

Youth ALIVE!



An Evaluation of Youth ALIVE!'s Programs

December 2023

About Us

Impact Justice

Impact Justice is a national innovation and research center advancing new ideas and solutions for justice reform. We work to dramatically reduce the massive number of youth and adults in our justice system, improve conditions and outcomes for those who are incarcerated, and provide meaningful opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to rejoin their communities. For more information, please visit www.ImpactJustice.org.

IMPACT/JUSTICE

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The Research & Action Center

This report falls under the purview of the Research & Action Center. As a Center of Impact Justice, our research catalyzes community efforts to eliminate disparities and propel system change. We focus especially on the populations most impacted by disparities, including youth and adults of color, as well as members of the LGBTQ/GNCT communities.

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Executive Summary

Serving the diverse population of Oakland, Youth ALIVE! aims to educate young leaders, interrupt cycles of violence, discourage retaliatory behavior, and support individuals in their healing journey. The organization uses mentorship and a violence intervention program to deter youth and adults from violence, address repeat victimization, and reduce gun violence. In 2020, Youth ALIVE! received funding from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to enhance the capabilities of their intervention and healing initiatives. The Research and Action Center (RAC) at Impact Justice collaborated with Youth ALIVE! to evaluate the effectiveness of three key programs: Pathways, Violence Interruption, and the Khadafy Washington Project. Taking into account the views of both participants and staff, the report focuses on whether the programs have improved social-emotional well-being and promoted healthier perspectives and behaviors among participants. The evaluation found that all three programs have had a positive impact on the communities they serve.

The Pathways program, a mentorship initiative by Youth ALIVE!, is designed to support young people transitioning back into society post-incarceration. A mixed methods approach was employed to evaluate the program, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The RAC initiated the process by conducting key stakeholder interviews and facilitating focus groups involving staff and program participants for each program. Impact Justice designed a survey to assess prosocial behavior among Pathways youth participants, focusing on social awareness, decision-making, conflict resolution, and community support. Notably, a significant number of Pathways participants expressed hope for the future; many aspired to enhance their academic success and held specific future goals. Interview participants described an enhanced ability to avoid trouble, risky behaviors, and negative influences, reflecting improved decision-making skills, increased resilience to peer pressure, and a shift towards a more positive self-image and future-oriented outlook. The mentorship received from staff in Pathways was described as pivotal to their success in the program, as it provided a reliable space for youth to express themselves and process their experiences. However, participants also reported challenges such as overcoming initial hesitancy to engage in therapy and coping with staff turnover within the program. The Pathways program has been successful in providing positive adult mentors for youth and nurturing their academic success, while also steering them clear of involvement in the justice system during the course of their participation in the program. Further evaluation is needed to assess the long term impact on participants' lives beyond their engagement with the Pathways program.

The Youth ALIVE! Violence Interruption program aims to identify and address the root causes of violent conflicts, with a focus on preventing further violence in Oakland neighborhoods. A survey for Violence



Interruption participants was distributed by Youth ALIVE! Violence Interrupters (VIs) from March to October 2023, assessing factors like resilience and attitudes towards violence. The Violence Interruption (VI) program has demonstrated a positive impact on participants' lives, helping to foster prosocial behaviors, promoting non-violent conflict resolution strategies, and providing a sense of support and community. The majority of participants reported a positive attitude towards interdependence and seeking support from others. Furthermore, the majority of participants indicated they had a solid support network and they reported a shift towards empathetic approaches to engaging others. This shift reflects a sense of community and collective efficacy being fostered among participants, potentially contributing to a reduction in justice system contact. The Violence Interruption program's impact is evident in the 522 mediations conducted during the evaluation period, showcasing the team's commitment to safety assessment and risk mitigation. Despite challenges from law enforcement and the demanding nature of their work, VIs remain dedicated to their mission, often organizing community events to promote peace and unity among rival groups.

The Khadafy Washington Project (KWP) is a community initiative that provides support to families and friends affected by homicides in Oakland. To assess the KWP, the evaluation team completed an interview with the program founder and a focus group with staff. Five themes emerged as key program components for making the KWP's work impactful: origins rooted in grief and empathy, cultural sensitivity and individualized support, emotional impact and self-care, challenges and resource needs, and measuring success through impact. The KWP was initiated by Marilyn Washington Harris after the loss of her son, Khadafy, to gun violence. Her personal grief and empathy led to the creation of KWP to support others in similar situations. The KWP values personalized support and emphasizes cultural sensitivity, tailoring assistance to the cultural values, beliefs, and traditions of each family. Additionally, the KWP project offers financial aid and seeks strategies to help families access support, recognizing the need for more resources, particularly for at-risk youth. The KWP measures its success through the transformation of aid recipients into advocates for violence prevention and positive change within their communities. However, it is important to mention that the transformation of aid recipients into community advocates, while observed, was not a predefined metric for evaluation, suggesting an area for future development in the project's assessment approach. Motivated by their own experiences with violence, the KWP team provides resources and support to those affected by gun violence, aiming to break the cycle of violence in their community. However, the emotional toll of this work can lead to compassion fatigue among the staff, highlighting the importance of self-care and support systems. The KWP exceeded its initial objective by connecting with 353 individuals impacted by recent homicides, surpassing the goal of 225 individuals by 57%. The project serves as an example of how personal grief, empathy, and a steadfast



pursuit of positive change can inspire a broader community to strive for a safer, more compassionate, and hopeful future.



Youth ALIVE! Overview

Introduction

Established in 1991, Youth ALIVE! is dedicated to its mission to break the cycle of violence and uplift a community of leaders rooted in Oakland through prevention, intervention, healing, and advocacy. Its broad goals include educating and training young leaders, interrupting cycles of street violence, convincing angry victims and their loved ones to avoid retaliatory behavior, and providing services and support to help wounded and grieving individuals heal from their trauma.

Youth ALIVE! is driven by six core values: relentlessness, innovative leadership, diversity, community, courage, and healing. Its staff are trained in the best practices of their respective professions and serve as mentors, youth leaders, counselors, case managers, intervention specialists, and violence interrupters. Many of the frontline staff have lived experience in the neighborhoods and communities they serve. Youth ALIVE! offers a range of programs under prevention, intervention, and healing such as Advocacy for Change, Teens on Target, Caught in the Crossfire, Pathways, Violence Interrupters, relocation services, community-based counseling and the Khadafy Washington Project (KWP).

The importance of Youth ALIVE! and similar violence interruption programs cannot be overstated. They serve communities that have been historically marginalized, particularly in urban cities like Oakland where historical marginalization has long-term effects.¹ Communities of color are often under-resourced and provide limited opportunities to flourish in cities with high rates of poverty, violence, and unemployment.² Violence is a result of a multitude of societal, community, and familial obstacles, predominantly concentrated in neighborhoods with high Black and Latino populations. Racial and economic oppression contribute to heightened violence in these communities. Economic disenfranchisement, such as high unemployment, instills a sense of hopelessness in both youth and adults, which is exacerbated by a lack of social services.³

¹ Egede, L. E., Walker, R. J., Campbell, J. A., Linde, S., Hawks, L. C., & Burgess, K. M. (2023). *Modern day consequences of historic redlining: Finding a path forward*. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 38(6), 1534–1537. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-023-08051-4>

² Prevention Institute. (2001, September). *What factors increase the risk of being involved in violence?* <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/What%20factors%20increase%20the%20risk%20of%20being%20involved%20in%20violence.pdf>

³ Prevention Institute. (2001). *What factors increase the risk of being involved in violence?* <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/What%20factors%20increase%20the%20risk%20of%20being%20involved%20in%20violence.pdf>

High rates of poverty, unemployment, crime, and substance use in a community increase the risk of youth being involved in violence.⁴ Research shows that mentorship can serve as a method to deter youth from violence in their communities.^{5,6} Successful youth mentoring programs, like Big Brothers Big Sisters, positively impact youths' academic, social, and psychological outcomes through the establishment of long-term relationships.⁷ Ninety-three percent (93%) of youth involved in Big Brothers Big Sisters have avoided or ceased violence and illegal activities, resulting in significant improvements in the areas of social competence, academic performance, educational expectations, emotion regulation, school connectedness, depressive symptoms, school discipline, and bullying.⁸ Similarly, Pathways is a mentorship program that helps young people stabilize post-incarceration and transition back home and into school. Higher educational achievement—often disenfranchised in Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities—is associated with reduced homicide mortality for youth in urban areas.⁹ Pathways' goals include providing youth with positive adult figures and support to nurture academic success, with a simultaneous emphasis on steering clear of involvement in the justice system.

