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TORONTO

A Public Health Approach to Gun Violence in Toronto

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Toronto has faced an increase in gun violence in recent years, a deeply concerning trend that continued to persist despite the COVID-19 pandemic. While many traditional approaches to gun violence centre around policing, effectively working to address violence after it occurs, the City of Toronto's Social Development, Finance, and Administration division (SDFA) has created a 10-year community safety and well-being plan known as SafeTO, which aims to apply a public health approach to gun violence that focuses on violence reduction and community well-being. In adopting a public-health approach to gun violence, the hope is to prevent violence before it occurs, and to address the systemic factors that contribute to such violence in the first place. **This report seeks to understand what the four stages of a public health approach to gun violence –** *1) monitoring, 2) risk and protective factors, 3) intervention, and 4) implementation* **– can look like in Toronto.**

The goal of this report is to offer information to pave the way for a more inclusive, safe, and thriving city. The information in this report will contribute towards finalizing the implementation plan of SafeTO, which will be presented to the Executive Committee and Council in December 2021.

INTRODUCTION

Gun violence in Toronto is receiving more public and media attention due to an increase in both general firearm discharges,[1] and a rise in shootings taking place in more public areas, such as shopping malls and playgrounds. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto saw high numbers of gun violence, with 462 firearm discharges, 178 injuries, and 39 deaths in the year 2020.[2] In the last five years, the number of incidents of gun violence has doubled in Toronto, with the annual average number of shootings at 436. This is a big jump from the 2004 to 2015 average of 288. [3]
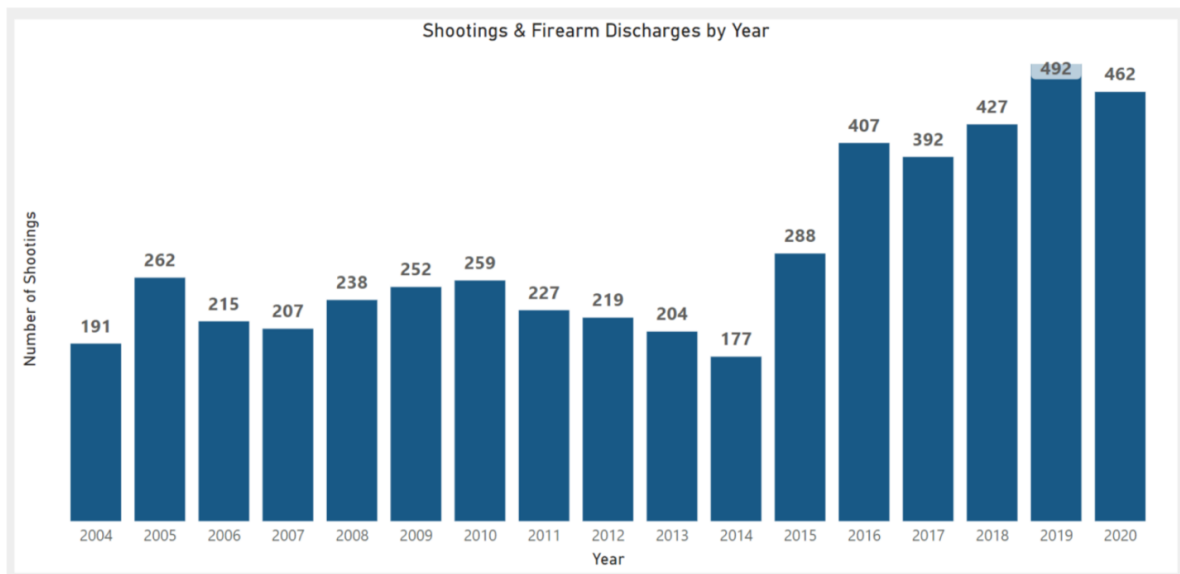
Source: Toronto Police Service Public Safety Data Portal

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[1] "Firearm discharges'" refer to when a firearm is used, but does not necessarily lead to injury or death. Firearm discharges, while perhaps not leading to direct physical harm of a person, may cause a traumatic response in bystanders, property damage, and lead to other harmful outcomes.

[2] Medical Officer of Health. Community Violence in Toronto: A Public Health Approach. City of Toronto. 2019.

