

Gun Violence Initiative

We address the burgeoning public health issue of death and injury as a result of gun violence.

Washington University is one of the first educational institutions to launch a community-focused violence prevention initiative using a public health approach.

We invite scholars, medical professionals, community leaders and residents to develop solutions to improve the safety and well-being of our region.



Our Mission

We work with national and local experts and stakeholders in the St. Louis community to:

- Better understand and raise awareness about death and injury as a result of gun violence
- Identify gaps in available data and research and explore ways that WashU can help address those gaps
- Position policy makers and the public with key information to help guide decisions to address root causes of gun violence
- Take action to reduce gun violence

Key Partnerships & Programs

LIFE OUTSIDE OF VIOLENCE (LOV)

St. Louis Area Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program

LOV is a partnership between two health systems, three research universities and four hospitals, which connects people harmed by stabbing, gunshot or assault to the treatment, support and resources they need to find alternatives to end the cycle of violence.

ST. LOUIS AREA VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMISSION

The commission unifies and provides support and resources to partners in education, healthcare, law enforcement, local government, and community and social services to reduce violence. It was developed by the Institute for Public Health and the United Way of Greater St. Louis and is now managed by the St. Louis Mental Health Board.

STOP THE BLEED®

To reduce preventable deaths due to bleeding out, this program trains bystanders in trauma first aid techniques. STOP THE BLEED® is a national program implemented in St. Louis under the leadership of Dr. LJ Punch from The T, a health education and resource center focused on providing support to people recovering from trauma.

ST. LOUIS SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

In partnership with Provident, Inc., the coalition provides education, treatment and advocacy for fostering a community that works to prevent suicide.

Violence is a major contributing factor to significant health disparities affecting U.S. patients, families and communities. Our initiative connects with more than 100 community partners, who are actively working to prevent gun violence and are applying evidence-informed interventions into practice.

The year 2020 is on record as the deadliest ever for Missouri gun violence. Academics, law enforcement and violence prevention experts agree that in order to stop this cycle, communities need to invest in social services, address inequalities and meet people's basic needs.

Through staffing, data sharing and management, feasibility studies and key interventions, the initiative and Washington University collaborate with the **St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission** to reduce violent crime in the region by advocating for coordinated, well-resourced policies, support systems, and interventions among area governments, institutions and agencies that serve individuals and families most at risk of violent crime.

Our **Life Outside of Violence (LOV) Program** offers immediate one-on-one counseling and resources to victims of violence, to help them and their families cope with trauma and break the cycle of violence. Since its inception in 2018, the program has reported a less than 7% recidivism rate compared to the national average of 30% without such intervention.

One participant, who we'll call "Paul," had been a victim of gun violence. He was involved in the juvenile justice system and struggled to maintain traditional satisfactory academic progress. He had limited positive peer support and was not engaged in any positive activities within his community. After enrolling in LOV, he made outstanding progress and his self-esteem increased.

Y'all really helped me out and I'm thankful to have y'all working with me especially when I lost my dad! Y'all make me believe that I can be a better me and make my dad proud in the end.

– "Paul"

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