**Law Enforcement and Children’s Exposure to Violence**

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| **May 21-22, 2012** |  | **Working Group Meeting Summary** |



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**Develop a national awareness campaign on law enforcement and CEV.**

**Integrate awareness of, identification of, and response to CEV across all types of law enforcement training.**

**Create a toolkit of practical resources to help enhance law enforcement response to CEV.**

**Develop a 'strategy library' of resources to support law enforcement initiatives on CEV.**

**Build coalitions and develop resources to support agendas for policy and legislative change.**

# Day One Summary

Below is a summary of key themes that emerged through small and large group discussions on day one. Discussions were centered on questions posed to the group.

Breakout 1

## **1. What primary factors are contributing to children’s exposure to violence and what is law enforcement’s role in addressing these factors?**

The following three themes emerged in discussion:

*Complex, interrelated social problems are the primary factors that contribute to CEV.* Participants listed a wide range of social issues that highlight the need for comprehensive responses to the causes of violence and treatment of trauma including:

* Violence within the family, including domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, and chronic exposure to violence;
* Substance abuse and drug trafficking that result in family dysfunction and exposure to the related violence;
* Community violence rooted in poverty, discrimination, gang activity, drug trafficking, easy availability of weapons, and cultural desensitization to and media normalization of violence;
* Problems in family dynamics and systems, such as untreated psychopathology rooted in trauma, lack of parental involvement, negative parenting strategies, and generational patterns of trauma;
* Lack of trust—often by communities most in need of services—of law enforcement and human service systems; and
* General lack of awareness by the public and child-serving agencies of the incidence, prevalence, and impact of trauma on children magnified by limited understanding of how to prevent and respond to CEV (e.g., use of evidence-based programs).

*Systems-level barriers and challenges limit effective prevention, identification, and treatment of CEV.* Specific issues include:

* General fragmentation of services for children and families across systems and agencies, including law enforcement, child protective services, juvenile justice programs, healthcare providers, and schools;
* Related lack of coordination and collaboration across systems and at all levels in areas such as reporting and referral processes, data collection, information sharing, and interagency identification and response systems;
* Conflicting professional perspectives on appropriate roles and responses to CEV that result in “turf” disputes, distrust, and the inability to develop consensus on shared frameworks and strategies across systems; and
* Lack of resources to provide the necessary services for children and families to prevent, respond to, and treat CEV.

*Practices of law enforcement either support or limit effective responses to CEV.* Specific issues include:

* Participants emphasized the role of law enforcement to “Notice. Care. Act.” which promotes awareness of, identification of, and response to CEV.
* “Public safety” paradigms support an integrated response to CEV, whereas “Enforcement” paradigms may deemphasize the important roles and practices (e.g., identification of and response to CEV) of law enforcement;
* Law enforcement serves as a visual presence in the community. This presence may present opportunities for mentorship and positive community relationship building.
* Identification of children exposed to violence during routine enforcement practices (e.g., drug raids, investigations, traffic stops) will encourage awareness and responses to CEV by LE. This may also create opportunities for LE to partner and collaborate with community service providers to ensure the needs of children and families are met; and
* Integration of awareness of and response to CEV into the basic management and processes of law enforcement agencies (e.g., training, criteria for professional advancement, strategic plans) may ensure a more consistent response to CEV.

## **2. What are current practices for a coordinated response to children exposed to violence issues on identification, intervention, assessment, and referral?**

Two themes emerged: the use of comprehensive, collaborative, and interdisciplinary responses to CEV and training programs that model and promote coordination. Examples of a number of existing tools and programs

were provided.

*Effective coordinated responses to CEV are characterized by the use of comprehensive, collaborative, and interdisciplinary approaches.* Specific examples include:

* Multidisciplinary teams that use practices such as case management to ensure the provision of comprehensive services, information sharing across agencies, and shared accountability for outcomes;
* Coordinated response strategies that pair law enforcement with outside agency staff members (e.g., mental health, CPS) who provide immediate services. Two examples mentioned at this meeting include the Child Development-Community Policing (CD-CP) model and New York’s use of a central registry for child abuse cases that manages immediate response teams of detectives and case workers;
* Colocation of different agencies and services to improve coordination and access to programs (e.g., Medical Model, law enforcement located at a Children’s Advocacy Centers and Family Justice Centers); Use of community-based agencies that act as “hubs” to coordinate services, most notably the Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) model; and
* Development of protocols and memoranda of understanding that outline referral procedures and define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistent responses.
* Shared data systems.