[3] Toronto Police Service: Public Safety Data Portal: Shootings & Firearm Discharges in the City of Toronto. Analytics & Innovation Unit. 2021

Oftentimes, both community violence and gun violence in Toronto is typically viewed as a policing issue. However, The City of Toronto is looking to alter how gun violence is viewed by framing it within a public health lens.

Community violence is defined by Toronto Public Health as "intentional acts of interpersonal violence often committed in public areas by individuals who are not intimately related to the victim, common types of community violence include individual or group conflicts, fights among gangs and other groups, use of weapons, and shootings in public areas." [4] In Toronto, gun violence is often a specific form of broader community violence. Gun violence often occurs among young people, particularly men.[5] Gun violence in Toronto is also racialized, as it disproportionately affects young Black males.[6] Research collected by Toronto Public Health shows that gun violence can also be considered a health equity issue, one that disproportionately affects lower-income and/or racialized communities. Oftentimes, these communities are places where there are fewer opportunities, strained relationships with police, fewer social services, and higher rates of unemployment, which in turn leaves young people vulnerable to the allure of gangs and violence.[7] [8] While gun violence disproportionately affects some communities more than others, research has shown that community violence has a widespread impact, one that directly and indirectly affects the physical, and mental health of the victim, perpetrator, family, neighbours, communities, and the city as a

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[4] Medical Officer of Health. Community Violence in Toronto: A Public Health Approach. City of Toronto. 2019.
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid
[7] Ibid
[8] Theresa Armstead, Natalie Wilkins, Maury Nation. Structural and social determinants of inequities in violence risk: A review of indicators. J Community Psychol. 49 (4): 878-906. 2021.

whole.[9] The indirect negative health impacts are described as, "high blood pressure, post-traumatic stress, altered activity patterns due to fear, behavioural, [and] emotional and learning problems among children and youth."[10] It also impacts the potential futures of those who have been exposed, with noted outcomes related to gun violence including "reduced educational achievement that limit future economic success; and negative effects on the economic well-being of neighbourhoods."[11]

Further compounding the issue of gun violence is the cyclical nature of the violence itself, in that the trauma of living in a community that is disproportionately affected by gun violence is both a cause *and* a symptom of the problem. Trauma is defined as the "lasting emotional response that results from living through a distressing experience or event."[12] Trauma can be caused by a multitude of factors, although notably, systemic factors, such as racism and pervasive inequity, can be considered as primary factors of trauma in certain contexts.[13] In one study conducted by Thrive Toronto and the Wellesley Institute, it was noted that, "the experience of "multi-generational, intergenerational, and early childhood trauma, can cause lifelong harm, poor health outcomes, contribute to health inequities, and can perpetuate violence and exposure to violence."[14] In effect, the experience of trauma as a child or young adult can potentially lead to an individual perpetuating violence later on in life,

[9] Medical Officer of Health. Community Violence in Toronto: A Public Health Approach. City of Toronto. 2019
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] CAMH. Trauma. 2021
[13] City of Toronto, Social Development, Finance, and Administration division. SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. 2021
[14] Thrive Toronto and the Wellesley Institute. Roadmap to a Toronto Trauma-Informed City. 2021

thus inflicting trauma on others, and continuing the cycle of violence. It is also worth noting that trauma, while often considered to be an experience at an individual level, is something that can also impact groups and communities as well.

Community trauma results from "consistent exposure to events that can cause physical, emotional, and psychological harm, and can have a negative impact on community wellbeing, health, and safety."[15] Neighbourhoods and communities that experience higher levels of inequities and violence are most at risk of being traumatized. The Wellesley Institute and Thrive Toronto have found that "racialized and equity seeking groups are at a greater risk of experiencing adverse childhood experiences that result in trauma."[16] Racialized groups also encounter race-based traumatic stress because of racial bias, racism, discrimination, and hate crimes that have detrimental impacts on both individuals and communities.[17] All of these factors contribute to the cyclical nature of trauma and violence, and must be considered as a core element within the broader issue of rising community and gun violence within Toronto.

