



**A STATUS REPORT OF
HUMAN RELATIONS PROJECTS
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S
TRAUMA PREVENTION INITIATIVE,
SPRING 2018**

**A LOS ANGELES COUNTY
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION**

Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2015, Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health (DPH) launched a Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI) to reduce trauma visits and deaths throughout the county. Initially, attention was focused on four unincorporated communities that were found to have experienced some of the highest rates of assault-related trauma center visits in the county. The four communities were East Compton, Florence-Firestone, Westmont/West Athens, and Willowbrook.

With the Trauma Prevention Initiative, DPH has facilitated and funded Core Strategies and Community-based Capacity Building Strategies. Core Strategies funded for 2 to 3 years include hospital-based violence intervention, facilitated community engagement and strategic planning, street outreach and community violence intervention services, and peer-to-peer violence prevention learning academy. Community-Based Capacity Building Strategies receiving one-time funding include training and technical assistance to community-based organizations and community-based prevention strategies.

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (LACCHR), a part of the Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services (WDACS), accepted DPH's invitation to collaborate on several projects during the first half of calendar year 2018 as part of the TPI community-based prevention strategies.

PLANNED PROJECTS

Youth Development Programming. Train staff of schools and other youth-serving organizations to implement violence prevention and peacebuilding programming with youth.

Youth Conference. Expand participation in Gender and Social Justice Conference.

Intergenerational Mentor Training. Train retirees to mentor local youth.

Youth-Led Law Enforcement Training. Train youth to contextualize and deliver orientation to law enforcement in order to facilitate strong relationships of trust.

Community Mediation Training. Provide mediation training to community leaders and members.

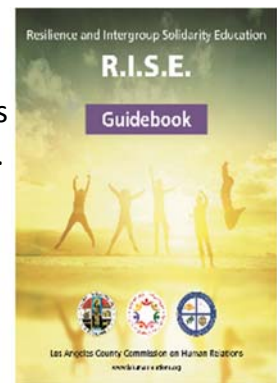
Implicit Bias Training. Train community leaders and members to manage their personal implicit biases.

Hate Reduction Pilot Campaign. Work with local leaders to design and implement a community-building, hate-reduction campaign.

STATUS

Youth Development Programming

Human Relations staff created and compiled materials for 44 sessions with youth, titled *Resilience and Intergroup Solidarity Education* (R.I.S.E.). Working with a graphic designer and a printing vendor, binders were produced to present the materials in an organized, flexible format.



R.I.S.E. sessions address a variety of human relations topics, including: Identity, Cultures & Communities, Emotions, Healthier Relationships, Conflict, Trauma and Resilience, Prejudice, Bullying, Human Trafficking, and Celebration. Each session guide details an overview of the focus, objectives, necessary materials, a session plan, and timed components. Where relevant, sources are cited at the conclusion of the session guide. Some sessions include additional notes and suggestions for session leaders. The sessions incorporate approaches to affective instruction that have been identified by education researchers as effective.

The binder also includes a section on steps for engaging youth, a recommended sequence for the sessions, objectives for the various sections, a list of helpful websites, and a 12-month calendar of respect and rights events.

Human relations staff conducted two training experiences for staff of youth-serving organizations in the use of the R.I.S.E. materials. One of them took place in February. The nearly 50 participants included staff of county parks, county probation, and local community organizations. The other training took place in May with 50 more participants, including staff from LAUSD South District schools as well as local youth-serving organizations. During the trainings, participants gained understanding of the educational design and content of the materials, were led through sample activities from various sessions, and reviewed possibilities for use of the materials in their youth programming.



Youth Conference

LACCHR's Women's Leadership Project (WLP) hosts a conference each year on gender and social justice. The 2018 conference was conducted on May 24 on the campus of California State University Dominguez Hills, and featured youth-facilitated workshops, videos, presentations, and a musical performance by acclaimed guitarist Malina Moye.



The conference began with a WLP-produced video on sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention. The video was followed by a student panel on the #MeToo movement featuring WLP students and alumni. The panelists discussed the marginalization of black and Latinx girls in mainstream representations and the impact of sexual harassment and sexual violence in school communities. The panelists also challenged young men to step up as allies in the fight against normalized sexism, sexual harassment, and sexual violence on school campuses.

