

What Community Violence Intervention Looks Like Outside of Large Urban Centers



CVIPI
Community Based Violence Intervention
and Prevention Initiative

OJJDP Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

NIJ National Institute
of Justice
STRENGTHEN SCIENCE. ADVANCE JUSTICE.

Office for Victims of Crime
OVC



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) & Rural Communities

- Rural Violent Crime Reduction Initiative (RVCRI)
- Rural LISC
- Capacity Building for Community Development (HUD Section 4 Program)
- CVIPI Resource & Field Support Center



Agenda & Learning Objectives

- Presentations from Practitioners in the Field
- Presentation from a state-led Office of Violence Prevention
- Q&A



Panelists



Dr. Paul Smokowski, Executive Director, North Carolina Youth Violence Prevention Center (NCYVPC)



Ainka Jackson, Esq., Executive Director, Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth & Reconciliation



Dr. Gerard Tate, Director, North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention

Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiatives (CVIPI) in Rural Areas

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Key Staff

Paul Smokowski,
Project Director

Martica Bacallao,
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Jordan Hendren,
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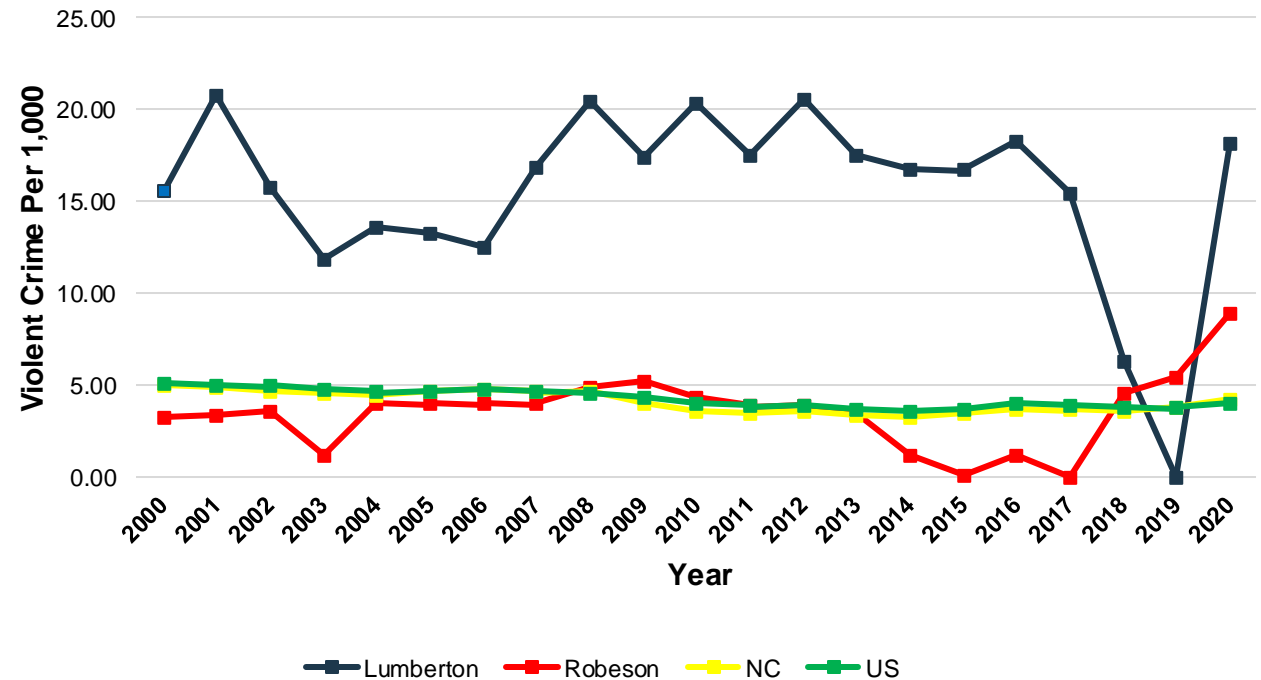
Mike Brill,
Lead Violence
Interrupter

Leon Burden,
Violence Interrupter,
Gang Prevention Lead

Crime and Violence are Often Thought of as Solely Urban Problems, With Less Focus on Rural Areas

Most Dangerous Places in U.S. Police Department	2020 Violent Crime Per 1,000
Monroe, LA	29.4
Memphis, TN	24.2
Saginaw, MI	23.8
Detroit, MI	22.6
St. Louis, MO	20.0
Alexandria, LA	18.8
Lumberton, NC	18.1
Pine Bluff, AR	18.1
Little Rock, AR	18.1
Albany, GA	17.7
South Bend, IN	17.1
Cleveland, OH	16.9