*Ongoing interdisciplinary and cross-training practices are essential to effective coordinated responses.*Participants highlighted the use of joint training methods as a core component of a promising practice. Trainings that bring together law enforcement officers with their partners from other agencies help break down negative stereotypes, collaboratively define clear roles and responsibilities that reflect the interests of all stakeholders, and build the relationships necessary to institutionalize and sustain new practices.

* Consideration should be made about what the message is and who will be the messenger. Typically law enforcement will be more responsive to a message developed by and conveyed by law enforcement.

## **3. Who are the community stakeholders who can assist law enforcement in identifying children exposed to violence and what is the nature of the partnership?**

* Service providers:
  + Public, nonprofit, and private providers of child and family services, most notably child welfare agencies, mental health systems, medical/healthcare providers systems (e.g., physicians, nurses, EMS), domestic violence shelters, and community advocacy centers;
* Legal system components:
  + Both criminal courts and dependency courts components including: prosecutors, legal aid, public defenders, juvenile justice professionals, and probation and parole offices;
* Educators:
  + Early education programs, the K–12 school system, afterschool programs, community colleges, colleges, and universities;
* Broader support providers:
* Job training programs, income assistance, and housing authorities; and
* Community-based organizations
  + Faith-based organizations, cultural organizations, neighborhood associations, youth leagues, and citizen coalitions.
* Children and Families.

Breakout 2

## **1. What data collection and information sharing is necessary to help law enforcement better understand the issues surrounding children’s exposure to violence?**

Participants acknowledged that data collection and information sharing are challenging topics for law enforcement, particularly since this is defined in so many different ways by various systems. Two themes emerged:

*Building awareness is the first step to enabling data collection and sharing.*

* Efforts to collect and share data should start with making the case to other community stakeholders about the needs for and benefits of such collaboration.
* Information about existing data collection mechanisms by stakeholders should be examined to determine how the mechanisms may be duplicative or complementary.
* Compelling stories about the benefits of success may motivate action, rather than technical talk about information systems and raw numbers.
* Agencies need to train staff on the benefits of data collection, how to collect data, and the impact good data collection can have children and communities.

*Changes in data collection and information sharing require collaborative processes.*

* Concerns about cost and cost sharing should be addressed up front. It may be beneficial to show how changes to data collection and information sharing will make a stakeholder’s jobs easier and more efficient.
* “Ambassadors” from other key stakeholder groups can build awareness and get buy-in. Law enforcement needs partners to address these complex issues.
* Leadership from law enforcement at all levels—national, state, local, tribal—is key to convening efforts around data issues.
* Collaboration helps prevent reinventing the wheel. Each system has a separate mechanism for data collection, which can be leveraged to develop a fuller picture of CEV.

General comments on this question include:

* Changes to data collection and data sharing practices require incentives.
* Agencies need to determine and define what data they need first, particularly since CEV cuts across so many different categories (e.g., domestic violence, gang violence, drugs). Communities will need to tailor data collection to their own needs.
* Entry points will vary across communities. Addressing data issues requires very different approaches in tribal communities, rural areas, and big cities.

## **2. What are the barriers and challenges to the identification of children exposed to violence by law enforcement?**

Three very clear themes emerged during the discussion:

*The current practices and mindset of law enforcement and other agencies are primary barriers to identification of CEV.*

* Organizational culture, philosophies, and negative perceptions of other agencies limit identification of CEV.
* Emphasis on enforcement approaches limits the ability of officers to identify CEV.
* Awareness of CEV needs to be built into basic training and officers’ roles and include how to talk to and interact with individuals and families.
* Turf conflicts and lack of trust among different agencies limits the collaboration necessary to effectively identify CEV roles should be delineated to ensure that every agency responds to its full capacity.