A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO GUN VIOLENCE

The City of Toronto has recognized community and gun violence as a critical issue affecting the city, and is working actively towards collecting data and finding solutions alongside community members and local agencies to build a public health

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[15] City of Toronto, Social Development, Finance, and Administration division. SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. 2021
[16] Thrive Toronto and the Wellesley Institute. Roadmap to a Toronto Trauma-Informed City. 2021
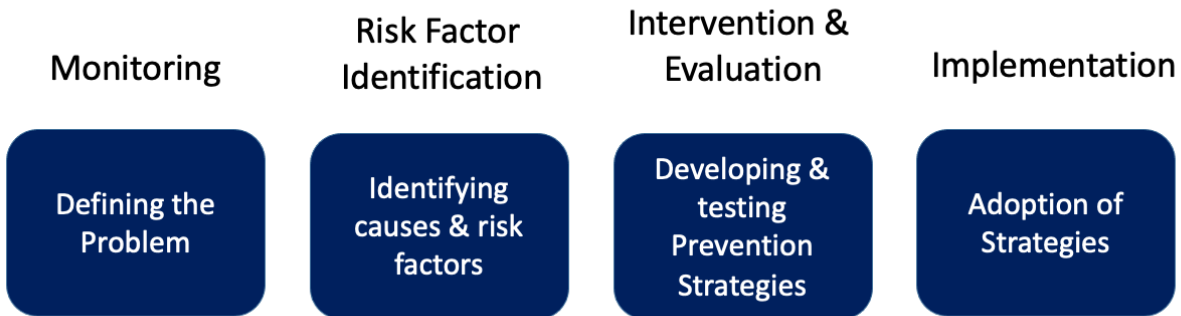[17] Ibid

approach for tackling community violence. These actions echo the longstanding calls of community groups and activists, which have called on the City of Toronto to reimagine core elements of community safety, and shift from a focus on reactive emergency response to a culture of violence prevention. In addition, provincial legislation has recognized the complexity of community safety challenges, and the need to respond with a multi-sector approach that emphasizes both social development and preventative measures to stop violence *before* it occurs.

A public health approach is multi-disciplinary, and draws on knowledge from a range of varied disciplines, including medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, criminology, education, and economics; this broad knowledge base is then used to respond to key public health issues.[18] A public health approach to gun violence focuses on a culture of prevention and social development by following four stages: monitoring, risk factor identification, intervention and evaluation and implementation. Within the context of community and gun violence, a public health approach collects, monitors, and analyzes data on violence to understand who is affected, ascertain the full extent of consequences stemming from such violence, and works to identify risk factors and protective factors (measures through which to reduce the risk of violence) to develop coordinated evidence-based policy, practices, and program solutions with various sectors and community members.[19]

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[18] Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention. 2021
[19] Ibid

Public Health Approach to Gun Violence

Monitoring	Risk Factor Identification	Intervention & Evaluation	Implementation
Defining the Problem	Identifying causes & risk factors	Developing & testing Prevention Strategies	Adoption of Strategies

Traditionally, gun violence has taken a law enforcement lens, which focuses on individuals and their behaviours; however, these interventions are not necessarily effective at reducing gun violence. They oftentimes fail to address the underlying root causes of violence. Generally speaking, the enforcement approach to violence is lacking in social development priorities. Furthermore, the over-utilization of law enforcement to address violence can disproportionately impact certain communities, perpetuating discriminatory practices. A reliance on these law enforcement strategies has shown that minority and racialized communities endure higher levels of surveillance, and in turn, are more likely to be both arrested and convicted of crimes.[20,21] The practice of subjecting racialized communities to increased surveillance by law enforcement is at its heart a discriminatory practice, and has a detrimental effect on the community as well as within the broader context of supporting a public perception of negative stereotypes. In turn, these stereotypes have societal consequences, which

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[20] Richard Rosenfeld, Rober Fornango, R., & Eric Baumer. (2005). Did Ceasefire, Compstat, and Exile reduce homicide? *Criminology & Public Policy*, 4, 419-449.
[21] Carrie B.Sanders & Stacey Hannem (2012). Policing "the risky": Technology and surveillance in everyday patrol work. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 49(4), 389-410.

then further serve to perpetuate the cycle of crime, trauma, and poverty.[22] An emergency response oriented around increasing police surveillance and law enforcement is not the solution.[23] This is a fact acknowledged by the Toronto police department themselves, as the department has noted that "we cannot police our way out of gun violence, as gun violence is largely a result of social and economic systems and conditions."[24]