Due to residential segregation,¹⁰ Black youth are more likely to be exposed to persistent violence.¹¹ In 2019, there were a reported 1.4 million violent assaults treated in hospitals across the country.¹² Research on services shows 91% of all assault victims and 92% of

⁴ Prevention Institute & Children's Safety Network. (2001). *What factors increase the risk of being involved in violence?* <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/What%20factors%20increase%20the%20risk%20of%20being%20involved%20in%20violence.pdf>

⁵ Mentor National. (n.d.) *Mentoring and youth violence prevention*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614513.pdf>.

⁶ Dubois, D. L. (2021). Mentoring programs for youth: A promising intervention for delinquency prevention. *National Institute of Justice Journal*. United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/mentoring-programs-youth-promising-intervention-delinquency-prevention>

⁷ Damm, A. P., von Essen, E., Jensen, A. J., Kern-Jespersen, F., & van Mastrigt, S. (2022). Duration of mentoring relationship predicts child well-being: Evidence from a Danish community-based mentoring program. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(5), 2906. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052906>

⁸ Porzig, R. (2021). *2020 Big Brothers Big Sisters of America annual impact report*. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. <https://www.bbbs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-Big-Brothers-Big-Sisters-of-America-Annual-Impact-Report.pdf>

⁹ Bray, M. J. C., Boulos, M. E., Shi, G., MacKrell, K., & Nestadt, P. S. (2020). Educational achievement and youth homicide mortality: A city-wide, neighborhood-based analysis. *Injury Epidemiology*, 8(7), 20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-020-00246-1>

¹⁰ The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. (n.d.). *Transformative guidance on victim services funding for hospital-based violence intervention programs*. United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/transformative-guidance-victim-services-funding-hospital-based-violence>

¹¹ Culyba, A., Riley, A., Corona, G., Miller, E., & Carley, K. (2022). Adolescent-adult social networks and experiences of violence among Black youth in neighborhoods with high levels of community violence. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2022.05.010>

¹² The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. (2022). *Transformative guidance on victim services funding for hospital-based violence intervention programs*. United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/transformative-guidance-victim-services-funding-hospital-based-violence>

robbery victims do not receive support or assistance from victim services agencies.¹³ In Oakland, up to 41% of patients treated for violent injury in hospitals are re-injured within five years.¹³ Homicide is concentrated within racially segregated neighborhoods; it is the leading cause of death for young Black men and the second leading cause of death for young Latino men.

More than 90% of assault or robbery victims receive no assistance from victim services agencies, and homicide co-victims face many economic and social obstacles.¹⁴ Many hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) reach the community by utilizing the Credible Messenger model, which allows staff to connect with participants/victims through shared life experiences, connection to the community, and long-term support. HVIPs have been proven to reduce repeat victimization, criminal justice involvement, and health care and other expenses associated with violence.^{15,16}

Credible Messengers are mentors who have passed through the justice system and sustainably transformed their lives. They are able to break through to younger, justice-involved people and form powerful, transformative, personal relationships.

This role may be formal or informal, but credibility must be determined by the community and those a credible messenger serves. For more information, see <https://crediblemessenger3.org/>.

¹³ The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. (2022). *Transformative guidance on victim services funding for hospital-based violence intervention programs*. United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime.

¹⁴ Bastomski, S., & Duane, M. (2019, January 1). *Losing a loved one to homicide: What we know about homicide co-victims from research and practice evidence*. Justice Information Center. <https://ncvc.dspacedirect.org/handle/20.500.11990/1384>

¹⁵ Credible Messenger Justice Center. *A transforming approach to justice*. <https://cmjcenter.org/approach>

¹⁶ The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. (2022). *Transformative guidance on victim services funding for hospital-based violence intervention programs*. United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d6f61730a2b610001135b79/t/628be626f63ee8417a6262f7/1653341336749/HAVI-VOCA-toolkit.pdf>

Many organizations in urban cities, like Advance Peace in Stockton, California, also work towards the reduction of gun violence. They engage community members most affected by cyclical and retaliatory gun violence to reduce overall urban gun violence.¹⁷ Using the Credible Messenger model, they support community members through intense mentoring, positive relationship building, and guidance through social services to keep participants from re-engaging in violence.¹⁸

Similarly, Youth ALIVE! operates in Oakland, California, a city where the majority of the population identifies as a person of color, with 21.8% of the population identifying as Black or African American, and 26.6% identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x. Almost one in five Oakland residents are under 18 years of age with an almost even split between men and women, 49% and 51%, respectively.¹⁹ Youth ALIVE! serves its community with intention by incorporating best practices for youth mentorship, violence intervention, and gun violence reduction throughout its programs.

Project Background

The Research and Action Center (RAC) at Impact Justice partnered with Youth ALIVE! to assess the effectiveness of three pivotal programs: Pathways, Violence Interruption, and Khadafy Washington Project. In 2020, Youth ALIVE! secured funding from The Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to enhance the capabilities of these intervention and healing initiatives. The additional funds provided the opportunity for Youth ALIVE! to broaden and deepen its services, extending its reach to more individuals and expanding services to operate 24 hours a day. Informed by research and prior evaluation reports, Youth ALIVE! staff held a firm belief in the effectiveness of its programs.

The purpose of the current report is to explore the essential components of the programs, describe their impacts on clients and community, and explore measures of success that go beyond simple distance. For impact on clients, the central inquiries revolved around whether the programs facilitated improvements in social-emotional well-being and fostered healthier perspectives and behaviors among participants. At a more granular level, we examined the perspectives of both participants and staff regarding the programs. We delved into what distinguished each program; explored the interactions between staff, team members, and other partners with clients; evaluated the effectiveness of program services on clients; and ultimately assessed whether the program successfully achieved its intended goals. This research and evaluation report

¹⁷ Advance Peace. (n.d.) *The solution*. <https://www.advancepeace.org/about/the-solution/>

¹⁸ Credible Messenger Justice Center. *A transforming approach to Justice*. <https://cmjcenter.org/approach>

¹⁹ United States Census Bureau. (2022, January 1). *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Oakland city, California*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/oaklandcitycalifornia/PST045222>

affirms Youth ALIVE!'s belief in the effectiveness of their programs, demonstrating their positive impact on Oakland communities affected by violence.

