



**National Network
For Safe Communities
at JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

Transforming Community Safety Learning Lab Series

June 17, 2021

National Network for Safe Communities

Supports strategies designed to:

- Strengthen communities' capacity to reduce and prevent serious violence
- Improve public safety
- Minimize arrest and incarceration
- Strengthen harmed communities
- Operate largely within existing resources

Overview of the Group Violence Intervention

- Operational approach to **reduce violence** and **build trust** between communities and criminal justice agencies
- **Enhances legitimacy** by explicitly breaking with past practice of over-enforcement and under-protection
- Based on central fact that communities are not dangerous: violence is driven by a small number of people
- Recognizes power of **informal social control**
- Recognizes **the trauma and victimization** of people involved in violence and works to keep them safe and support them in their lives
- Offers immediate, concrete support for safety and critical needs
- Uses law enforcement and sanctions as **strategically and sparingly** as possible
- “Safe, alive and free”

Focused Attention on Highest Risk Groups



Scientific Consensus: GVI is widely effective at reducing violence

The National Academies of Sciences found that these innovations produce “consistent crime control impacts on gang violence, street crime driven by disorderly drug markets, and repeat individual offending.”

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Results: GVI achieves dramatic reductions in violence

63%

Reduction in
youth homicide
Boston, MA

73%

Reduction in
shootings
New Haven, CT

47%

Reduction in violence
for call-in participants
Detroit, MI



National Network
For Safe Communities
at **JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

[NNSCommunities.org](https://www.NNSCommunities.org)