To focus on prevention, it is important to address the systemic root causes of violence, such as the socioeconomic status of communities and experiences of poverty, economic inequity, systemic racism and violence, and the trans-generational trauma that place communities and individuals in an environment that makes them vulnerable and susceptible to violence.[25, 26] Focusing on prevention requires implementing evidence-based solutions to reduce identified risks to community safety and well-being. A cultural shift of prevention will require a focus on social development, and giving attention to upstream long-term investments to improve the social determinants of health. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), the social determinants of health are "non-medical factors that influence health outcomes, they are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age - the wider systems that shape the conditions of daily life such as social and economic policies, development agendas, and

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Wendy Gillis & Jennifer Pagliaro. Police Plan won't curb causes of gun violence, researchers say. Toronto Star. 2019.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Paula Braveman, Laura Gottlied. The social determinants of health: it's time to consider the causes of the causes. Public health reports (Washington, D.C. : 1974), 129 Suppl 2(Suppl 2), 19–31. 2014, Medical Officer of Health. Community Violence in Toronto: A Public Health Approach. City of Toronto. 2019
[26] Medical Officer of Health. Community Violence in Toronto: A Public Health Approach. City of Toronto. 2019.

political systems."[27] Social determinants of health are the largest predictor of risk and susceptibility to gun violence. Improving the social determinants of health, then, will reduce the probability of harm, victimization, and will work to address the underlying causes of gun violence.[28]

Some of the preventative supports needed to reduce gun violence include investing in and empowering communities through reducing economic inequality and poverty through social and economic inclusion.[29] In addition, system-level policy change is required to remove barriers to social mobility through increased educational attainment and employment opportunities. It is also essential to invest in neighbourhoods and create inclusive spaces with supports and resources that are culturally sensitive, in that such resources must be culturally appropriate for the community that will be using them.[30] Another element of consideration is supporting healthy child development through parenting supports and quality early childhood education and programs, with such supports being considered as protective factors against future gun violence.[31] Lastly, it is important to move towards becoming a trauma-informed city to understand the ways structures have created and perpetuated inequities and exposure to violence. [32]

[27] World Health Organization. Social determinants of health. 2021.
[28] Kim, Daniel. "Social determinants of health in relation to firearm-related homicides in the United States: A nationwide multilevel cross-sectional study." PLoS medicine vol. 16,12 e1002978. 17 Dec. 2019,
[29] World Health Organization. Preventing youth violence: An overview of the evidence. Geneva: WHO. 2015.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Jacqueline Russell, Jennifer Burgess, Domenico Calla. Community Violence Prevention: The Effectiveness of Child and Youth Interventions. Toronto Public Health. 2019.
[32] Jason Corburn, DeVone Boggan, Khaalid Muttaqi…A healing-centered approach to preventing urban gun violence: The Advance Peace Model. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 8 142. 2021.

SAFETO: COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING PLAN

In 2019, the City of Toronto was tasked by the Province of Ontario to adopt and legislate a community safety and well-being plan, and to identify risk factors, appropriate evidence-based solutions and interventions, and a framework to assess impact in reducing community violence and increasing safety and well-being.[33]

SafeTO is a comprehensive Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for Toronto that reimagines core elements of community safety and well-being to shift our paradigm from a reliance on reactive emergency response to a culture of proactive prevention.[34] As a comprehensive community plan, SafeTO recognizes that the root causes of community violence, trauma, and injustices are complex, and require a cross-sectoral collaborative effort to fully address them.[35] Systemic inequities impact the ways individuals and communities participate within the city, an impact that has consequences on the health and well-being of residents. Addressing this impact is at the heart of SafeTO strategies.[36] SafeTO provides a roadmap for how the city and its systems such as community services, healthcare systems, education systems, justice systems, police, and businesses can work collaboratively across sectors to support community safety and wellbeing.[37] The plan emphasizes social development and prevention, while also acknowledging the important role of risk intervention and emergency response. Through the review of data and consultation findings, SafeTO will

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[33] City of Toronto, Social Development, Finance, and Administration division. SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. 2021
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] City of Toronto, Social Development, Finance, and Administration division. SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. 2021

prioritize community trauma, community violence, harm and victimization, and injustice in both strategy and implementation.[38] In addition, Toronto's Safety and Well-being Plan has seven key strategic goals:[39]

- Reduce Vulnerability

- Reduce Violence

- Advance Truth and Reconciliation

- Promote Healing and Justice

- Invest in People

- Invest in Neighbourhoods

- Drive Collaboration and Accountability.