Figure 1: Primary Questions and Indicators

Primary Questions	Indicators
Does Youth ALIVE! have an impact on re-victimization and healing from shootings, stabbings, and aggravated assault cases?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduction in trauma symptoms among survivors ● Increase in prosocial behaviors among survivors ● Improvement in emotional well-being and beliefs around hopelessness, optimism, and/or self-efficacy ● Less exposure to violence ● Improvement in attitudes, beliefs, hostility, future involvement in violence, personal safety, and/or attitudes towards retaliation ● Less acceptance of gun carry and use
What impact does Youth ALIVE! have on retaliation and violence among its target population?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduction in retaliatory behavior among groups or individuals identified as having disputes ● Positive changes in attitudes, beliefs about retaliation, and/or hostility ● Improvement in emotional well-being, e.g., attitudes or beliefs around optimism, hopelessness, and/or self-efficacy ● Exposure to violence
Is Youth ALIVE! helping to reduce justice system contact for participants who are formerly incarcerated and gang-affiliated individuals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduction in recidivism among target population ● Stronger community to connect, for example, increase in civic engagement, connection to community, and perceived collective efficacy
What are the key elements of success for respective programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pathways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tailored Academic and Success Plans ○ Mentorship and Consistent Support ○ Life Mapping and Goal Setting ● Violence Interruption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Street Credibility and Authenticity ○ Community Trust ○ Neutrality in Mediations ● Khadafy Washington Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Families Served

Methodology

This project takes a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The RAC initiated the process by conducting key stakeholder interviews and facilitating focus groups involving staff and program participants for each program. All interviews were conducted in English and lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The sessions were recorded, transcribed, and coded to identify themes. The interview questions were tailored to explore impacts of the services provided by Youth ALIVE! The RAC also obtained program data from Youth ALIVE!'s data specialists to address process-related inquiries, including the count of participants, demographic characteristics, and the variety of services in which they actively participated.

For **Pathways**, Impact Justice designed a survey utilizing a 4-point scale to assess prosocial behavior among youth participants. Questions for the Pathways survey examined the domains of social awareness, decision-making, conflict resolution, civic efficacy, and attitudes towards violence. The voluntary survey was distributed between May 2022 and July 2023. The research team planned to administer the survey at three distinct time points: upon intake (Time 1), four months post-intake (Time 2), and eight months post-intake (Time 3). Despite efforts by the research team and Pathways staff, only a small number of participants took the follow-up surveys, which is not uncommon for this age group. Only 17 participants completed both Survey 1 and Survey 2 and fewer (six) completed all three.

Due to a low response rate during Time 2 and Time 3, this report will primarily focus on the 52 participants who engaged in the initial survey at intake. Demographically, most survey participants (69%) were identified as male and almost all were either African American or Black (55%) or Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic (40%). Almost all survey takers identified as straight (82%) with six individuals identifying as bisexual and three as gay or lesbian (See Appendix.01).

A separate survey designed for **Violence Interruption** participants was designed and distributed between March and October 2023. This survey included indicators assessing resilience, attitude towards violence, fatalism, violent intentions, posttraumatic growth, protective factors such as the presence of a caring person, and attitudes towards guns and violence. Impact Justice crafted a survey to measure how the Violence Interruption program has positively influenced participants' life goals, priorities, mindfulness, attitudes towards violence, confidence in their future, intention to use nonviolence strategies to cope with anger and violence, sense of support from an adult, and attraction to guns and violence. Youth ALIVE!'s team of Violence Interrupters helped with the administration of the survey, targeting previous and current participants. There were 42 survey recipients; all participants were given a \$50 dollar gift card for taking the survey.

Demographically, a higher proportion of women participated in the survey compared to men, with 50% of survey takers identifying as female, 43% as male, and an additional 7% choosing not to state their gender. Most identified as either African American or Black (60%) and Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic (24%). (See Appendix.02.)

For the **Khadafy Washington Project** (KWP) the evaluation team completed an interview with the program founder and a focus group with staff. The themes and findings from those interviews are highlighted later in this report.

Additionally, in the spring of 2022, the RAC developed and administered a community survey to better understand the connections within Oakland and to gauge the community’s perceptions of exposure to violence. Surveys were administered during two Youth ALIVE!-sponsored community events in the Western region of Oakland, i.e., West Oakland, downtown during Oakland's First Friday events, and at Lake Merritt, a large regional park.

Table 1: Methods of Data Collection

Program	Data collection methods
Pathways	Surveys and interviews
Violence Interruption	Surveys and interviews of staff but not participants
Khadafy Washington Project	Interviews and focus groups

Pathways Program

Pathways is a case management and mentorship program that helps young people stabilize post-incarceration and transition back home and into school.²⁰ Pathways program goals are to provide positive adult figures for youth and support to nurture academic success, with a simultaneous emphasis on steering clear of involvement in the justice system. The program primarily focuses on youth between the ages of 12 and 18 years old. At the heart of Pathways' strategy is the robust practice of mentoring and building strong relationships, underscored by consistent and meaningful contact.

Through qualitative interviews we learned that the strategic approach to academic achievement for the Pathways program includes tailored plans, consistent support, and personalized tutoring. This strategic approach has positively impacted participants' educational outcomes, reinforcing their belief in their capabilities and commitment to their education. The Pathways program employs life mapping and goal setting as transformative tools for participants. Interview participants spoke of how these practices have helped them envision a path to safety and success, offering motivation and guidance to achieve various objectives, from probation completion to obtaining driver's licenses or pursuing higher education. Life maps serve as visual guides, outlining steps and milestones toward long-term goals. Participants highlight that life maps fostered motivation and accountability, empowering them to proactively plan and take control of their futures. Setting personal goals complements this approach, providing focus and life skills development, and boosting self-confidence. Participants highlighted that achieving their goals instilled a sense of pride in them, forced them to be forward-thinking, and helped deter them from engaging in negative behaviors.

Pathways served over 101 youth. With a measurable objective of serving 60 formerly incarcerated or gang involved people, Pathways exceeded its program goals by 68%.

During the evaluation period the Pathways program served 101 clients. The program aims to engage youth for six to 12 months. The average age of participants was 16.7 years. Most identified as male (82%), and African American (61%) or Latinx (33%).²¹

Discussion of Survey Data

The limited participation in the post-surveys (see the Methodology section for more information) hinders our ability to report quantitatively on the developmental changes that youth may have experienced through their involvement in Pathways, as initially planned. Although quantifying these changes is not feasible, it's important to