The workshop presentations were conducted by college community partners and high school youth. They included presentations on sexual violence and homelessness, Black feminism, gender justice and labor organizing, countering “fake news,” and disrupting criminalization in communities of color. In addition, representatives from the Gay-Straight Alliance Network, Media Done Responsibly, Peace Over Violence, and the WLP alumni network led discussions of social, racial, and gender justice youth leadership work that they have been doing at partner schools for the past several years.



In addition to a powerful performance, internationally acclaimed electric guitarist and music producer, Malina Moye, described her experience as a homeless youth living on the streets in LA at the start of her career. She encouraged the youth to pursue their dreams and aspirations and not surrender to the negative expectations of the dominant culture.

DPH funding made it possible for more students and staff in the TPI-identified communities to participate in the conference this year. These included a hundred participants from Carson, Diego Rivera, Gardena, Fremont, and King-Drew high schools.

Intergenerational Mentor Training

Community leaders shared with DPH that they believed efforts to engage more mature community members with younger community members could be an efficacious element in the violence prevention strategy. In response to DPH's invitation, Human Relations staff designed and delivered a 20-hour training experience for retirement age persons.



The training experience began with an introductory discussion of the nature and impact of trauma, particularly with youth. This discussion included opportunity for participants to share their own personal experiences. In fact, sharing of personal experiences was a recurring feature of the training throughout.

The training continued with a focus on the strengths and resources youth need in order to respond well to trauma. This was compared with what mature community members can offer youth. Participants were led to recognize that navigating life's challenges and choices requires a reliable compass. This is in contrast to how many of us may be tempted to offer young people merely a map of our own personal life journey.

Substantial time was spent on the development of the needed life compass in the form of a Personal Manifesto, including guidance as the participants clarified their own. With their Personal Manifesto, each participant answered 4 core questions: Who am I? (Identity and Character), What do I really want? (Deepest Desire), What will be my legacy? (Promise), and What is my mission? (Purpose). Then, focus was given to how we can assist someone else to craft a Personal Manifesto. For this purpose, attention was given to how we can listen without judging and guide without controlling.



Each day a different brief video was used to provide an illustration of persons who have made powerful choices in response to traumatic experiences, including those who have influenced them. The training closed with practical exploration of how participants could use what they had learned for successful mentoring, as well as the importance of maintaining a sustainable balance.

In cooperation with the director of the county's Willowbrook Senior Center, where the training sessions were held, 11 participants were enlisted. Nine of them were from the Willowbrook community and 2 were from the Westmont/West Athens area. Plans are underway to coordinate with local youth-serving groups to enlist youth to be mentored.

Youth-Led Law Enforcement Training

For several years, the nonprofit organization, Legacy LA, has been working to strengthen relationships of trust between community youth and local law enforcement in the Ramona Gardens area. LACCHR staff has consulted with them in the development and use of a youth-led experience called “Through Our Eyes.” It is designed to substantially alter relationships with police officers in the community.



“Through Our Eyes” is the product of local youth deciding to create solutions to problems that have plagued their community for many years. The aim is to bring youth and police together to cultivate common ground and help improve their understanding of actions and behavior of each other.

In this experience, trained youth leaders guide law enforcement representatives through a series of activities that focus on hearing one another’s stories, identifying root causes, engaging with one another’s perspectives, and active listening.

At the close of the workshop, youth and law enforcement serving their community identify a public safety issue they will work on together. Collaborating on a tangible project allows opportunity to apply and practice perspectives and skills gained in the training. Examples of public safety projects include: arranging for a stop sign to improve pedestrian safety, teen driver safety training, gaining approval for a traffic study on a busy street used to access a local park, street crossing safety projects, additional lighting for outdoor spaces, and community murals to reduce graffiti.

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has recognized the value of this special experience for their officers and for people in communities they serve. LAPD is working to make the experience available in more areas in the city. Some private funding for this effort has been arranged.