SHORT TERM COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECT

In the spring, the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division, the Toronto Police Service and the Toronto Police Service Board, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Transit Commission, the Toronto District School Board, and the Toronto Catholic District School Board formed the Executive Leadership Table with the support of the Office of the Mayor to collaboratively develop a short-term Community Safety Pilot to leverage and integrate community safety efforts across organizations for better impact on the reduction of gun violence through the summer months.

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

The community safety project operated from July to September of 2021 in seven neighborhoods that were identified as being at high-risk of violence, with each neighbourhood having their own neighbourhood area plan to address the specific needs of the community, effectively utilizing a place-based approach to problem-solving. The project aims to create a culture shift by promoting both institutional and community collaboration to address gun violence. This short-term pilot takes on a public health approach in addressing gun violence, and works to inform best practices to enhance community safety. Lessons learned through this collaborative work will then be used to further inform the SafeTO Implementation Plan, which will be brought back for Council consideration in December of 2021.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

To gain a better understanding of how a public health approach can apply to the City of Toronto, I engaged in 10 stakeholder interviews with community agencies, youth organizations, the Community Crisis Response Program at the City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing, and community champions and researchers to understand their perspectives on violence and a public health approach.

Given the nature of gun violence as something that disproportionately impacts young people, I also partnered with the Toronto Youth Cabinet, a non-partisan organization that advocates on behalf of Toronto's youth and provides young people with a forum in which they can build an equitable, accessible, and youth-friendly Toronto, to invite 25 young people between the ages of 16-29 across different Toronto

neighbourhoods to discuss SafeTO. The goal of our community engagement initiative was to both engage young people and to facilitate knowledge-sharing amongst one another, which occurred through interactive sessions and dialogue. This approach served to provide additional insight on a youth-oriented perspective to addressing community safety and applying a public health approach to gun violence.

The questions asked in both the stakeholder interviews and roundtable discussion with youth focused on the four stages of a public health approach: *1) Monitoring, 2) Identifying Risks & Protective Factors, 3) Intervention & Evaluation, and 4) Implementation.*

KEY FINDINGS

- **Monitoring**

The first step in a public health approach is to understand what the problem is, what the consequences are, who the issue is affecting, where the issue is occurring, and how it is happening. Throughout my stakeholder engagement interviews, a number of thematic elements emerged when participants were asked questions regarding the monitoring stage of the public health approach. Stakeholders, community members, and youth believe it is important to:

- o Continue to collect data on the number of shootings and firearm discharges, injuries, and deaths. Data plays an important role in understanding the

frequency in which violence occurs, where it is happening, and who the

perpetrators and victims are to monitor trends and create solutions.

o Understand that violence has **widespread** impacts on communities. It is

   important to collect additional data on the physical and mental health impacts

   of being exposed to violence, and to unpack both the immediate and long-term

   impacts of such exposures.

o Pay attention to the inequities that are prevalent in a community and/or

   neighbourhood. With data showcasing that social and economic conditions

   give rise to violence, it is important to monitor these inequities and create

   solutions to reduce them.

- **Identifying Risks & Protective Factors**

The second step in a public health approach is to identify both risks and protective

factors. This step aims to understand what factors and conditions place people at risk

for experiencing or perpetrating violence, and what factors protect people. Risk factors

help to understand where prevention efforts are needed, and are defined as

"characteristics that increase the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator

of violence.[40] Conversely, protective factors are "characteristics that decrease the

likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence, it provides a buffer

against risk."[41]Throughout my research, it emerged that the risk factors that

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[40] Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention. 2021
[41] Ibid.

stakeholders, community members, and youth believe is particularly important to acknowledge are:

- o The underlying causes of gun violence - systemic violence, poverty, racism, racial inequities, and income inequality.