Fig. 1: Violent Crime in Lumberton, Robeson, North Carolina, and the United States Rate Per 1,000



Community Violence in Rural Areas, Small Towns, and Tribal Communities

Hot Spots in Robeson County by Police Department	2020 * Violent Crime Per 1,000	2020 Homicide Per 1,000	2020 Property Crime Per 1,000	Poverty Rate	2020 Population
Fairmont PD	11.57	0	33.91	33.4	2,507
Lumberton PD	18.13	0.05	76.06	31.1	19,025
Pembroke PD	4.85	0.35	65.86	44.2	2,885
Red Springs PD	10.29	0.31	86.01	50.9	3,206
Robeson Co Sheriff Office	8.88	0.30	20.70	27.9	116,530
Rowland	9.30	0	39.26	14.1	968
North Carolina	3.82	0.071	20.82	13.4	10,439,388
United States	1.95	0.0317	10.39	12.8	329,500,000



Community Violence in Rural Areas, Small Towns, and Tribal Communities

Unique risk factors in rural areas:

- Isolation; shortage of community resources, including primary care and mental health providers; poor health outcomes in rural areas (e.g., unintentional injuries, traffic fatalities, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, suicide, obesity, and smoking), which lead to high rates of premature mortality (i.e., dying before age 75 years).
- Higher rates of depression, weapons use, alcoholism, and drug use.



Challenges to (and Solutions for) Launching CVI in Rural Areas, Small Towns, and Tribal Communities

- **Challenges**

- Trust – Insider/Outsider dichotomy
- Distance – Geography
- Infrastructure and Resources – Cell Phone and Internet coverage

- **Opportunities:**

- Concentrated Social Networks (once you are accepted in)
- Online Engagement – Telehealth for therapy, Zoom for Paint Parties



- **Challenges**

- Often small and rural police agencies do not have access to the same level of support, resources, and training opportunities as their larger, urban peers.

- **Strengths**

- Many small and rural agencies are highly effective at crime response and maintain higher clearance rates for poverty and violent crime than urban agencies due to their close relationships with the community.
- Officers in small, rural, and tribal agencies develop a variety of skills that larger agencies devote specific units to, such as narcotics, school resources officers, and other specialized roles.
- Small and rural departments are highly flexible and adaptable, particularly in balancing their formal and informal responses to crime, due to their close ties to their communities

