



The Peace Alliance

Factsheet: *Community Youth Peacebuilding Solutions*

There are many modalities emerging in communities across our nation that are very effectively dealing with youth crime, violence, bullying, delinquency and other related issues that focus on prevention and more healing-oriented intervention practices. Below are a few key highlighted programs that show these are not only more effective than traditional punitive approaches, but they also save lives and money for communities.

\$50 benefit for every \$1 invested:

According to a recent report on the economic benefit of evidence-based prevention programs, **LifeSkills Training (LST)** programs produced a **\$50 benefit for every \$1 invested** in terms of reduced corrections costs, welfare and social services burden, drug and mental health treatment; and increased employment and tax revenue – and up to **42% reduction in physical and verbal violence**.¹

\$3 to \$13 benefit for every \$1 invested:

A major study by the non-partisan Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that for every dollar spent on county juvenile detention systems, \$1.98 of “benefits” was achieved in terms of reduced crime and costs of crime to taxpayers. By **contrast, diversion and mentoring programs** produced **\$3.36 of benefits** for every dollar spent, **aggression replacement training** produced **\$10 of benefits** for every dollar spent, and **multi-systemic therapy** produced **\$13 of benefits** for every dollar spent.²

Recidivism rates down to 10%:

After the Longmont Community Justice Partnership (in Longmont Colorado) implemented its **Community Restorative Justice Program**, recidivism rates among youth dropped to **less than 10%** in its first three years.³

Violence Drops by 65%:

In West Philadelphia High School, within two years of implementing a **Restorative Discipline program**, incidents of assault and disorderly conduct dropped by more than **65%**.⁴

In the Spotlight: *Pennsylvania & Ohio*

Pennsylvania:

Life Skills Training Program (LST) is a community program designed to **prevent substance abuse and violence** and that provides middle school students with self-care tactics including: resisting peer pressure, decision making skills, communication skills and methods to reduce anxiety.

- There are over **100 LST programs statewide** with an estimated **20,000** young people served.
- Researchers found a **per dollar return on investment of \$25.72**, and a total potential economic benefit statewide of **\$16,160,000 per year per child**.⁵

Multi-systemic Therapy (MST) is a **treatment focused** program targeting at-risk youth 12-17 years old exhibiting chronic/serious antisocial behavior. Trained clinicians deliver **comprehensive care** over 3-5 months, including crisis care and intensive skills coaching, to change home, school and community environments.⁶

- MST programs have been proven to **increase pro-social functioning, decrease truancy, and reduce drug and alcohol abuse**, both immediately and over time. Those who have completed the program had **75% fewer substance related arrests** 4 years after treatment.⁶
- In 2008, MST produced an estimated **\$30 million in savings**.⁷

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is an **intensive treatment program** targeting youth, 10-18 years old, with behavioral problems. It **engages family members** in therapy sessions with a clinician aimed at impacting the entire environment of the youth. The program improves supportive communication patterns and reinforces positive school-family and community-family relationships, and has been shown to effectively decrease general delinquent behavior and substance abuse, and increase family cohesion.⁸

- FFT has been proven to **decrease the likelihood of sibling involvement with the justice system by 65%** 2.5-3.5 years after the intervention is administered.⁷
- In 2010, FFT served a **total of 1,120 youth** and their families, with **72% of treated individuals discharged successfully** (completed all phases of treatment and indicated a reduction in risk factors).⁹
- FFT can provide a **statewide economic benefit of \$136 million per year**.