²⁰ <https://www.youthalive.org/caught-in-the-crossfire/#pathways>

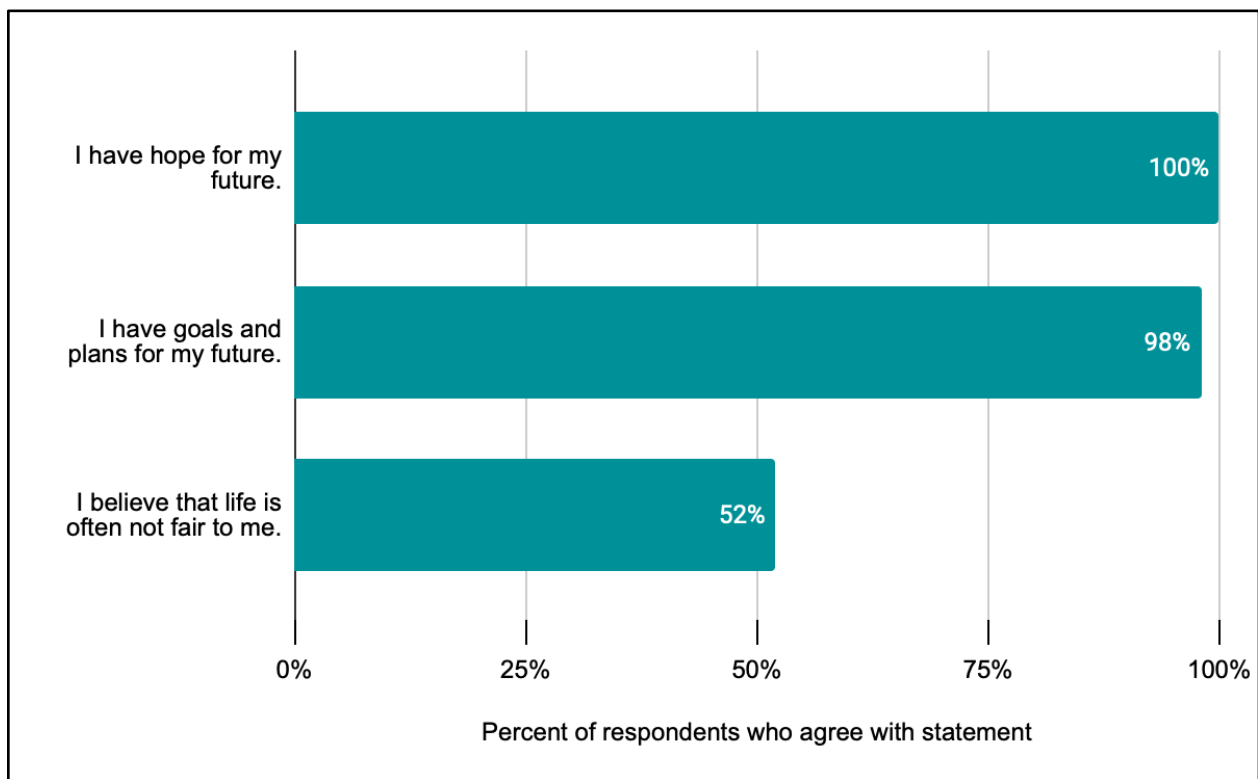
²¹ This data represents 64 individuals served in 2022 and any client enrolled in 2021 and still receiving services.

acknowledge the program's achievement in surpassing its goal of serving 75 youth and young adults. We were able to gather qualitative data from youth, which will provide valuable insights into program impacts.

Survey participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement (ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Agree*) or disagreement (from *Disagree* to *Strongly Disagree*) with a series of questions. While the survey data may not explicitly reflect developmental changes, it does illuminate the characteristics, aspirations, and ambitions of the participants. Moreover, as some survey participants were already enrolled in Pathways and receiving services before the evaluation period commenced, the evaluation team believes it is highly probable that this pre-existing engagement influenced some of the positive measures that will be discussed.

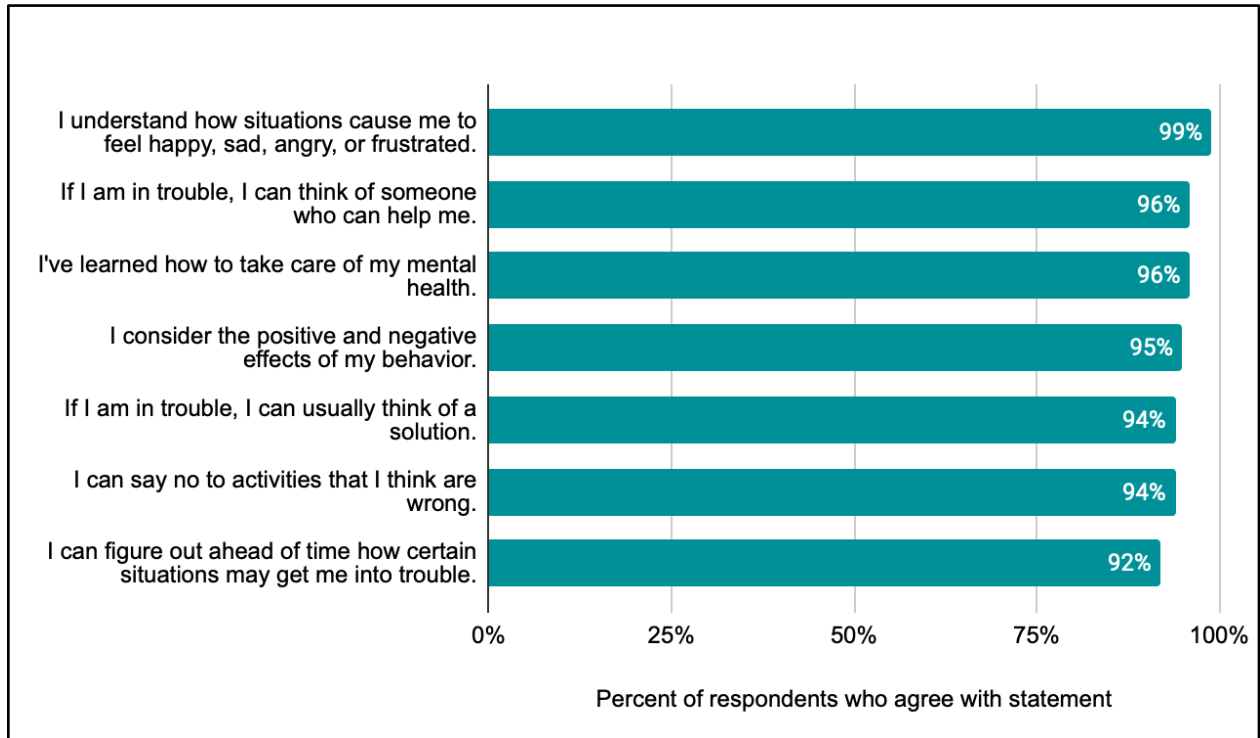
The survey covered five key domains: future outlook, self-management, decision-making, civic efficacy, and attitudes towards violence. Each of these is discussed below.

Figure 2: Percent of Pathways participant agreement regarding personal resilience and future outlook (n=52).