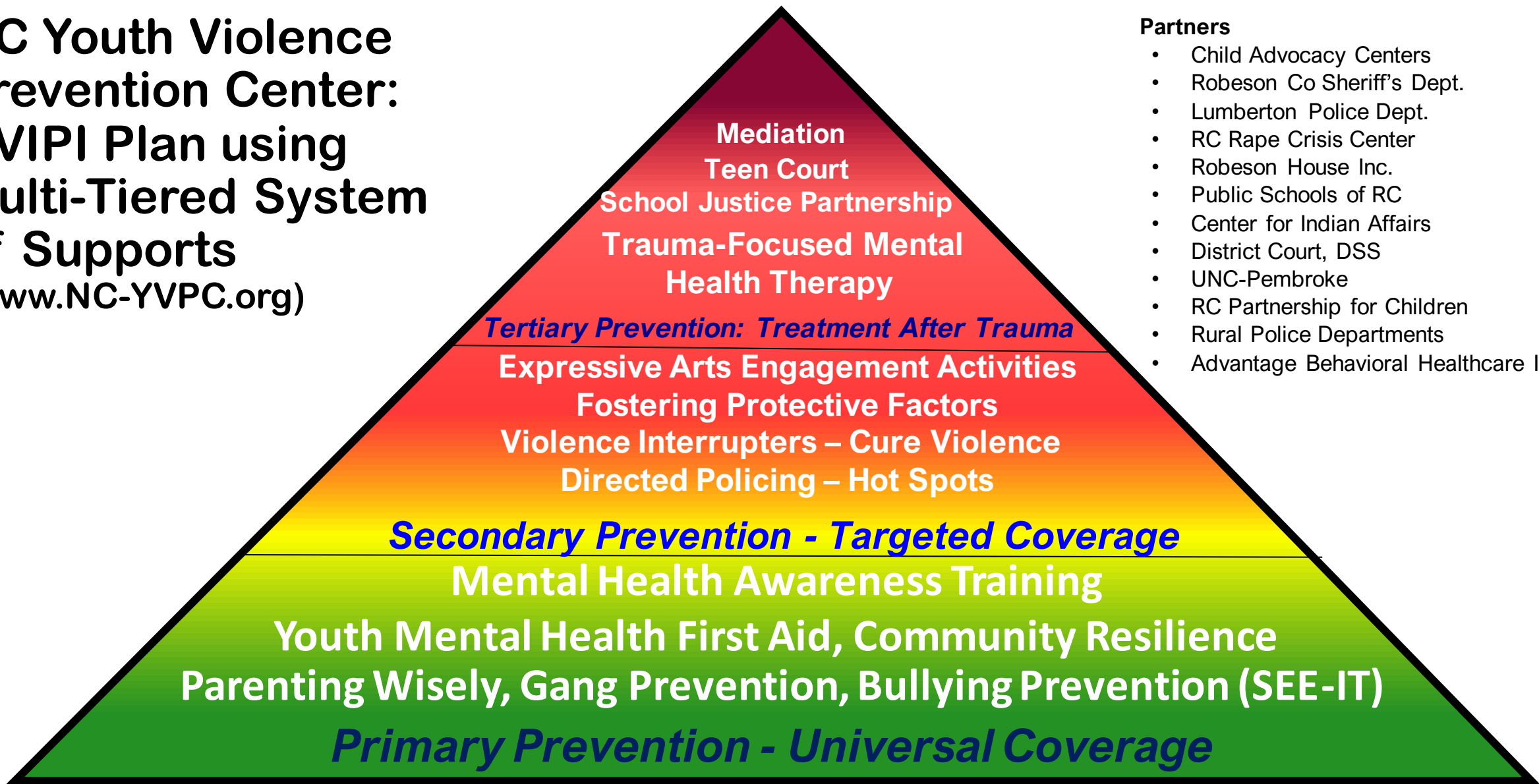


Community Violence Intervention (CVI) Programs Focus on Reducing Homicides and Shootings by Establishing Relationships with People at the Center of Gun Violence

- Hospital-based violence interruption programs try to meet victims' basic needs and support them, while also working to prevent retaliation.
- Group violence interventions are collaborations among community leaders, social service providers, and law enforcement.
- Violence Interrupters reach out to those at the center of gun violence in their communities, build relationships, and work to support healing and address conflict through nonviolence means, including de-escalation and mediation.



NC Youth Violence Prevention Center: CVIPI Plan using Multi-Tiered System of Supports (www.NC-YVPC.org)



Partners

- Child Advocacy Centers
- Robeson Co Sheriff's Dept.
- Lumberton Police Dept.
- RC Rape Crisis Center
- Robeson House Inc.
- Public Schools of RC
- Center for Indian Affairs
- District Court, DSS
- UNC-Pembroke
- RC Partnership for Children
- Rural Police Departments
- Advantage Behavioral Healthcare Inc





Student Expression and Empowerment through Interactive Theater (SEE-IT)