*A range of policies and procedures impede the identification of CEV.*

* Reporting forms lack checkboxes to indicate when children are present and response protocols (after identification) are not always clear. Perceived confidentiality requirements limit access to records, especially from other agencies.
* .Factors such as high turnover rates and the diversity of law enforcement agencies make it difficult to institutionalize a process to identify and respond to CEV.

*Fear of negative consequences limits the willingness of victims to report CEV.* The cooperation of victims with law enforcement plays an important role in the identification of CEV. Participants discussed a number of issues that often make victims hesitant to disclose information to police, which include:

* A general lack of trust in the system of services and law enforcement in particular; and
* Concerns that reporting information on CEV might lead to negative outcomes such as the removal of children, deportation, and compliance with burdensome follow-up procedures.

## **3. What is the range of effective responses after the initial identification of children exposed to violence?**

Group discussions focused on two main types of response: those at the scene of an incident and long-term options for coordination among multiple agencies. Specific examples include:

* Provision of victims services (e.g., support, service referrals, crisis intervention) on scene by a non-law enforcement professional. Examples include the use of Victim Specialists or Victim Advocates and the CD-CP model, which utilizes clinicians as part of mobile crisis response teams;
* Differential response procedures that provide clear guidance for law enforcement on how to respond based on factors such as prevalence and severity of violence;
* Evidence collection from a collaborative mindset (e.g., take pictures of holes in walls to document violence in home or take pictures of health hazards present in drug homes);
* Case management and multidisciplinary teams to ensure coordination across agencies, access to comprehensive services, and ongoing communication;
* Referral to community-based services such as children’s advocacy centers to serve as a “hub” that coordinates services with other agencies;
* Community-level violence prevention strategies that mobilize significant resources in response to outbreaks and high levels of violent incidents; and
* Accountability review panels or similar processes to ensure cases receive appropriate responses and encourage compliance with procedures.

## **4. What tools and resources are available to improve the identification of children exposed to violence from law enforcement to the appropriate response system?**

* Significant tools and resources already exist to improve identification and response to CEV, but these are scattered across different initiatives, communities, and agencies.
* Data management and sharing tools exist in some communities such as New York City’s ChildStat system (the CD-CP model that emphasizes the development of collaborative relationships to share data across agencies), databases that provide aggregate information on issues that cut across multiple agencies such as the NCAtrak system, and emerging technologies such as cloud-based architectures that streamline reporting and pooling of data.
* Templates for procedures and protocols. Participants pointed to a variety of different tools already in use that can be readily disseminated to other communities. These include data recording forms and procedures (e.g., checkboxes, referral protocols, New Haven’s and Cleveland’s standardized question about the presence of children at the scene of incidents), memorandums of understanding, and model legislation.
* Screening and assessment instruments. Participants pointed out that numerous screening and assessment instruments already exist for identifying CEV, but relatively few are adapted specifically for law enforcement.
* Procedures for inmates returning into communities.

# Breakout 3

## **1. What are effective prevention efforts and response systems for addressing children exposed to violence and what is law enforcement’s role?**

*Comprehensive collaborative strategies.* Participants reiterated that initiatives on CEV can draw from a range of existing models that emphasize collaboration among different agencies and providers. In addition to the frameworks already discussed, other approaches to prevention and response include:

* “No matter where you’re at in your system, prevention is your job."
* Multidisciplinary teams and cross-training of police with other agencies to improve response and referral;
* Community-based organizations that serve as “hubs” to integrate and enhance services, such as Children’s Advocacy Centers and Family Justice Centers; and
* Multiagency Task Forces.

*Broader networks of support services for children and youth.*

* Afterschool programs, in particular those that can reach at-risk children who do not meet criteria for involvement with child protective services but still need support;
* School-based partnerships, such as the Virginia Rules program provided by school resource officers, that offer law enforcement the opportunity to build relationships with youth through lessons on bullying, dating violence, and domestic violence, among other topics;
* Police athletic leagues, coaching programs, and mentoring programs that help law enforcement provide children with positive role models;
* Community-based programs for youth offenders that provide treatment and connections to general equivalency degree courses, job training, and other alternatives to involvement in the juvenile justice system; and
* Early childhood programs such as home visitation and Head Start that allow early intervention and referral to other family services.