- o The lack of economic opportunities, material deprivation, and lack of supports and resources – programming, services, spaces.

- o Discrimination, stigma, neighbourhood stereotypes. and the experiences of trauma.

- o Social isolation and lack of belonging in communities, stigma, discrimination, that has forced individuals to find their own version of community – sometimes this leads them to turn to gangs for acceptance.

- o Social environments that force individuals and communities to turn to other alternatives to protect themselves.

- o Lack of access to appropriate mental health services and needs.

- o Counter-productive criminal justice policies.

Similarly, the protective factors that stakeholders, community members, and youth believed are particularly important are:

- o Reducing inequality and creating social and economic inclusion.

- o Eliminating racism, structural oppression, and discrimination in society.

- o Supporting families in living a dignified life.

o   Being intolerant to violence.

o   Becoming trauma-informed in our policies, programming, and care.

o   Creating protective environments.

o   Investing in communities and neighbourhoods to create and support inclusive, culturally sensitive, and safe programming, services, and spaces.

o   Supporting healthy child development through quality early childhood programming, strengthening social skills and capacity building through schools, youth programming and activities, and connecting youth to mentors.

o   Fostering community and belonging.

The identification of "belonging" as a protective factor is particularly relevant, as there is an intuitive sense that when an individual feels connected to a community, and understands that they hold a place of belonging within it, there is a far lesser likelihood that they will then perpetuate violence within or towards their community.

- **Intervention & Evaluation**

The third step in a public health approach is to take findings from research literature, data, community surveys, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups to design and develop evidence-based strategies and interventions to tackling gun violence.[42]Key suggestions for interventions to tackle gun violence from my research and engagement activities include:

o   Policy change that addresses oppressive and inequitable systems.

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[42] Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention. 2021.

o Implementing resources that address the specific needs of the community as every community has different needs.

o Safe spaces and programming.

o Investing in the education system – making school a hub - creating community partnerships in offering programming and activities to youth, building community, supports, and opportunities.

o Mentorship programs for youth - Important to have mentors that youth trust.

o Engage in advocacy with and for young people.

o Funding and support for programs - Both physical and digital programming.

o Community involvement in programming, implementation, and evaluation.

o Cultural appropriate/sensitive responses, resources, supports, and programs.

o Creating a better environment and safe spaces of belonging.

o Providing a circle of care and wrap-around supports: Major agencies and institutions in the community: school, counselling services, health professionals.

o Creating change together:

  o Working in collaboration with government, community agencies, organizations, funders, institutions, hospitals, school boards, TTC, Toronto Public Housing, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Health, Parks and Recreation, local businesses, faith communities, and young people.

o Work towards reducing stigma and stereotypes.

o Focus on both prevention and reaction interventions.

- o In terms of risk intervention, it is important to provide immediate support for those who need it – Incidence response, referral processes, a program to help youth move to safety if they cannot stay in their neighbourhood because it is unsafe to do so.

- o Strategy in place for those involved/affected directly from gun violence – social service workers, health professionals should come to them.

- o Trauma-informed city - having a trauma lens embedded in training, services, programs, and policies.

- o Adopt a holistic, whole systems, ecological approach – as opposed to individual level reactionary interventions focused on rehabilitation.

- o The need for the City of Toronto to support programs in the city: Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, Community Healing project, FOCUS.

- **Implementation**

The fourth stage in a public health approach is to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of the strategies implemented and for those that are proven to be effective, ensure widespread adoption and continuous assessment of whether the strategy is a good fit for the community in its goal of preventing violence. Stakeholders identified the following as critical components to the implementation stage:

- Identify short-term and long-term goals.

- Impact reports at the end of the year to track actions and impact of all stakeholders.

- Quantitative *and* qualitative evaluation.

- Evaluating numerous elements, including:

  - Firearm discharges, injuries, and deaths

  - Monitoring health of communities- physical, mental, emotional well-being

  - How many people have graduated from high school?

  - How many people have accessed programs and services?

  - How many people have been helped by interventions?

  - How many police officers, teachers, program providers, community agencies etc. have received training on trauma and the social determinants of health?

  - Measure policy changes.

  - Trends in social and economic inequities.

  - Measure interception of violence incidences- stopping a young person from committing violence.