DPH funding has made it possible for Legacy LA to customize the training experience for use in the TPI-identified communities. In partnership with the county Parks After Dark director, training is being scheduled to continue over the next several months.

Community Mediation Training

LACCHR manages the work of 11 contractors to provide mediation services through the county's Dispute Resolution Program (DRP). LA County DRP was established to implement state legislation and regulations enacted beginning in 1986. DRP helps people resolve differences without the substantial time and money required for full, formal court proceedings. In community mediations, DRP assists people with a wide variety of disputes, including merchant-customer, landlord-tenant, family, and neighbor to neighbor disputes. Mediation is a proven method for addressing conflict to prevent it from escalating to open hostility or aggression.

All LA County DRP contractors include training as part of the mediation services they provide. In adherence to state requirements, communication skills, confidentiality requirements, building trust, empowerment tactics, identifying and prioritizing issues, managing disagreement, identifying options, and facilitating consensus are among the topics and skills addressed. The training also includes requisite guided practice in role plays.

As part of DPH's Trauma Prevention Initiative, LACCHR enlisted 4 of the DRP contractors to conduct training in the four TPI communities. In addition to state required content, the training they provided included instruction and coaching in de-escalation, restorative practices, working with difficult people, youth and trauma, and working with gangs.

Loyola Law School's Center for Conflict Resolution trained 7 community members and intervention professionals in unincorporated Compton. Community advocate, Perry Crouch, and local nonprofit, Southern California Crossroads, enlisted trainees and coordinated local logistics. Another nonprofit organization, Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County, also assisted. Centinela Youth Services trained 13 community members and intervention professionals in Westmont/West Athens. Community interventionist, Reynaldo Reaser, of R.A.C.E. (Reclaiming America's Communities through Empowerment) enlisted trainees and coordinated local logistics. California Conference for Equality and Justice trained 16 community members and intervention professionals in Willowbrook. Community advocate, Perry Crouch, enlisted trainees and coordinated local logistics. Michael Torrence and Fellowship Baptist Church also assisted. LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs trained 22 community members and intervention professionals in Florence-Firestone. Community group, Florence-Firestone Community Leaders, enlisted trainees and coordinated local logistics. LA County Florence-Firestone Service Center also assisted.



Implicit Bias Training

LACCHR's assignment involves addressing the incidence and impact of prejudice in LA County. Implicit bias is a form of prejudice common to all of us. Implicit bias refers to stereotypes that affect our attitudes, understanding, decisions, and actions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Left unchecked, implicit bias can intensify interpersonal and intergroup tensions and contribute to violence.

While it is unlikely that someone will eliminate their implicit bias, research has found that it is possible to increase our awareness of it and reduce its influence. LACCHR has reviewed and synthesized current research, and created training experiences based on this work. Initial efforts in this regard were part of a federally funded project in collaboration with the county Department of Public Health. LACCHR used the results to consult with LA County Department of Human Resources in the design of their online implicit bias and cultural competency training, and in customizing and delivering training for the county Probation Department, Urban Peace Institute's Los Angeles Violence Intervention Training Academy, affordable housing managers, nonprofit community organizations, and a university campus safety department.

Early in planning conversations for LACCHR's participation in DPH's Trauma Prevention Initiative it was agreed that providing training in managing implicit bias for community leaders and intervention workers would be a valuable component. As planning proceeded, it was noted that the intended participants for this training were parallel to those identified for the community mediation training. Consequently, it was decided to integrate the two.



With DPH TPI funding, LACCHR contracted staff to prepare and deliver a 90-minute training on awareness and management of implicit bias to be incorporated into and delivered as part of the 4 community mediation training courses, each of which a total of at least 30 hours. The result was a guidebook and dialogue-oriented training experience shared with nearly 60 trainees so they would know what implicit bias is, acknowledge that it is universal, recognize that it is harmful, and understand ways to manage its influence. Included were a definition of implicit bias, key characteristics, a review of why we're biased and