*Community outreach and awareness programs.*

* Law enforcement and multidisciplinary presentations on CEV to community groups such as: school personnel, faith-based groups, citizen coalitions, and similar community organizations (e.g., Darkness to Light trainings). Partnerships with cultural organizations and informal support networks to connect with underserved populations such as immigrant communities.
* Integration of CEV awareness and response information into other existing community services (e.g., Neighborhood Watch modules on identification of elder abuse and exploitation for Meals on Wheels staff).

## **2. What are policies and procedures that support effective response systems?**

* It is important to frame any changes—especially significant ones—in ways that detail justifications, benefits, and relationship with established professional roles and responsibilities.
* There is a need to leverage existing networks (e.g., International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, Child Welfare League of America, National Children’s Alliance, National District Attorneys Association)and resources to disseminate templates
* Sample policies and procedures include:
  + Mandatory reporting protocols;
  + Coordinated intake and assessment procedures across different agencies;
  + Requirements for interdisciplinary training and integrating curricula on CEV across training activities;
  + Uniform templates for reporting forms and procedures within law enforcement agencies and across different disciplines;
  + Interviewing protocols that streamline the process for children and define criteria for who interviews them (e.g., forensic interviewers as opposed to line staff); and
  + Mandatory review processes to ensure accountability for identification and referral, identify potential problems with procedures, and develop policy recommendations based on case outcomes.

**Day Two Summary**

The agenda for the second day of the Working group meeting used small group breakout discussions to address three main issues:

**1. Awareness of and response to CEV require a culture shift by law enforcement.** All four groups emphasized that the single most important factor to the long-term success of Defending Childhood and related initiatives is embedding response to CEV into the culture of law enforcement. The keys to success in this effort include:

* Make the case to law enforcement officers at all levels that addressing CEV is a core part of their mission because the benefits contribute to short- and long-term public safety goals;
* Frame the desired changes in thinking and behavior as a complement to current law enforcement roles rather than a replacement of them;
* Balance the “facts” about CEV with compelling stories;
* Draw on champions and existing networks from within the law enforcement community to make the case for change; and
* Use the lessons learned from previous efforts to change law enforcement culture (e.g., awareness of and response to domestic violence).

**2. Change strategies should be top down, bottom up, and middle out.**Participants stressed the need for efforts to target the entire “system” of law enforcement as a whole. This requires multiple strategies with messages tailored to different types of communities and audiences—officers on the beat, middle managers, top executives, and professional associations. Specific suggestions to guide this overall change strategy include:

* Encourage an overall change strategy that starts with raising awareness of the issue to make the case for change and get buy-in, and then move toward planning and implementation.
* Coordinate between state and local levels. Build a coalition of stakeholders and an agenda for legislative/policy changes at the state level that connects to grassroots efforts.
* Identify the incentives that drive change at each level, such as performance assessment for line staff, data collection/reporting policies for agencies and states, and funding requirements for state and federal grants. Create incentives for change of institutional policies and procedures that inform law enforcement practices.

**3. Directly address the issue of scarce resources.** Law enforcement is unlikely to implement changes it perceives as “unfunded mandates” or ineffective because scarce resources will limit the ultimate impact. Change strategies should:

* Make a clear case for the “return on investment” law enforcement will receive from implementing strategies to address CEV;
* Provide concrete examples of how agencies, communities, and states can maximize resources through collaboration (e.g., financing strategies, systems reform); and
* Identify options at all levels to leverage additional resources through connections with related initiatives, community services outside the child welfare and child protective systems, and elected officials.

**4. Law enforcement needs the help of other stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels.** Participants stressed that most of the strategies they discussed—especially comprehensive, long-term efforts—require the support of other stakeholders. Specific suggestions for support included:

* Process models, examples, and technical assistance for how to convene diverse stakeholders, especially at the local level; and
* Leveraging the convening power of federal partners (U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorneys at the state level, and other federal agencies) to engage a broader coalition of stakeholders with an interest in addressing CEV.