The first GVI Intervention in Minneapolis, summer 1997

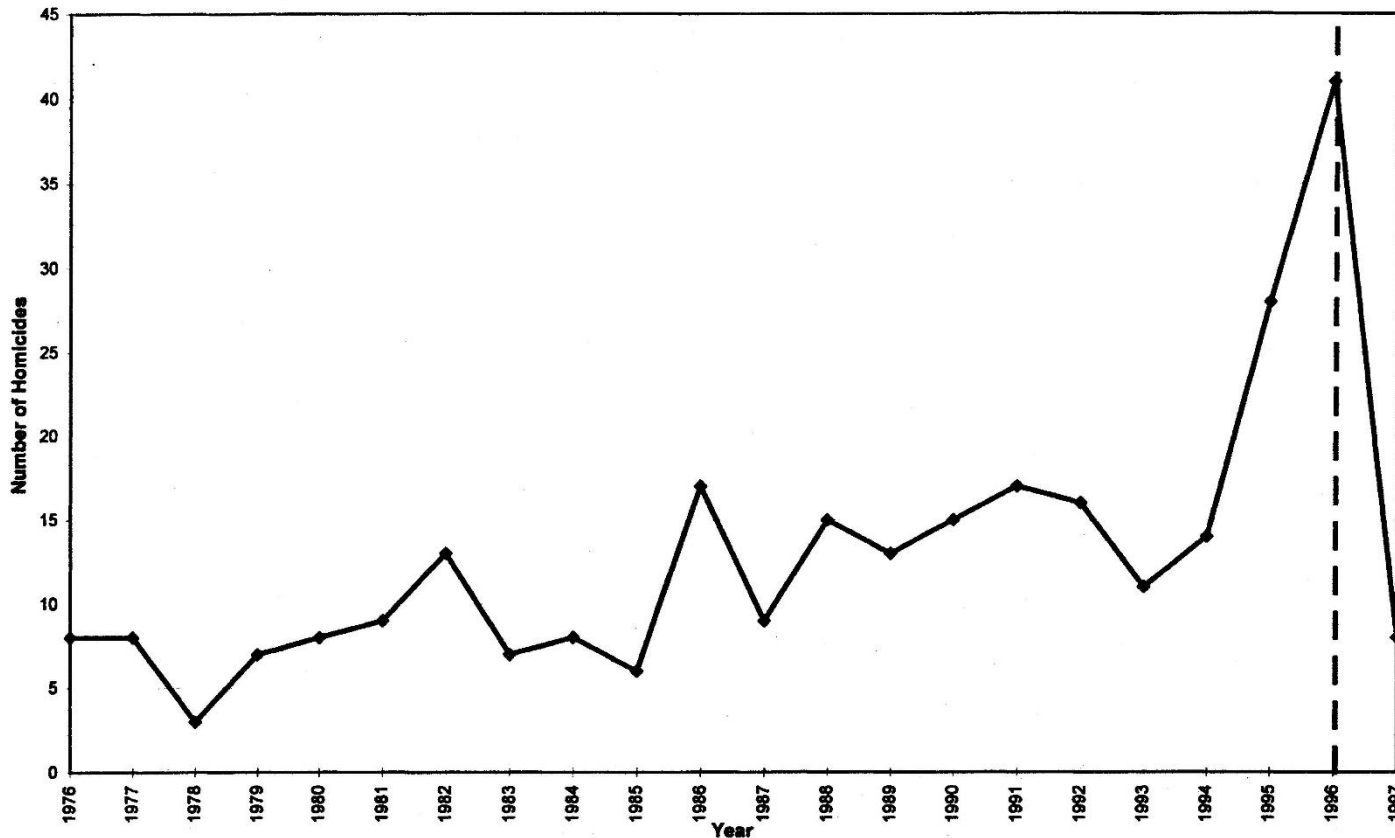


Figure 5: Minneapolis Homicide Victims (June, July, and August yearly totals)
NOTE: Vertical dashed line represents the date of intervention, June 1, 1996.



At the same time, GVI reduces enforcement

Focused deterrence interventions
“achieve a dramatic crime
reduction effect while **subjecting
smaller numbers of people and
groups to criminal justice
intervention.**”

Criminology & Public Policy

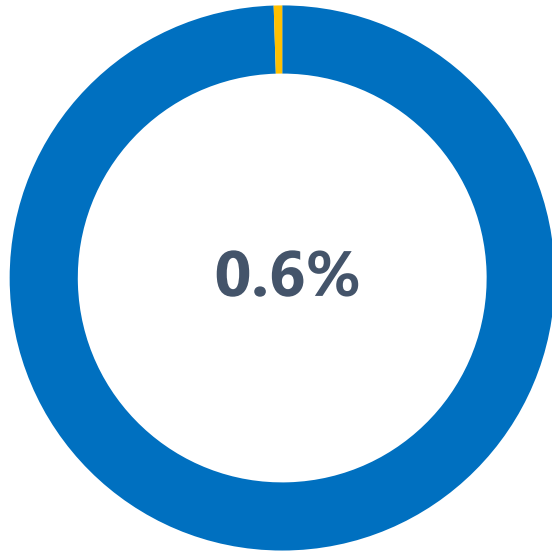


National Network
For Safe Communities
at JOHN JAY COLLEGE

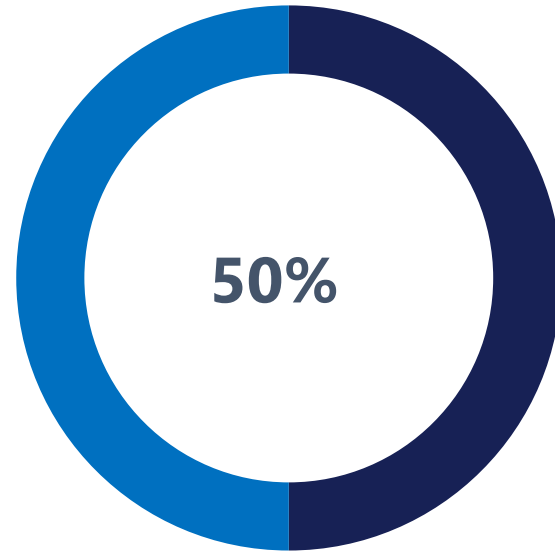
[NNSCommunities.org](https://www.NNSCommunities.org)