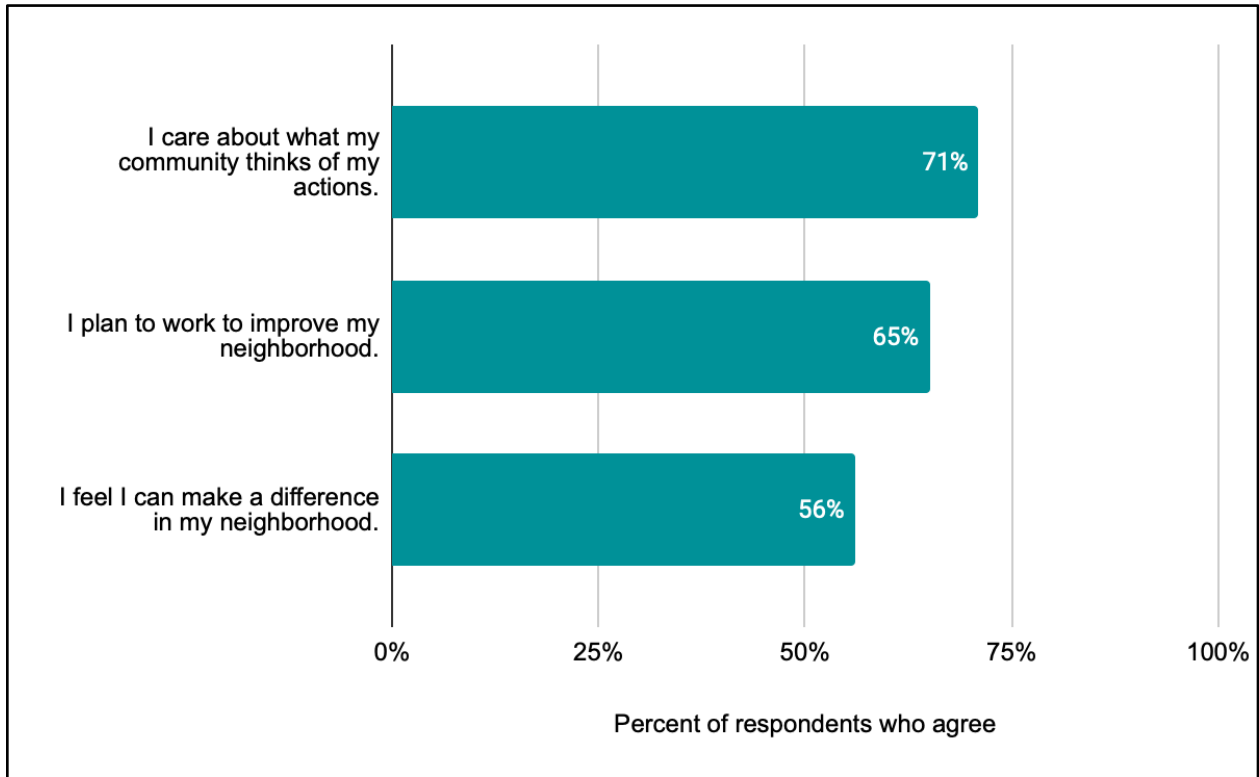
When asked about their outlook for the future, all respondents expressed unwavering hope for the future and nearly all stated having clear goals and plans for their future, despite over half of respondents acknowledging feelings of life being unfair (see Figure 2).

Figure 3: Percent of Pathways participant agreement regarding self-management and decision-making (n=52).



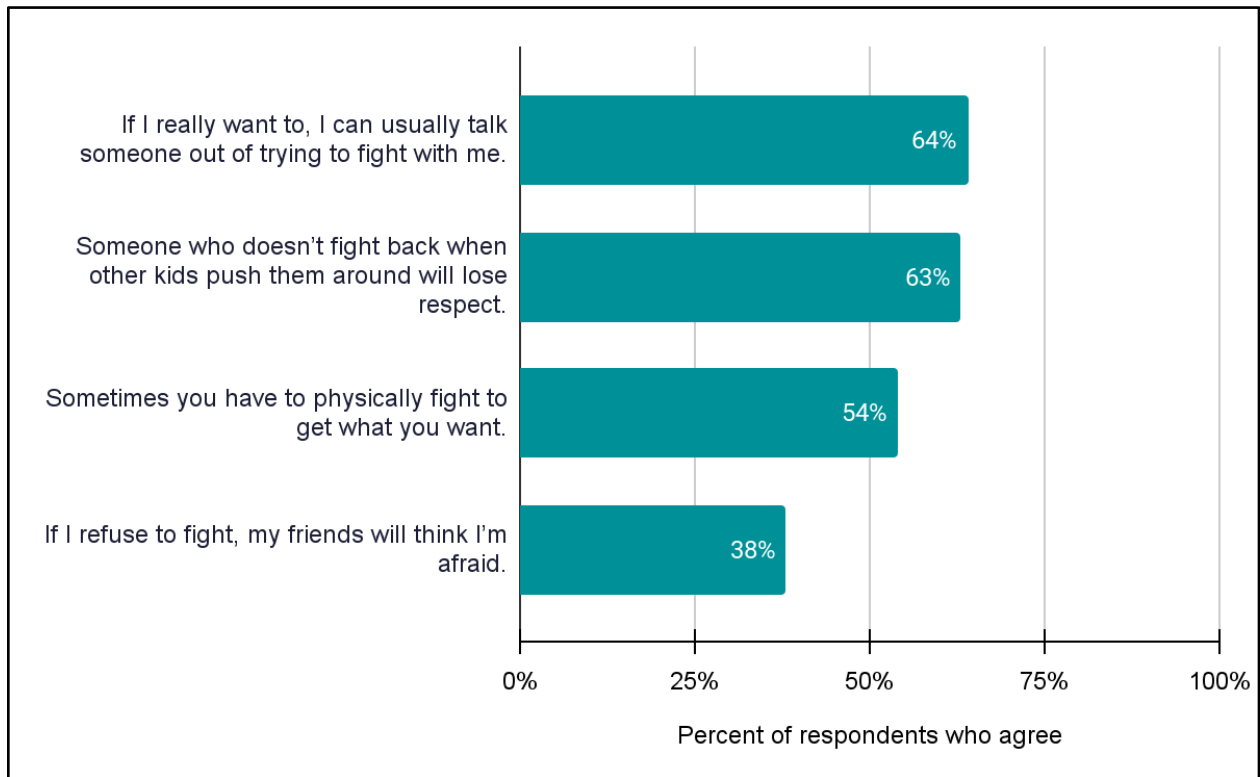
These participants also exhibited signs of positive self-management and decision-making skills. As illustrated in Figure 3, almost all affirmed having learned to prioritize their mental health (96%), understand the emotional impact of various situations (99%), and consider the positive and negative effects of their behavior (95%). The majority of survey participants asserted their capability to refuse engagement in inappropriate activities (94%) and determine how certain situations might lead them into trouble (92%).

Figure 4: Percent of Pathways participant agreement regarding civic efficacy (n=52).



The survey also sheds light on the civic efficacy of these young people, with the majority expressing a desire to actively enhance their neighborhoods (see Figure 4) and a belief in their power to effect positive change in their communities.

Figure 5: Percent of Pathways participant agreement regarding attitudes towards violence (n=52).



As illustrated in Figure 5, respondents' attitudes towards violence are a little more complex. A majority of respondents indicated that not fighting back when others push them around represents a potential loss of respect, and 53% viewed physical confrontation as a necessary recourse. However, the results indicate an overall inclination towards peaceful resolution, with 64% confident in their ability to defuse fights verbally. Interestingly, only a minority, 38%, feel that avoiding physical conflict might make their friends think they're afraid, indicating a lesser concern of peer judgment in these scenarios.

Discussion of Interview Data

The analysis of Pathways program interviews revealed six key themes. These themes encompass Overall Satisfaction, denoting participants' contentment with the program and its staff; Positive Life Changes, signifying significant improvements in various life aspects due to program participation; Mentorship, highlighting the role of Pathways mentors in providing guidance and support; Academic Success, highlighting achievements and positive educational outcomes; Future Aspirations, reflecting participants' personal and professional goals; and Challenges, encompassing obstacles encountered during their time in the Pathways program.

Overall Satisfaction with the Pathways Program

Interview participants reported high satisfaction with the Pathways program. They also had positive feedback regarding program staff and mentors, underscoring that these roles were a crucial source of support. For example, one respondent stated,

They have always supported me. I've always felt comfortable enough where I could just tell them straight up what I was going through without worrying. – Pathways Participant

Respondents noted that they felt empowered by the help of supportive staff and the program's holistic assistance and that these things helped facilitate personal growth, increased their self-confidence, and offered a sense of agency over their futures.

Acknowledgment of Positive Life Changes and Impact of Pathways

Similarly, participants described an enhanced ability to avoid trouble and steering away from risky behaviors and negative influences. This change reflects improved decision-making skills, increased resilience to peer pressure, and a fundamental shift in mindset towards a more positive self-image and future-oriented outlook.