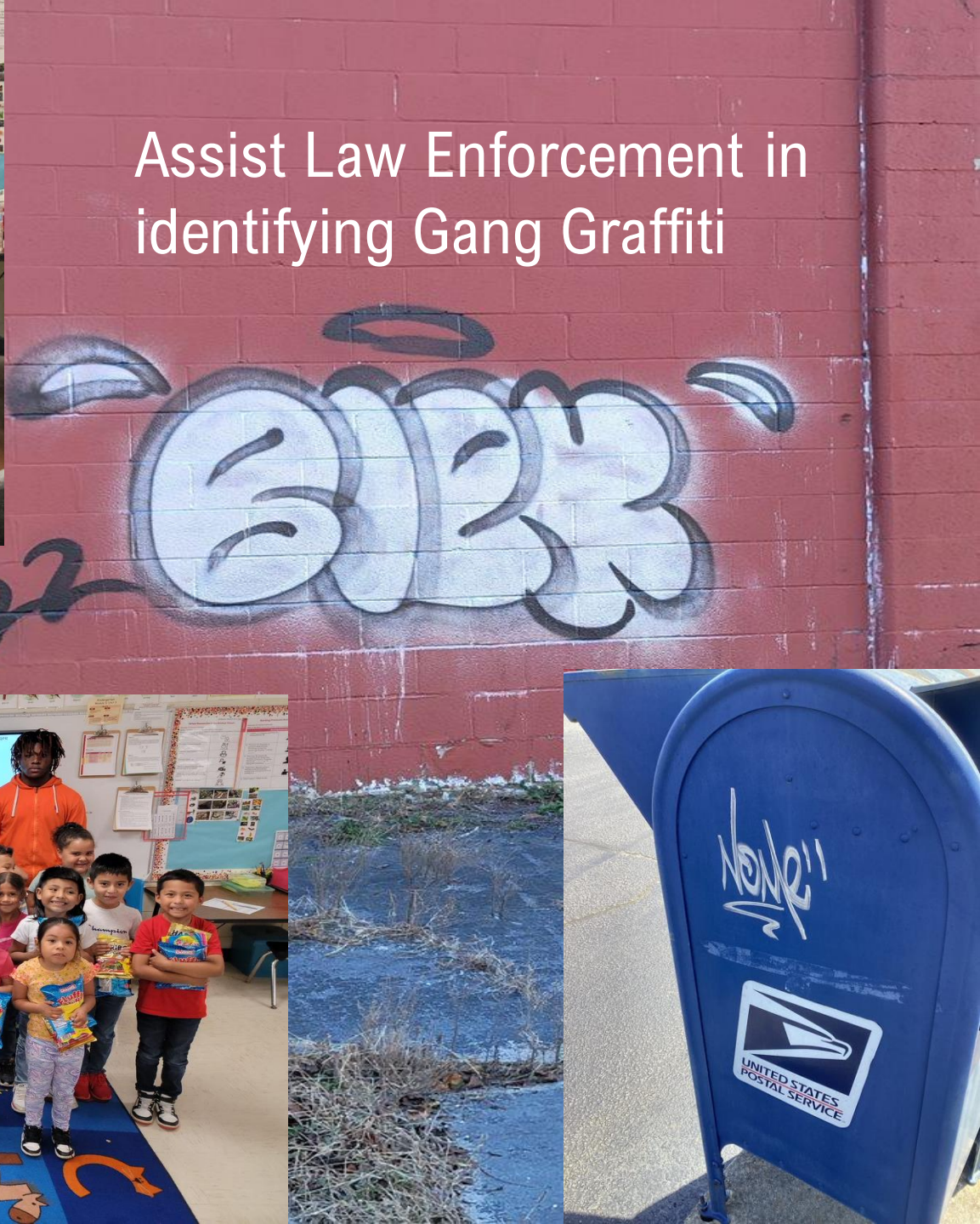




Violence Interrupters

- Work closely with law enforcement and schools
- De-escalate conflict situations
- Gang awareness (graffiti, teaching gang signs to teachers)
- Special community events (chicken dinner, Thanksgiving dinner, dinner for football team after a shooting)
- Assigned to hot spots (Fairmont, Pembroke, Red Springs, Rowland)

Violence Interrupters Speak to a Wide Range of Community Stakeholders



Assist Law Enforcement in identifying Gang Graffiti



Violence Interrupters in Robeson County, NC – featured on PBS!
(start video 12:08)



