable.
- The impact of overt drug markets is unacceptable.
- The tensions between the police and minority communities are unacceptable.
- The levels of incarceration in America are unacceptable.

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1. Baltimore, MD
2. **BOSTON, MA**
3. **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
4. Canton, OH
5. **CHICAGO, IL**
6. **CINCINNATI, OH**
7. Cleveland, OH
8. Columbus, OH
9. Concord, NC
10. Dallas, TX
11. Dayton, OH
12. Durham, NC
13. East Palo Alto, CA
14. Graham, NC
15. Greensboro, NC
16. Greenville, NC
17. Hempstead, NY
18. **HIGH POINT, NC**
19. Hillsborough, NC
20. Huntington, WV
21. Lancaster, PA
22. Long Beach, CA
23. **LOS ANGELES, CA**
24. Mesa, AZ
25. Middletown, OH
26. **MILWAUKEE, WI**
27. Mineola, NY
28. Mount Vernon, NY
29. **NEWARK, NJ**
30. **STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**
31. **OAKLAND, CA**
32. Ocala, FL
33. Omaha, NE
34. Oxnard, CA
35. Peoria, IL
36. Pittsburgh, PA
37. Portland, OR
38. **PROVIDENCE, RI**
39. Richmond, VA
40. Rockford, IL
41. Sacramento, CA
42. Salinas, CA
43. Salisbury, NC
44. Seattle, WA
45. Shelby, NC
46. Snow Hill, MD
47. Stockton, CA
48. Toledo, OH
49. White Plains, NY
50. Winston-Salem, NC
51. Yonkers, NY

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Purpose of Webinar Series

- Provide assistance to National Network jurisdictions in specific areas of crime reduction research and practice.
- Provide a venue for sharing cutting-edge innovations among current National Network sites.
- Provide an opportunity to identify emerging issues and opportunities in the community of practice.

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Webinar Series Schedule

- Innovative Notification Strategies November 2010
- What the Research Says December 2010
- Project Management Essentials January 2011

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The Three Elements of National Network Strategies

- Strategic enforcement
- Social services
- Community moral voice

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OVERVIEW

Community Moral Voice

- What is the “moral voice of the community?”
- Who can play this role?
- How do you find and work with them?
- What are the moral voice messages?
- Who are “influentials?”

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OVERVIEW continued

Community Moral Voice Key Ideas

- Why the moral voice is so powerful
- Informal social control
- Norms and narratives
- Legitimacy
- The racial divide and reconciliation

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OVERVIEW continued

Community Moral Voice

- A concrete example: Hempstead, NY
- Real site experience:
 - Cincinnati, Ohio
 - High Point, North Carolina
- Q & A

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Community Moral Voice

Community figures, with standing in the eyes of offenders and potential offenders, who can influence how they think and act.

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Not Social Services

Services are important, but the community moral voice is a separate, third element.

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The Key Question

Who will offenders listen to?

**Often different people than usual
community representatives.**

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Strong Community Moral Voices

EX-OFFENDERS: Voice of redemption / aspiration

MOTHERS OF MURDERED CHILDREN: Voice of pain

VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND CRIME: Voice of victimization

AUTHENTIC FAITH AND COMMUNITY LEADERS: Voice of community aspirations

INFLUENTIALS: Those close to individual offenders – mothers, fathers, relatives, faith leaders, loved ones, friends

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Finding the Community's Moral Voice

Most communities already have people doing this work.

These actors are often but not always:

- Engaged in street outreach
- Working in prisoner reentry field
- Grass roots leaders in affected neighborhoods
- Faith leaders
- In existing groups (mothers of murdered children)

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Finding the Community's Moral Voice

- Identify a small set of such figures.
- Work through their questions and concerns about the strategies in private.
- Work through their social networks: who do they trust and want to work with?

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Not Traditional Community Organizing

- Does not require “organized community.”
- Should not be done in open door meetings (at first).
- Only need right moral voices for the call-in.

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Community Moral Voice at the Call-In

- Call-Ins: Formal, organized meetings between the intervention partners and offenders.
- The call-in conveys several key themes: community standards, help, consequences.
- Special attention is given to the moral voice of the community.

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Key Messages

EX-OFFENDERS challenge the street code and speak to the possibility of redemption.