Ohio:

Montgomery County's LIFE (Learning Independence and Family Empowerment)

program is a Home-Based Family Counseling Program designed to address the behavioral health needs of youth ages 12 to 17 and their family members, involved with The Juvenile Court System.¹⁰

- The L.I.F.E Program utilizes the Functional Family Therapy Model (FFT). FFT is an **intensive treatment program** targeting youth, 10-18 years old, with behavioral problems. It **engages family members** in therapy sessions with a clinician aimed at impacting the entire environment of the youth. The program improves supportive communication patterns and reinforces positive school-family and community-family relationships, and has been shown to effectively decrease general delinquent behavior and substance abuse, and increase family cohesion.⁸
- Of the 634 youth the LIFE Program has now served, **only 0.9%** were sent to an Ohio Department of Youth Services facility at any time following their enrollment.¹¹
- Youth who successfully completed the LIFE Program were **69.3% less likely to recidivate**.¹¹

Ohio's State-wide School Conflict Management Initiative

The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management developed a grant-training program that enabled elementary, middle, and high schools to integrate nonviolent dispute resolution techniques into their overall curriculum, teaching conflict management as a life skill.

- High schools with conflict management programs reported that physical violence **decreased as much as 43%**.¹²
- The annual cost per student to administer the school conflict management grant training program is approximately \$12.00. When compared to the per student cost of suspending a child (\$231.00) or expelling a student (\$431.00), the program has been cost effective.¹²

Spotlight: Education & Schools

Below are examples of the kinds of modalities that can and are being used in schools. Much of this was put together by the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding, which is doing some of this work already in Gainesville, FL.

1) Restorative Circles & Dialogues - This works well from the start. Children of elementary age start the day in a circle with their teacher. Everyone gets to see each other and they all do a check-in. In this way, there is space for young ones to share what is happening in their life. Perhaps a death in the family, a birth, someone in the hospital, divorce...all kinds of what could be traumatic in nature and yet kids are expected to "behave" and appear normal. Modeling depth is always a good thing and that's where a teacher willing to be vulnerable is helpful.

2) Restorative Justice with trained facilitator - This is when an offense has taken place on school grounds involving one or more people. All parties that have been impacted by action come together and each is pre-interviewed. It is essential that the "offender" is willing to take responsibility and make things better. Victim must agree as well. Both victim and offender are invited to bring support people with them.

3) Communication Skills - Conflict Resolution Education Curriculum is one of the key modalities. Teachers, staff and administrators are trained to integrate conflict resolution as a life skill into existing curricula and to facilitate positive change within the school community by aligning school mission statements, disciplinary procedures, and team-building efforts with conflict resolution concepts and theories.

4) Peer Mediation - This is Peer-to-Peer mediation and not involving teachers or adults.

5) Social/Emotional Learning - Self Awareness, Empathy, Impulse Control, Motivation and Social Skills

¹ Return on investment: Evidence-based options to improve statewide outcomes. October 2013 (Printed on 3-20-14). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

² The Juvenile Justice System in Washington State: Recommendations to Improve Cost-Effectiveness, 2002

³ National Research Center's Analysis of the Longmont Community Justice Partnership 2007-2009

http://www.lcjp.org/images/stories/pdf/LCJP_2007-2009_Report_Final.pdf

⁴ "Improving School Climate; Findings from Schools Implementing Restorative Practices" a report from the International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2009.

⁵ http://prevention.psu.edu/pubs/docs/PCCD_Report2.pdf

⁶ <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/sites/default/files/resources/FY%202011-2012%20EBI%20Outcomes%20Summary%20FINAL.pdf>

⁷ http://www.parecovery.org/documents/QUIC_Facts_040411.pdf

⁸ <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/sites/default/files/ebp/FFT%20logic%20model.pdf>

⁹ http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/sites/default/files/resources/2010%20Evidence-based%20Intervention%20Outcome%20Summary_9-16-11.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.southcommunity.com/services/youth-care/learning-independence-and-family-empowerment-program/>

¹¹ <http://www.fftinc.com/resources/LIFE%20Program%20FFT%20Article.pdf>

¹² Hart, R.C., Shelestak, D. and Horwood, T.J. Cost Savings Report on School Conflict Management Program, Kent, Ohio. Kent State University, Bureau of Research Training and Services, February, 2003.