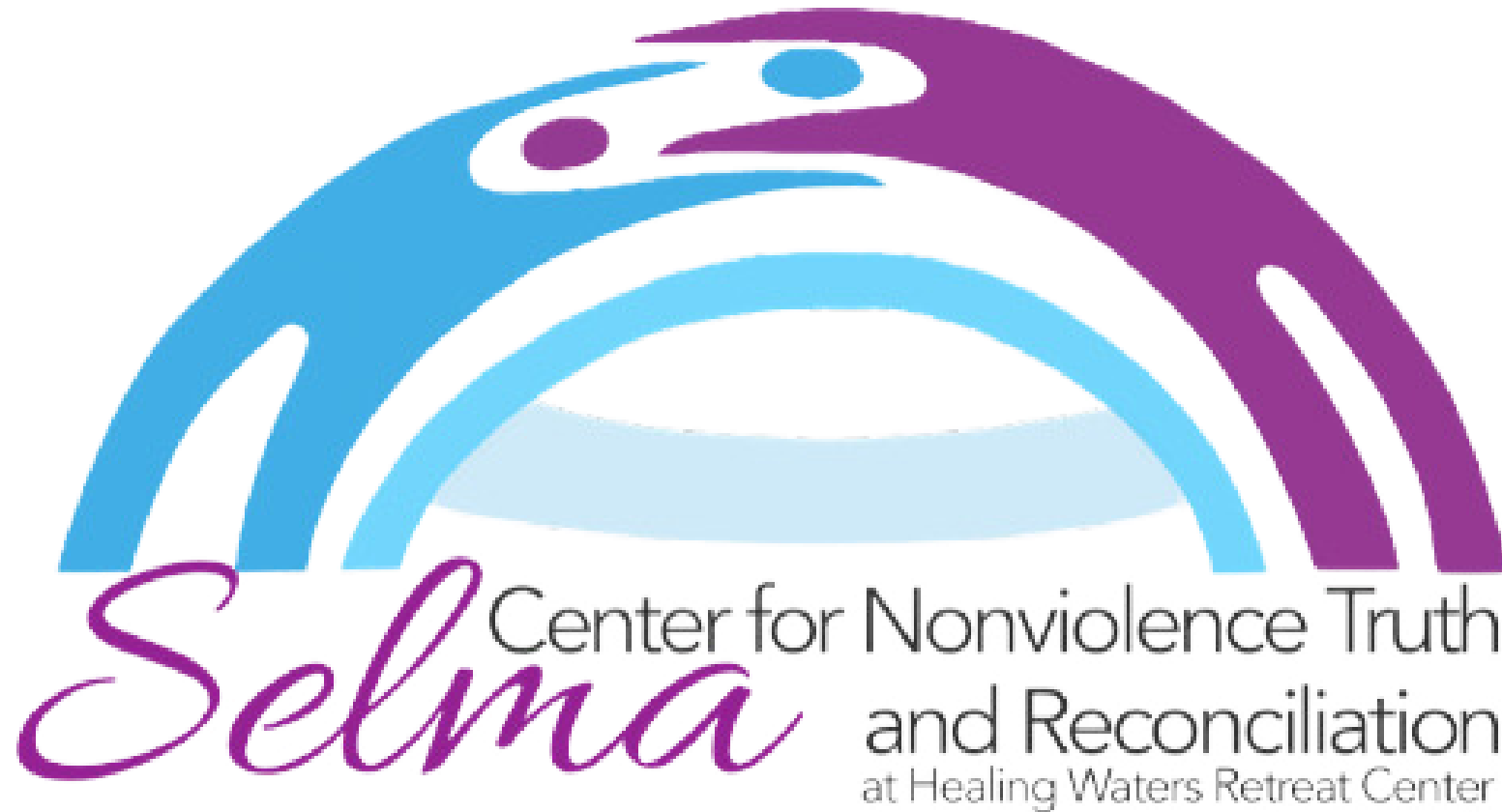
Strategies Found Useful for Effective CVIPI in Rural Areas, Small Towns, and Tribal Communities

- **Past Research**
 - Hot spots policing to reduce traffic accidents, fatal crashes, DUI, property crimes.
 - Community police engagement to improve communications and relationships between law enforcement and the public.
 - Problem-oriented policing can address repeat offenders and chronic problems.
- **NC-YVPC Lessons Learned**
 - “Credible Messengers” reputations and social networks are critical for success.
 - Positive youth engagement activities are often non-existent. Creating these activities engenders good will and gratitude.
 - Mental health providers are scarce. Telehealth can greatly expand access.



Progress in Crime Reduction - 2010 to 2021 Uniform Crime Report Data

Area	Rate in 2010 per 1,000 residents	Rate in 2021 per 1,000 residents	Change
Robeson County Sheriff Office	32.57 property crime	20.04	48% decrease
Lumberton PD	122.54 property crime	70.18	43% decrease
Pembroke PD	10.41 violent crime	2.13	80% decrease
Pembroke PD	97.60 property crime	13.51	86% decrease
Rowland PD	54.86 property crime	43.97	20% decrease
Red Springs PD	14.25 violent crime	10.98	23% decrease
Red Springs PD	101.48 property crime	50.71	50% decrease
Fairmont PD	59.84 property crime	35.85	40% decrease
NC	3.55 violent crime	4.03	13% increase
NC	34.14 property crime	20.18	40% decrease
USA	4.05 violent crime	3.96	3% decrease
USA	29.46 property crime	19.33	44% decrease



Selma 2:0: Bridging Divides & Building the Beloved Community



SCNTR GOALS

Eradicate Violence

- **Economic:** To facilitate the development of purposeful and prosperous employment opportunities that promote dignity and value people, planet, and profit.
- **Racial:** To counteract harmful dominant culture, including the false narrative of the hierarchy of human value that makes people and planet disposable and instead create a love culture that raises relationships to a height where justice prevails, and people can attain their full human potential.
- **Physical:** To reduce violence by ensuring people have the tools needed to resolve conflict and reconcile relationships using what we have in common to make sure everyone has what they need.



What is VIP?

VIP is the Violence Intervention Program.

We are the only federally-funded initiative in Dallas County, AL dedicated to deploying evidence-based best practices for reducing gun violence.

Our approach is rooted in NONVIOLENCE.