Connection Between Violence & Groups

Representation in
Population

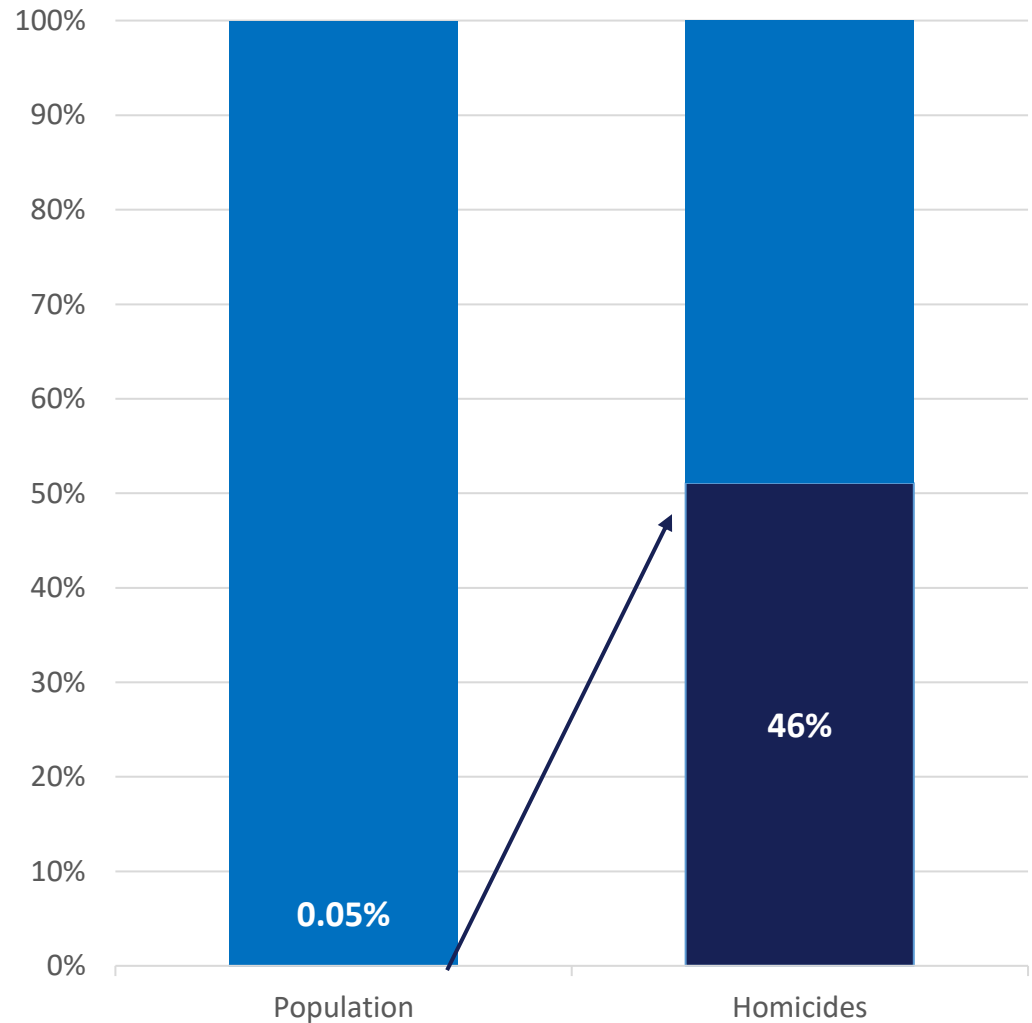


Representation in
Homicides



Columbus, 2020

- Total population: 878,553
- Group Member Involved (GMI): ~480
- Groups: 17



Group Members Face Extreme Risk

5:100k national homicide rate

1,500-3,000:100k shootings for core group-involved network

For those close to victims of homicide and shooting, the risk increases by up to

900%

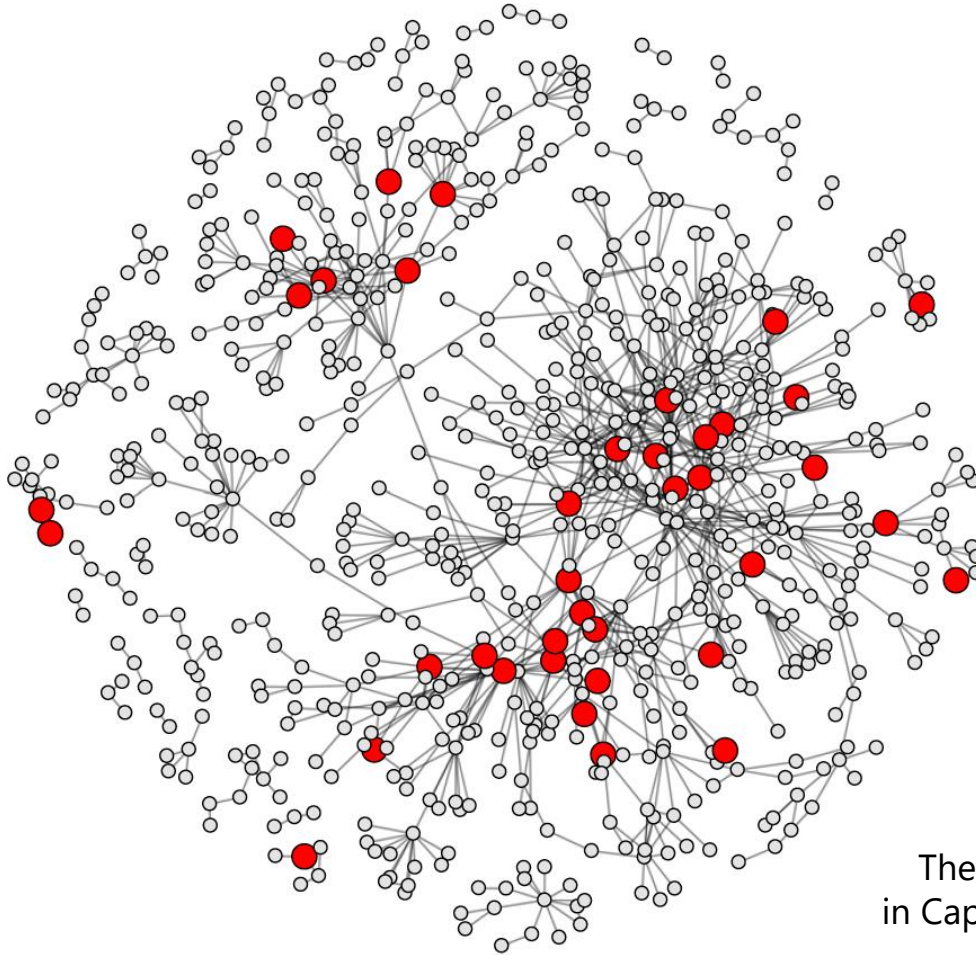


National Network
For Safe Communities
at **JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

NNSCommunities.org

SNA: Social Network Analysis

Social networks and the risk of gunshot injury



The social network of high-risk individuals
in Cape Verdean community in Boston, 2008

“ The risk of stepping on a landmine in Afghanistan is less than 10 out of 1,000, which means it’s **safer to walk around a real warzone** than it is for the young men in the network to walk around West Garfield Park.

Andrew Papachristos
Associate Professor, Northwestern University

Framework

GVI facilitates **direct, sustained engagement** with the small number of group involved individuals through a partnership of community leaders, social service providers, and law enforcement standing and acting together.

- An explicit focus on homicide and serious violence
- An **approach**, not a **program**

Police Legitimacy

Police legitimacy is the community's recognition of and agreement with police authority and the use of that authority.

- Main components:
 - Levels of **trust** in police
 - **Confidence** in police efficacy
 - **Approval** of police actions
 - **Willingness to partner** with police in the interest of public safety

Community violence is overwhelmingly driven by retaliation and “beef”

- Pick up a gun, or call 911?
- Where legitimacy and trust are low, and where street norms prevent asking for help, there will be more beef, retaliation, and violence.
- Lack of legitimacy is a root cause of community violence.

GVI can help reduce harm & enhance legitimacy

- **Breaks with traditional approaches** to violence prevention, which have been ineffective, harmful to communities, and counterproductive for partnership