I was committed to changing my grades and just bettering myself in school instead of just doing bad. So I was at least putting in effort to get better and get stuff done. – Pathways Participant

Focus group participants also reiterated the positive impact that Pathways had on their lives. Some described the experience as transformative, stating that services extended beyond surface level and supported shifts in behavior, mindset, and their life trajectory. By investing time in the program, having access to staff and mentors when they needed, and ultimately buying into the program, they were able to make better choices; these choices helped keep them out of trouble. For example, two interviewees noted that their ankle monitors were removed while in the program. These respondents reported that Pathways helped them grow, take personal responsibility for their actions, and elevate their self-esteem and confidence, while reducing risky behavior and the legal consequences that often follow. The support and skill development provided assisted them in complying with regulations, leading to the eventual removal of their electronic monitors. This, in turn, granted them the freedom to pursue education, employment, and community engagement with fewer legal restrictions.

Throughout my courts, they were supporting me, they were helping me and all that. They helped me get out of juvenile, and then they helped me get off ankle monitoring. They helped me improve school, they helped me with getting to after school, and do programs so I can better myself. – Pathways Participant

At first, when I was on the ankle monitor, they were helping me by like, keeping my mind off of it. That I had an ankle monitor, They helped me believe that everything's gonna be good. And at the end of the day, they gave me a better mindset. – Pathways Participant

The Impact and Importance of Mentorship

Participants described the mentorship they received from staff as pivotal to their success in the Pathways program. Beyond emotional assistance, mentors provided a reliable space for youth to express themselves and process experiences, which is particularly valuable for those who have faced trauma or adversity. For example, another respondent stated:

I would see them as, you know, more like a brother and sister, an older brother and sister, where I could sit and just, you know, explain my feelings. So if it was mental health issues, 'cause I do deal with a lot of mental health issues, so I would always run to them if I couldn't tell my parents or my siblings, you know, I would always tell them, oh, look like this is what I'm going through.

As positive role models, Pathways staff boost participants' self-confidence and resilience. Respondents reported the mentor–mentee relationship as critical to building trust, belonging, and motivation.

They don't really be too hard on you. They are really trying to motivate you and get you to where you need to be. Like whatever you are going through, they're gonna try to make it positive. – Pathways Participant

Improvement in Academic Performance and Desire to Succeed

Participants reported significant improvements in their academic success, attributing it to the program's tailored support mechanisms. These include regular meetings, tutoring sessions, and collaborative development of academic success plans that assist participants in setting and tracking their academic goals. Participants reported greater confidence regarding their academic abilities, improved school attendance, heightened dedication to their education, and better grades.

When I got goals, it's easier for me to reach 'em. It makes me wanna go to school... It makes it a little bit more attainable. – Pathways Participant

She pushed me to get better grades, better attendance, get off probation and impacted me, in like beneficial ways. She helped me with my internship, ways to find money make legal money. – Pathways Participant

Desire to Make a Positive Impact

Almost all interview participants reported a desire and even commitment to have a positive impact in their communities and on youth facing similar circumstances and challenges. Respondents spoke about wanting to become mentors and role models and their desire to break cycles of violence and adversity in their communities.

It's your ability to develop relationships with the mentors, relationships with younger students, and it kind of gives you career insight. . . . I want to be in their shoes because one of the reasons why I want to work with kids now is because of this program. This program has taught me like, okay, maybe like my passion is working with kids. – Pathways Participant

Program Helped Participants Learn to Embrace Therapy

A participant spoke about having to overcome their initial hesitancy to engage in therapy. This participant reported initially feeling apprehensive about opening up to therapists but, with the help of program staff, they were able to overcome this feeling and benefit from this resource.

Therapy, in the beginning, I didn't wanna talk to him. Then [staff] found me a good one. She told me I didn't have to sit on the zoom and talk for a long time. I feel like I can say whatever I feel like saying. That helps me and it's good. Because there's some days I need that. – Pathways Participant

Challenge of Staff Turnover and Changes

Two participants mentioned the challenge of dealing with staff turnover within the program. They stated that the loss of staff was hard on them because of the positive relationships they had built.

Recently we had another mentor leave. It's just sad having to say goodbyes because, you know, just having, like, they're going on to do better things, but it's just like, it's been challenging because this program, like it's very big on developing relationships with the students, so we get so attached to mentors and they have to go. – Pathways Participant

Impact

In the face of challenging circumstances, Pathways members demonstrated hope for the future and a dedication to the common good—sentiments often absent in those affected by violence, residing in violent communities, and entangled in the criminal legal and carceral systems.

Violence Interruption

The Violence Interruption program was created to identify the root causes of violent conflicts and to interrupt or prevent further violence. Violence Interruption provides solutions to combat cycles of violence throughout Oakland neighborhoods. Using a Credible Messenger model, Violence Interrupters (VIs) connect with participants through their own lived experiences to build positive relationships and provide the levels of support needed to mitigate conflicts. VIs promote alternatives to violence by providing on-the-ground mediation services intended to diffuse tensions that might otherwise lead to violence among groups and gang-involved individuals. Violence Interrupters focus on community members preparing to defend or retaliate against a perceived enemy. Research on similar violence intervention programs, such as Cure Violence, which has been implemented in many cities across the country, has shown that this type of intervention can reduce violent incidents within communities, decrease retaliatory violence and criminal justice involvement, as well as provide nonviolence conflict resolution skills.²² As part of their conflict mediation services, VIs conduct safety assessments and relocate families to safe locations when needed.

Violence Interrupter Process

VIs go through an assessment process to determine what happened and how to approach a situation where violence or conflict took place.

Step 1: Receive notification of incident and assign a VI based on location.

Step 2: Contextualize what happened and who's involved.

Step 3: Connect with involved parties to determine what the next steps are.

Step 4: Work towards resolution.

Additionally, the Violence Interruption Ambassador program is a street-based internship program that recruits influential men and women from Oakland neighborhoods who were previously considered the source of the problem and/or formerly incarcerated. The program leverages the knowledge and skills of these individuals by providing them with opportunities to earn financial incentives by (a) removing themselves from “street life,” and (b) assisting in conflict mediations to prevent those situations from escalating to violence. Each Ambassador is mentored by a senior VI, and becomes additional eyes and ears, keeping VIs informed of potential community conflicts or flare-ups. Three ambassadors have made the transition from intern to full-time VI staff. There were 522 mediations between October 2020 and June 2023. Mediations can look very different,

²² Butts, J. A., Roman, C. G., Bostwick, L., & Porter, J. R. (2015). Cure violence: A public health model to reduce gun violence. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 36, 39–53.

but broadly speaking they involve bringing together two individuals or groups to mediate a conflict or tension.