- Cyclical evaluation process that allows for the implementation strategy to be nimble to rising needs, as well as gaps.

- Need measurements at *each* stage.

- Continuous engagement - what does follow up work look like with young people and families, honorarium to engaged folks in evaluation.

> - Create a shared dashboard and data across stakeholders to monitor progress and gaps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based off of the research conducted throughout this Fellowship, some key recommendations towards the implementation of a public health approach to gun violence in Toronto through the SafeTO Community Safety and Well-being Plan are:

- Collect and analyze data on the impacts of community violence to create evidence-based solutions. Collect data that includes socio-demographic information, and data on the physical and mental health impacts of being exposed to violence.
- Gun violence is a complex issue that requires a multi-sectoral approach. It is important to adopt a collaborative approach where stakeholders and institutions can work together to tackle gun violence in their community, and therefore, the City of Toronto, local community groups, neighborhood representatives, local nonprofits, local businesses, and the Governments of Canada and Ontario, respectively, should seek to better utilize and maintain lines of communication.
- The City of Toronto should work towards becoming more cohesively trauma informed at all levels of bureaucracy, and embed an understanding and commitment to confronting structural violence, inequities, racism, discrimination, and bias. This could look like providing comprehensive trainings to staff, and including a trauma informed decision making framework within policy-making.

- Communities should have a greater voice in decision-making, particularly those who are traditionally under-represented, such as youth, racialized groups, Indigenos peoples, and lower-income groups, among others.
- Consider both short-term and long-term measures for programmatic evaluation, ensuring a holistic approach and a multitude of different measurements are effectively deployed.

CONCLUSION

Adopting a public health approach in order to reduce gun violence must focus on social development and investing in and involving communities. This will develop a city where people can live and thrive without the fear of community violence. Fostering strong neighbourhoods and communities, promoting social connectedness, and tackling inequities are protective factors against community violence, and should be both promoted and centered in gun violence reduction strategies. As well, greater education and advocacy is critical to understand how the social determinants of health interconnect to gun violence, and is needed to make informed policies, programming, and intervention decisions. Above all, however, my research highlighted that at the root of gun violence, the issue is not a singular action taken by an individual at a moment in time, but rather, a reflection of communities facing pervasive inequities, and fundamentally *lacking* in belonging. Just as the well-known, but unattributable, African proverb states that "A child not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth," so too can gun violence be seen as a type of fire set by those longing for their communities' embrace. In adopting a public health approach to promote and uphold

belonging, individuals and communities can effectively utilize social connectedness as one element through which to reduce gun violence. SafeTO is one such strategy for incorporating belonging into a broader framework of violence reduction, and above all, working to prevent violence, via a community public health based approach, *before* it occurs.

APPENDIX:

Terminology

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) are preventable traumatic events that occur in childhood, such as witnessing violence, bullying, experiencing racism, neglect, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

Community trauma is defined by The City of Toronto as consistent exposure to events that can cause physical, emotional, and psychological harm and can have a negative impact on community well-being, health, and safety.

Community violence is defined by Toronto Public Health as intentional acts of interpersonal violence often committed in public areas by individuals who are not intimately related to the victim. Common types of community violence include individual or group conflicts such as fights among gangs and other groups, use of weapons, and shootings in public areas.

Community safety and well-being as defined by The City of Toronto refers to the ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate, and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

Firearm discharges are defined by Toronto Police Service as any incident where evidence exists that a projective was discharged from a firearm including accidental discharge.

Shooting events are defined by Toronto Police Service as any incident in which "a projectile is discharged from a firearm and injures a person.

Social determinants of health as defined by the World Health Organization are non-medical factors that influence health outcomes, they are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age - the wider systems that shape the conditions of daily life such as social and economic policies, development agendas, and political systems.

Trauma as defined by Toronto Public Health as the lasting emotional response that results from living through a distressing experience or event.

INFORMATION ON SAFETO: TORONTO'S SAFETY AND WELL-BEING PLAN

- SafeTO: A Community Safety & Well-Being Plan
  - https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/public-safety-alerts/community-safety-programs/community-safety-well-being-plan/

- SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Strategy Report
  - https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-168551.pdf

- SafeTO: Consultation Summary
  - https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-168553.pdf

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