- Focuses on risk and victimization: impossible to “bring numbers down” without making “offenders” safe
- Engages directly and respectfully with group members
- Law enforcement **works closely with the community** to increase trust and collaboration towards shared goals



Legitimacy-enhancing GVI messaging to communities:

On violence and acknowledging harm:

We understand that nearly nobody in the community is a part of the problem. There are not many dangerous group members, and most of them are **more scared and traumatized than predatory**.

We also understand that our policing has not always reflected this, and **has caused harm**.

That is why **we are trying to do better now**, and **we need your help** to do that.



Legitimacy-enhancing GVI messaging to communities:

On the GVI approach to violence reduction:

We think they'll listen to you. **We'll create safe ways for you to tell them what you expect** from them.

We think a lot of group members want out of the life. **We'll offer them help.**

We'll tell them ahead of time what law enforcement will be doing.

Only when they shoot and kill will we be focusing sanctions on the group.



Chief Eric Jones of Stockton, CA has credited his department's trust building work with NNSC for the city's **40%** drop in criminal homicide, **31%** reduction in nonfatal shootings, and a **68%** rise in his department's homicide clearance rate from 2017 to 2018.

COVID and the rejection of policing has driven violence spikes all over the country

Appears to be almost entirely within the existing world of those at highest risk.

One wave driven by changes in routine activities and vulnerability during the pandemic

One wave driven by the legitimacy hit policing has taken

Immediate, effective attention to violence is critical.

Investing in communities and structural change take time.

Violence is itself a driver of violence: violence today drives beef and retaliation tomorrow.

The basic GVI framework is the best we have right now for reducing violence, reducing the criminal justice footprint, changing policing, and having near-term impact on public safety.