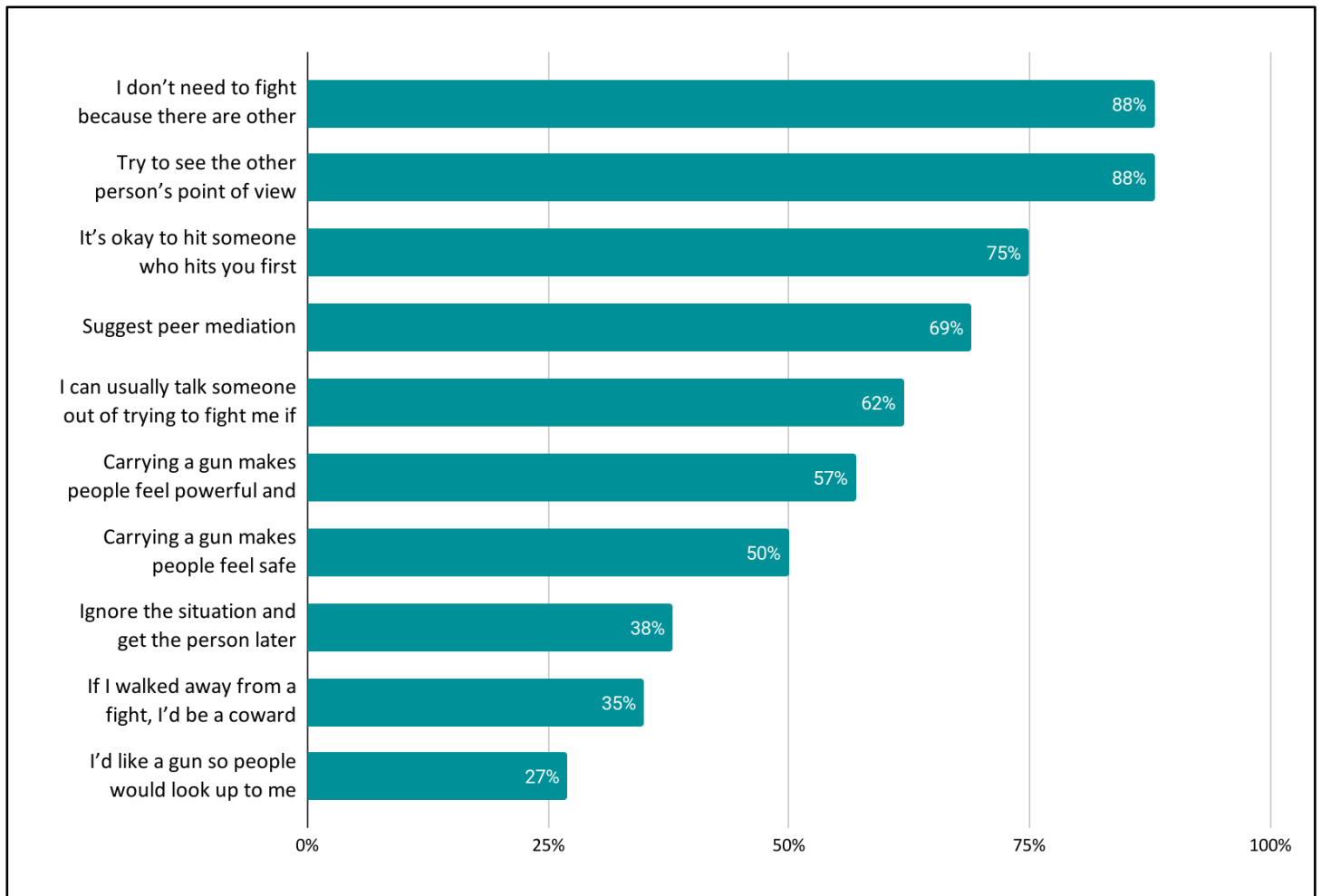
Discussion of Survey Data

Overall, the Violence Interruption program shows evidence of having a positive impact on participants' lives. Based on survey data, it is evident that the program has been successful in promoting non-violent conflict resolution strategies and fostering a sense of community among participants.

In terms of conflict resolution, a striking 88% of respondents said they shifted towards non-violent methods for dealing with anger and a majority are confident in their ability to defuse potential fights through communication. This suggests the program may be effective in promoting peaceful conflict resolution strategies (see Figure 6).

When it comes to shifting opinions on attitudes towards violence, a more nuanced narrative emerges. A majority of the participants no longer viewed walking away from a fight as cowardice, yet most still saw self-defense as justifiable. This complex view extends to their opinions on guns, with many respondents viewing guns as symbols of safety and power, but not as tools for gaining respect. These findings suggest a lingering belief in the effectiveness or necessity of force or threat of force for personal safety.

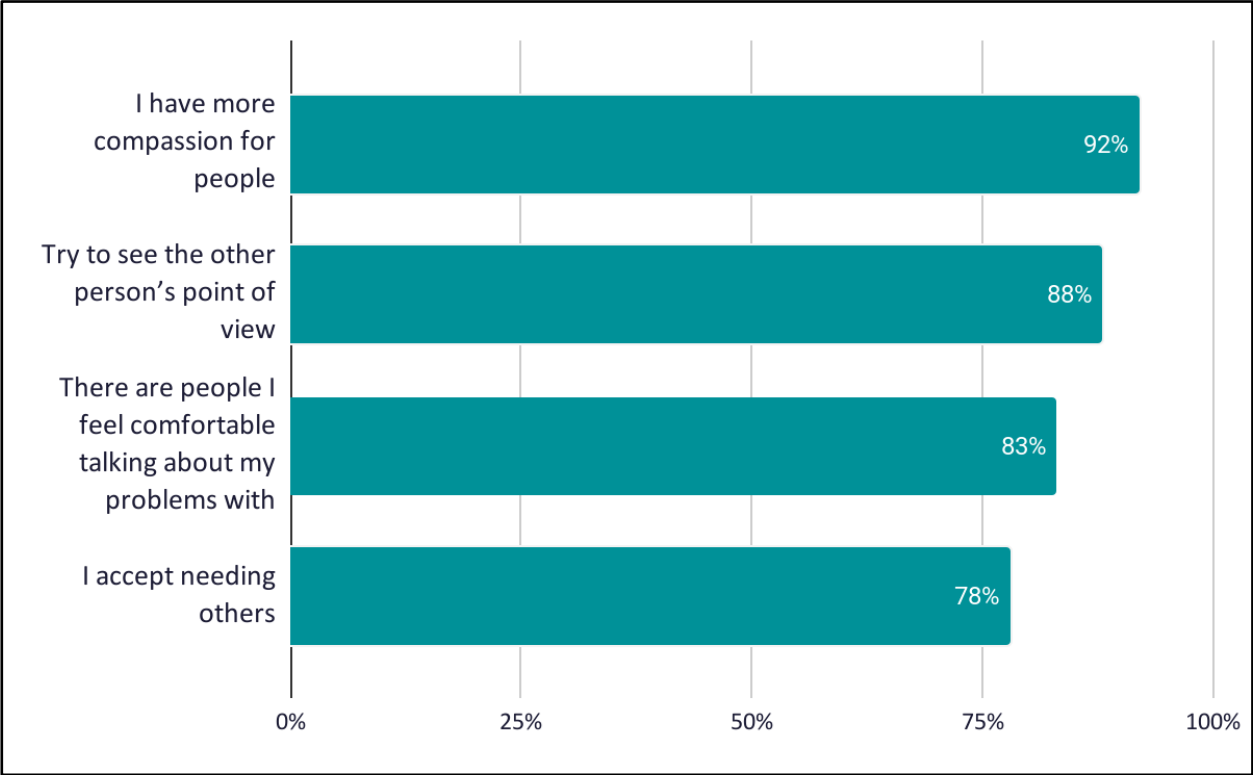
Figure 6: Percent of participant agreement with themes of conflict resolution, violent intentions, and gun violence (n=41).