- There is no justification for the violence.
- The community needs the violence to stop.
- The ideas of the street code are wrong.
- Redemption is possible; learn from my example.

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Key Messages

MOTHERS of murdered children or other victims speak to the community pain.

- There is no justification for the violence.
- The community needs the violence to stop.
- The violence destroys families and the community; here is what it did to me. This is what it will do to your mother.
- Don't let this happen to your family. Make the right choice.
- We are justified in demanding that you stop, but we will help you if we can.

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Key Messages

AUTHENTIC FAITH OR COMMUNITY LEADERS speak to community aspirations.

- There is no justification for the violence/the dealing.
- The community needs the violence/the dealing to stop.
- We are justified in demanding that you stop, but we will help you if we can.
- The community needs to grow and to thrive—but needs you alive and out of prison to do so.
- You are valuable and important to us; we have great and justified hopes for you.

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Key Messages

LAW ENFORCEMENT challenge offender narratives.

- None of us have been entirely in the right; all of us would like to change.
- Law enforcement respects you.
- Law enforcement has been part of the problem and would like to change.
- Law enforcement does not want to put you in prison or see you dead; law enforcement would prefer that you succeed and the community thrive.
- Law enforcement will tell you exactly how to stay out of prison.

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Influentials

- Influentials are people close to the offenders who they respect, care about, and who have a positive influence.
- Developed for the DMI model, their role is also being worked into the group violence strategy.
- Feels very, very powerful.

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Finding Influentials

- Criminal Justice sources: probation and parole reports, jail visit lists, call logs, bail sources, etc.
- Community sources.
- Ask the offender.

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SOME KEY IDEAS

Informal Social Control

- Criminal justice system punishment is often the least important influence on decision to commit crime.
- What matters most is the judgments of individuals, peer groups, families, and communities that crime is wrong.
- Scholars call this “informal social control,” and divide it into “internal” and “external.”
- Research, experience and common sense show that informal social control is far more potent than formal.

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SOME KEY IDEAS

Norms and Narratives

- A **norm** is a rule or a standard held by an individual, group or community.
- A **narrative** is an explanation used by an individual, group, or community to understand and explain why something has happened.
- The norms and narratives held by offenders, communities and law enforcement have tremendous impact on crime and crime prevention.

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SOME KEY IDEAS

Norms and Narratives

- **Example:** the narrative that law enforcement is an illegitimate presence in the community can lead to the narrative that drug arrests are racist oppression and to the norm that good people don't talk to the police – “stop snitching.”
- **Example:** the narrative that the community is silent about drug dealing because it is corrupt and living off drug money can lead to the norm of aggressive drug enforcement and arrest.

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SOME KEY IDEAS

Legitimacy

- High crime communities often lack faith in the police -- “legal cynicism.”
- Research shows this lack of faith explains much of neighborhood violence.
- Increased legitimacy will likely enhance overall public safety.
- Attention to community perceptions of legitimacy may produce additional crime control benefits.

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SOME KEY IDEAS

The Racial Divide

- The most violent and victimized communities are minority, mostly African-American.
- These communities are angry at law enforcement.
- This anger is rooted in actual history of oppression.
- Current law enforcement practice is often interpreted through this lens.
- All leads to communities' silence on violence and drugs.

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SOME KEY IDEAS

The Racial Divide

- Law enforcement reads community silence as approval and complicity.
- Anger/silence and law enforcement interpretation close off a working partnership.
- Lack of partnership often leads to more aggressive law enforcement practice.
- Withdrawal, distrust deepens.

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SOME KEY IDEAS

Truth Telling and Racial Reconciliation

- Community and law enforcement norms and narratives are explicitly raised and addressed in this process.
- Law enforcement has not succeeded, is doing unintentional damage, would like to do differently.
- Communities have not set clear standards about right and wrong, would like to do differently.

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Real impact of moral engagement and resetting norms and narratives

- A gang that believes that disrespect does not justify violence will be less violent.
- A community that no longer believes law enforcement to be oppressive will be more likely to express community standards against violence.
- A police department that recognizes that a community is angry, not corrupt, is more likely to find strong community partners.
- A drug dealer who knows his mother wants him to stop is more likely to do so.