

## Youth Violence Prevention Continuum

The Youth Violence Prevention Continuum (Continuum) was developed based on a review of effective interventions for youth violence prevention. The Continuum serves as a reference point to ensure staff working on youth violence prevention strategies are equipped to help educate and build community capacity regarding strategies that have been proven to work through evidence-based literature reviews. A comprehensive approach requires a wide range of interventions to co-exist and support one another and has been shown to reduce youth violence. The Continuum is shown on the next page.

The Continuum is structured into four major categories of intervention, with the intensity and cost of interventions per capita being lower on the prevention end (left), increasing at the intervention, treatment and support end (right) of the Continuum.

The four major categories of intervention are:

- 1. Community Foundations:** these strategies seek to prevent violence before it occurs and can be delivered to the whole population. The interventions address many of the societal, structural and cultural roots of youth violence such as health, economic, educational, and social policies that affect economic or social inequality, availability of weapons and societal norms. Interventions include:
  - a. Increasing opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills;
  - b. Changing societal norms to reject violence; and
  - c. Reducing inequality, racism and poverty.Efforts decrease risk factors and increase protective factors that can affect young people's chances of being involved in violence later in life. Other strategies seek to prevent violence directly, for example, by modifying the places in which violence occurs.
- 2. Early Prevention:** these strategies are also delivered to the whole population but provide more opportunities for training programs to particular groups (i.e. parents, communities that are at higher risk) and with an eye to addressing personal risk and protective factors against youth violence. Examples of interventions include:
  - a. Parenting programs;
  - b. School-based prevention programs; and
  - c. Social skills development programs.
- 3. Intervention:** these strategies target children and youth at increased risk for violence and/or those who exhibit early signs of violent behaviour. The increased risk could be due to neighbourhood characteristics, relationships and family situation as well as personal factors such as mental health or socioeconomic status. Interventions include:
  - a. Mentoring programs;
  - b. Gang prevention programs; and
  - c. School based prevention programs.
- 4. Treatment and Support:** these interventions involve providing support and treatment to youth already engaged in violent behaviour. They are the most costly and aim to deal with the existing violence, prevent its consequences, reoccurrence and escalation. Example of interventions include:
  - a. Programs which divert youth away from the adult justice system;
  - b. Restitution/reintegration programs;
  - c. Victim services; and
  - d. Multi-agency/wraparound approach.

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A comprehensive approach to youth violence prevention requires addressing effective and promising intervention strategies, across a continuum of prevention. The role of the Community Health Initiatives Team includes: Advocacy and Public Policy, Community Mobilization and Capacity Building, Knowledge Transfer and Social Marketing/Public Education in collaboration with our community partners in Peel across this prevention continuum.

**Advocacy and Public Policy ~ Community Mobilization and Capacity Building ~ Knowledge Transfer ~ Social Marketing**