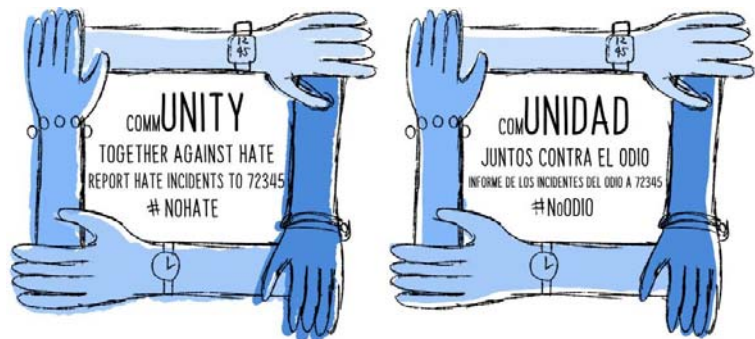
how it affects us, and actions we can take to reduce it, including a format for a personal implicit bias reduction plan, a glossary, and a list of relevant resources.

Hate Reduction Pilot Campaign

Sometimes it seems that the things that push us apart are stronger than the things that bring us together. As a result, we often react to one another with insult and hate. And, as we know all too well, hostility can turn violent. What a difference it would make if we focused on what unites us: our need to feel safe, our value of respect, our hope for acceptance instead of hate. Working together, we can combine our different experiences and perspectives to build communities where everyone is welcome. We can join our voices in a call to unite against hate. We can identify early signs of hostility and prepare ourselves to respond. We can create a network to celebrate community and share resources.

With DPH TPI funding, LACCHR has launched a pilot campaign to experiment with turning these aspirations into reality. In consultation with WDACS staff of the Florence-Firestone Service Center, LACCHR staff collaborated with the Florence-Firestone Community Leaders to plan and launch a community-building, hate-reduction campaign.

Communications professionals were consulted to generate possibilities for a central message for the campaign. Florence-Firestone Communities Leaders discussed the alternatives and chose the message to be used. Then, graphic artists were contracted to create possibilities for a central image, incorporating the message. Again, Florence-Firestone Community Leaders chose the image to be used. Banners and decals were printed for use in the Florence-Firestone community. Plans are underway to distribute the image digitally as well.



LACCHR staff worked with WDACS IT personnel to contract for a number to which people can text reports, in English or Spanish, of hate incidents. A system was created for automatic responses to texted reports consisting of brief questions about the incident. Answers to these questions are registered with a gmail account created for this purpose and monitored by an experienced mediator who is a Florence-Firestone community member. A brief note of acknowledgement is sent to the reporter with an information sheet about hate speech and why we must address it. The note includes a statement that someone will contact the reporter within 48 hours to offer assistance. The person monitoring the gmail account then enlists one of the trained mediators in the Florence-Firestone community to contact the reporter. The results of the reports and these contacts will be compiled to identify additional action that is needed.

CONCLUSION

The projects produced by this collaboration have helped to enrich the lives of community members and empower them with information, knowledge, and skills. People of all ages, from youth to retirees, have been equipped and engaged to respond to and prevent hate that can lead to violence. Much has been done, but much is left to do.

Most of the projects were completed near the end of FY2017-18 and followup efforts are ongoing. This includes maintaining contact with organizations who participated in the R.I.S.E. trainings to provide technical assistance. Additional requests for trainings are being reviewed. Relationships continue with schools whose staff and students participated in the gender and social justice youth conference. LACCHR staff is working with the Willowbrook Senior Center for followup with those who participated in the Intergenerational Mentor Training. The youth-led law enforcement training will continue over the next several months in partnership with the county's Parks After Dark program. And, the community-building, hate-reducing campaign in Florence-Firestone is just getting started.

In addition, plans are being developed for deploying those who completed the community mediation and implicit bias training. What's more, there has been a request to develop and deliver this training in Spanish in one or more of the TPI communities. Also, a proposal is being reviewed to design and deliver different levels of training in peacebuilding skills.

Though the work continues, there is ample reason to celebrate what has already been done to strengthen capacity and enhance mobilization of communities too often overlooked or excluded. There is reason to believe that the hope for diminished violence and greater peace is no mere fantasy. It is, indeed, a realistic expectation.