Our strategies are based on decades of research and track records of success demonstrated in other communities and tailored for our rural community.



Priorities & Goals

Reducing Street-Level Gun Violence

- Street Outreach
- Conflict Resolution Strategies
- Relationship-building
- Hosting and supporting community events (i.e., Peace Walks, sports/games)



Priorities & Goals

Reducing Incidence of Retaliation

- Victims' Services
- Restorative Dialog Circles
- Relationship-building
- Nonviolence Training
- Conflict Resolution Training



Priorities & Goals

Increasing Economic Opportunity

- Educational program referrals
- Employment referrals
- Housing referrals
- Wrap-around service referrals
- Transformation coaching/Partnerships



Stakeholders

GROUP GOALS

- Gather experts who regularly impact gun violence in Selma on a quarterly basis to discuss strategies, build consensus, and promote collaboration.
- Provide updates, statistical data and benchmarks, as well as partnership opportunities to reduce gun violence.
- Tighten the ‘net’ among stakeholders and affiliated initiatives so that families and youth are not using gun violence to solve conflicts.



The Challenges Are Great

But RELATIONSHIPS Are

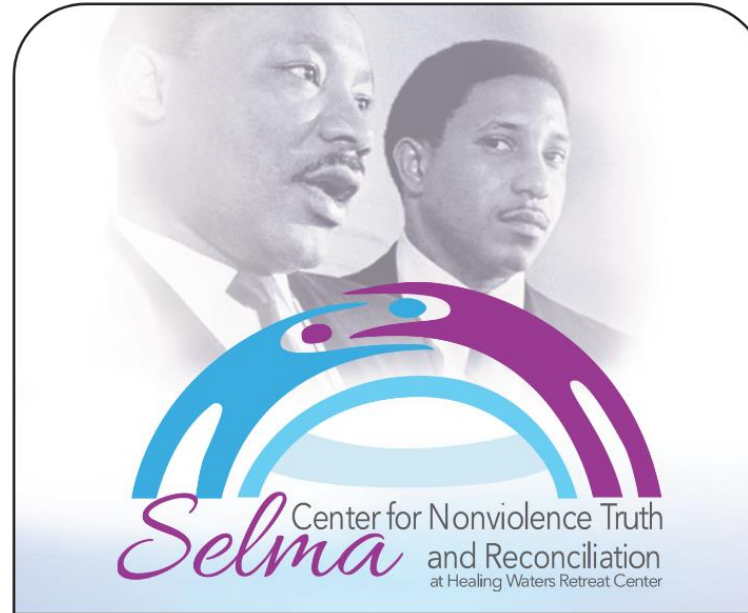
Greater





SIX PRINCIPLES OF **NONVIOLENCE**

- 1** Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people
- 2** The Beloved Community is the framework for the future
- 3** Attack the forces of evil, not the persons doing the evil
- 4** Accept suffering, without retaliation, for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal
- 5** Avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence
- 6** The Universe is on the side of Justice



THE SIX STEPS OF **NONVIOLENCE**

- 1. Information Gathering**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Personal Commitment**
- 4. Negotiation**
- 5. Direct Action**
- 6. Reconciliation**

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SCNTR Shared Love Agreements