**Day Two: Strategies and Actions Summary**

Participants identified five broad strategies to pursue as the core of an overall agenda for change. Many suggestions overlap or otherwise connect with one another, pointing to the need for a clear plan on how to coordinate across the different options.

**Develop a national awareness campaign on law enforcement and CEV.**There was broad consensus among the groups that raising awareness of law enforcement about CEV should be a first step in any broader set of strategies. Specific actions suggested to implement this campaign include:

* Convene “kickoff” events of law enforcement and other community stakeholders supported by Webinars, toolkits, or similar resources;
* Develop multiple brief, targeted resources to raise awareness of CEV (e.g., short videos, issue briefs, brochures) and a dissemination plan to reach different law enforcement audiences;
* Make presentations at state and national conferences to raise awareness of CEV and build a network of support for future efforts;
* Use a White House meeting or similar high-profile event with the leadership of federal agencies to kick off a national campaign;
* Identify all major law enforcement publications (journals, magazines, e-newsletters) and develop articles on CEV tailored to their different audiences; and
* Connect with established awareness campaigns (domestic violence, victims’ rights month) to incorporate information on law enforcement and CEV into their work.

**Integrate awareness of, identification of, and response to CEV across all types of law enforcement training.**All groups discussed the primary importance of training to raise awareness of CEV and ultimately change the culture of law enforcement regarding this issue. Specific actions suggested to implement this strategy include:

* Aggregate existing training resources in one location and organize them for use by different levels and audiences;
* Adapt training resources from other fields and related initiatives to address different law enforcement audiences;
* Identify all major centers of law enforcement training (e.g., police academies, regional training centers, state and national membership associations) and engage them in discussions on how to integrate training material on CEV into their curricula; and
* Develop a train-the-trainers toolkit and identify the best “entry points” to build training capacity.

**Create a toolkit of practical resources to help enhance law enforcement response to CEV.** Despite concerns about the concept of a toolkit, all groups made suggestions about the need to develop a range of concrete, practical resources and strategies to help law enforcement identify and respond to CEV. Specific ideas for the contents of the toolkit include:

* Compilation of all the existing practice tools on CEV available to law enforcement—many resources are already available, but there is no single place to find them;
* Use of information technology such as mobile applications to “translate” information on CEV into easy-to-use tools for frontline officers, such as risk factor checklists, “decision trees” to assist with referrals, and data collection forms; and
* Development of a “learning community” to support the dissemination and use of the toolkit, such as a You Tube channel, electronic mailing list, and Web site.
* Development of a way for jurisdictions and communities to self-assess their law enforcement readiness to address CEV in a ‘Stages of Readiness’ model that considers where communities may be regarding training and capacity, identification, partnerships with other community agencies and stakeholders, philosophical approach for the role of law enforcement and CEV, incentives and funding for addressing the issue, and other factors that limit or contribute to a comprehensive response to CEV.

**Develop a “strategy library” of resources to support law enforcement initiatives on CEV.** Participants suggested a variety of ways to help agencies, communities, and states develop “roadmaps” and similar supports to help them move from awareness to action. Specific resources for the “library” include:

* Self-evaluation guides to help law enforcement stakeholders assess their readiness for change;
* “Strategy menus” for different types of communities and those at different stages of readiness for change that describe the various options available to convene, plan, implement, scale up, and sustain their initiatives; and
* “How to” manuals that use case studies and describe promising practices that help law enforcement officers and their community partners address specific issues such as data collection, information sharing, and collaborative development of referral processes.

**Build coalitions and develop resources to support agendas for policy and legislative change.**Many participants cited the success of coalitions on domestic violence in changing laws and policies as a model for CEV initiatives to replicate, especially at the state level. In addition to using many of the strategies and actions already described to cultivate broader networks of law enforcement and other stakeholders to develop agendas for legal and policy changes, other specific suggestions include:

* Integrate responses to CEV into current model policies and legislation used by national law enforcement associations; and
* Collect, organize, and disseminate examples of existing laws and policies that address CEV, such as protocols for data collection, information sharing and records management, memorandums of understanding, and referral processes.