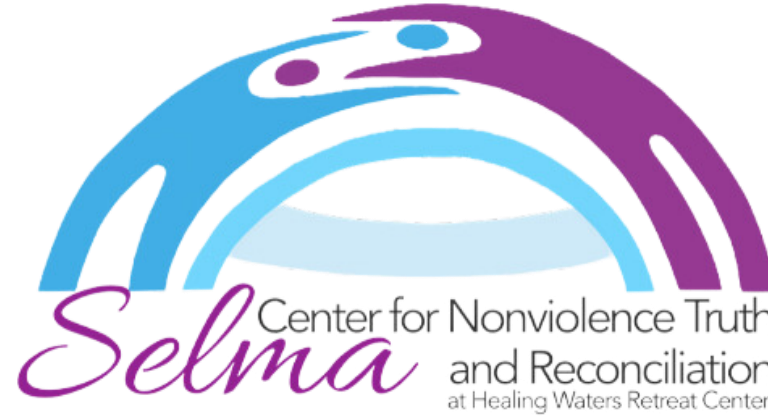
- 1. Identify assumptions, suspend judgment, and turn to wonder**
When we hear someone say something we may feel differently about or it offends us we resist the temptation to make people disposable. We are intentional in our thoughts, words and actions
- 2. Calling in** (to deepen the relationship), not calling out; not to fix but to **heal**
- 3. When speaking your truth, speak from the “I”** based upon your lived experience
- 4. Multiple things can be true at once and should be respected**, for ex.:
Voices are important and action is important
Both the means (or process) are important, and the ends are important
Both Hearts and Minds and Materials Conditions are important and interconnected
Both impact and intent matter
Direct service is important and so is advocacy and power-building, and each can aid one another
- 5. I will prioritize compassion over comprehension, connection over comfort, and love over fear while also ensuring that I care for our collective and individual wellbeing.**
- 6. Directly affected/suffering people must have presence** (diversity), **participation** (inclusion), and **power** (equity) **at the table**, not just a voice or a story
- 7. We encourage safer and braver spaces where we talk about identities such as race, class and gender.** We recognize they (along with other identities such as ability, sexuality, etc.) have affected people's material conditions over history and into the present
- 8. Conflict is inevitable but combat is optional.** I will **lean into conflict with love** in order to cultivate **relationship** and **authenticity**. When conflict arises, I will go **directly to the person(s)**, that the conflict is between. If **reconciliation** did not occur, I will bring one or two other wise counsel with me. If there continues to be no reconciliation, I will bring the matter before the group, and I will keep the conflict confidential at each step unless agreed to by the parties for the upliftment of the community.
- 9. Power with, not power over** (by sharing power)
- 10. Dialogue not debate**
- 11. Be fully present** in general including having cell phones on silent
- 12. Don't dominate the conversation**, (move up, move back) step up (listening) / step up (sharing)
- 13. Honor silence** while inviting in love to share
- 14. One mic** at a time
- 15. Explain jargon and acronyms** and invite people to question if don't understand
- 16. Honor each other's time** (e.g., starting and ending on time as able, adapt agendas to be realistic and effective, etc.)
- 17. Mutual respect and apologize** if you offend someone
- 18. Confidentiality about sensitive issues**, as well as when requested and agreed to
- 19. Permission to hold each other accountable in love to these** by stating if somebody steps over a line with one of these agreements, including trying to go directly to the person who has done something harmful first



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Contact Information



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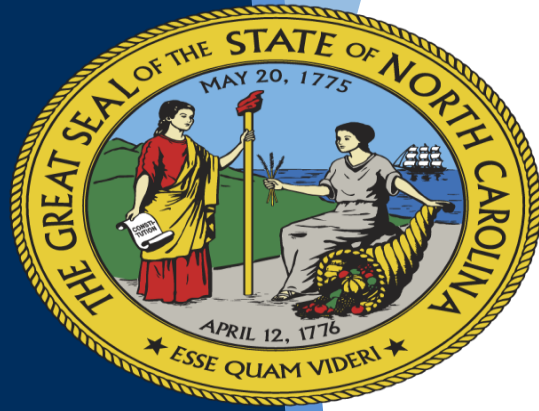
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North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention (OVP)

Gerard V. Tate, DSW, MSW, LMSW

Executive Director, NC Office of Violence Prevention
NC Department of Public Safety

Office of Violence Prevention

[Executive Order 279](#), Governor Cooper established a statewide Office of Violence Prevention to reduce violence and firearm misuse, a first in the South.



Vision & Mission

We envision a future where North Carolina's communities are safe, equitable, and resilient, achieved through collaborative public health strategies that prevent violence and foster healing.

Our mission, in partnership with the NC Department of Health and Human Services, is to serve as North Carolina's central hub for coordinating and supporting evidence-based public health strategies that enhance public safety, prevent violence, and foster community healing.



Primary Functions with Rural Communities

At our core, OVP is tasked with implementing a state-wide, whole of government public health approach to violence prevention. Primarily, OVP serves as a convenor, connector, and collaborator by:



Connecting

CVI, GVI, and PSN Programs with Training, Technical Assistance Partners, Providing Executive Advising To City & County Mayors /Managers, Law Enforcement, Health & CBOs Executives



Facilitating

Information Sharing Across State & Local Violence Prevention Partners & Public Health Programs designed to prevent violence



Supporting

Public Awareness Campaigns (E.G. Firearm Safe Storage)



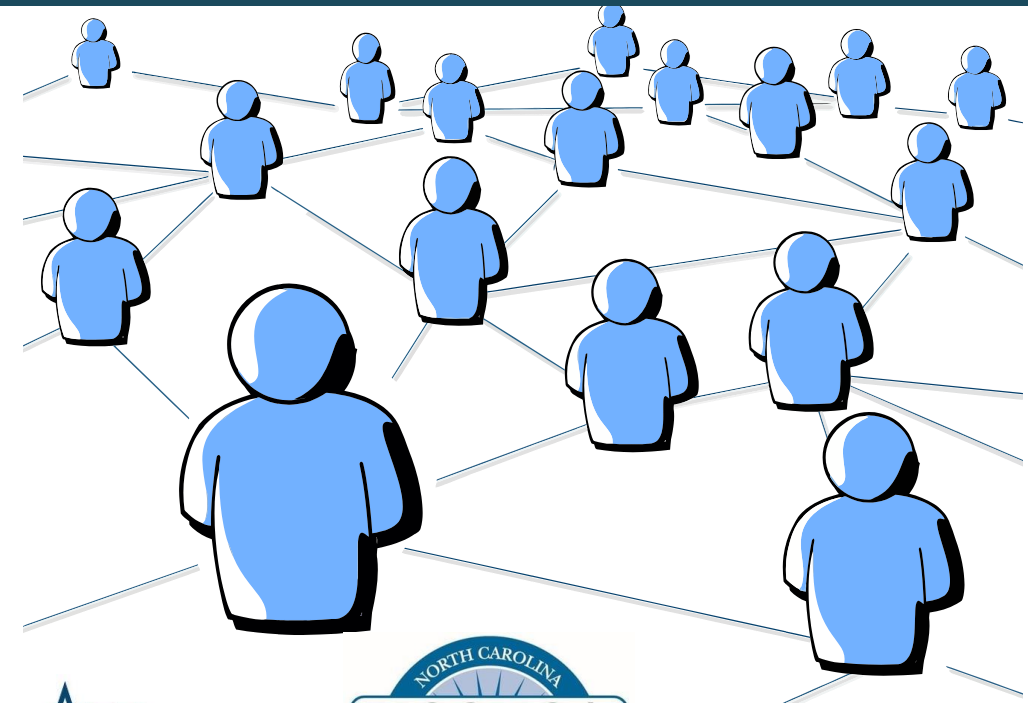
Working With Universities And Community Colleges To Share And Promote Best Practices, Evidence-based Interventions, and Trainings



Identifying & Applying For Federal And Philanthropic Funds to expand CVI & Public Health Resources



Rural Specific CVI Considerations & Opportunities for CVI Success



- Healthcare Partnerships
 - Primary Health Care / Mental Health Care
 - ***Healthy Opportunities Pilot Areas***
 - Community Health Centers
 - Regional Hospitals and Outpatient Centers
- Strong Community Partnerships
 - Community-Based Social, Economic & Health CBOs
 - Recreational Programs
 - Major Employers
- Faith-Based Institutions
- Federal Grant Programs
 - BJA
 - USDA
 - DOL
 - CDC
- State Level Grants, Outreach & TTA
 - Rural Economic Development Division (Dept of Commerce)
 - USDA Programs and Services
 - CJ Related Grants for CVI/ GVI, Mental Health Supports, Substance Use Disorder etc.
 - OVP TTA and System Navigation Supports
- Rural Health Initiatives (State and Federal Funding)
- Education Partners
 - Community Colleges
 - Extension Campuses
 - School Health Initiatives
 - County Education Departments
- Local & County Law Enforcement and EMS



Working together to stop violent crime and make communities safer.





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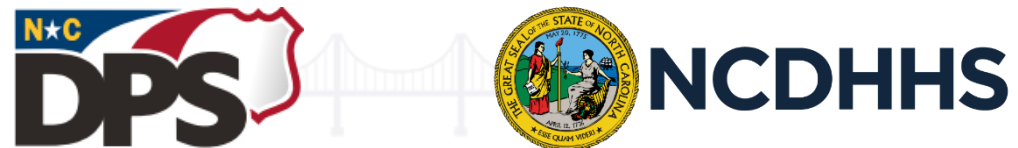


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Bridging the Gap

Our office stands as the sole state-level entity dedicated exclusively to bridging the gap between Public Safety and Public Health.

Our mission is pivotal: to foster collaboration across sectors for the prevention and reduction of community violence. This is essential in rural North Carolina Communities seeking to address the root causes of community violence.



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Audience Q&A

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- Dr. Tate: gerard.tate@ncdps.gov
- John Connelly: jconnelly@lisc.org

Resources:

[Practices in Modern Policing: Policing in Small, Rural, and Tribal Communities Video](#)

[Rural Violent Crime Reduction Initiative \(RVCRI\)](#)

[Rural LISC](#)

[Intro to Section 4, Capacity Building for Community Development & Affordable Housing](#)

[Community Violence Intervention & Prevention National Resource Center](#)



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