Participants also indicated that there was an improvement in their ability to form meaningful connections within their community. A significant number of them have expressed comfort in seeking support and showing empathy, with 78% acknowledging the importance of needing others, and over 80% feeling comfortable discussing their problems and trying to understand others' perspectives. Furthermore, the program has been successful in establishing a strong support system among participants. The majority felt they had dependable support for help and guidance, which is vital for mental health and resilience amidst violence and stress (see Figure 7).²³

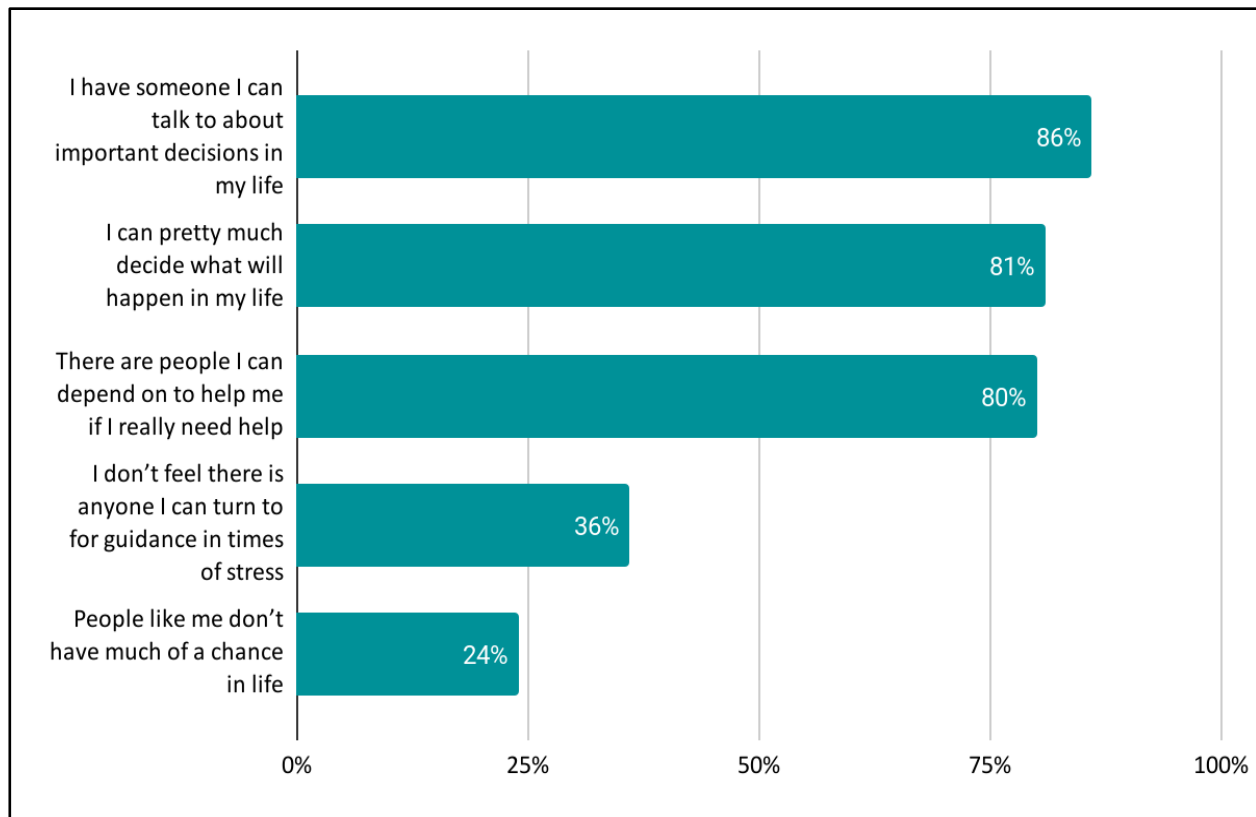
²³ Panter-Brick, C., & Eggerman, M. (2011). Understanding culture, resilience, and mental health: The production of hope. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice* (pp. 369-386). Springer New York.

Figure 7: Percent of participant agreement with themes of prosocial behavior and interdependence (n=41).



Encouragingly, the Violence Interruption program has had a positive effect on reducing fatalistic attitudes. A significant majority disagreed with the notion that they have little chance in life and instead believed in their ability to shape their futures. This contrasts with the often fatalistic attitudes that can arise in under-resourced communities due to systemic issues such as racial segregation, poverty, and lack of access to opportunities. This suggests that the Violence Interruption program may be effective in promoting a sense of personal agency and optimism.

Figure 8. Percent of participant agreement with themes of fatalism (n=41).



In summary, the Violence Interruption program has shown evidence of impacting participants' lives and shifting attitudes on conflict resolution, personal agency, and community connectedness. These findings underscore the importance of such interventions in mitigating the psychological and life impacts of violence along with fostering resilience and hope for the future.^{24 25}

Discussion of Interview Data

The analysis of focus groups and interviews conducted with Violence Interrupters revealed five key themes. These themes include Community Engagement and Trust Building, which relates to efforts to actively engage with the community and establish trust in Oakland; Authenticity and Street Credibility, which highlights the importance of VIs' authenticity and credibility within the community; Safety Assessment and Risk

²⁴ The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. (2022). *Transformative guidance on victim services funding for hospital-based violence intervention programs*. Office for Victims of Crime. Retrieved from <https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/transformative-guidance-victim-services-funding-hospital-based-violence>

²⁵ The Center for American Progress. (2022). *Community-Based Violence Interruption Programs Can Reduce Gun Violence*. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/community-based-violence-interruption-programs-can-reduce-gun-violence/>

Mitigation, which refers to the evaluation of safety factors and the implementation of strategies to manage potential risks; Challenges and Obstacles, which encompasses difficulties faced by Vis; and Impact, which reflects the influence and effects of the Violence Interruption program in Oakland.

Community Engagement and Trust Building

Community engagement and trust building were central themes among VIs, highlighting their unique and effective approach to their work. Distinct from law enforcement, VIs are dedicated community members deeply committed to neighborhood well-being. Across interviews and focus groups VIs highlighted their priorities of forming genuine connections in their communities and recognizing that trust is hard-earned, especially in violence-affected communities.²² As one VI shared:

Coming into this work, somebody knew that my community trusted me. That's how I got into this work. When I wasn't a VI, but just out in the streets, and people had a problem in my neighborhood, it was always brought to my attention. So my community, they trust me to the fullest.

During interviews, staff shared that having established credibility and rapport within their communities is central to achieving their goals of reducing gun violence and retaliation.²⁶ By actively listening, understanding, and connecting with individuals on a personal level, VIs are ultimately able to earn the trust of those they serve. To the VIs we interviewed, this trust is invaluable when mediating conflicts or intervening in high-intensity situations.

Authenticity and Street Credibility

Authenticity is a cornerstone trait consistently emphasized by VIs in their community engagement and conflict mediation work. Violence Interruption team members stressed the importance of remaining true to themselves in their interactions and this authenticity is closely tied to their credibility and effectiveness.

One source of VIs' credibility lies in their shared background with the communities they serve. They come from the same neighborhoods, offering a deep understanding of local challenges and complexities. This shared identity fosters trust, as community members view VIs as authentic representatives of their areas.²⁷

What helps a lot is just having that credibility. Being involved with both sides and still being in the streets and carrying that respect. – Violence Interrupter

²⁶ Wical, W., Richardson, J., & Bullock, C. (2020). A credible messenger: The role of the violence intervention specialist in the lives of young black male survivors of violence. *Violence and Gender*, 7(2), 66–69. <https://doi.org/10.1089/vio.2019.0026>

²⁷ Hazler, R. J., & Carney, J. V. (2002). Empowering peers to prevent youth violence. *The Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, 41, 129–149. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-490X.2002.tb00137.x>

Authenticity also stems from VIs' street knowledge, encompassing local dynamics, power structures, and personal connections within the community. This insight allows them to navigate sensitive situations effectively, identify key influencers and sources of conflict, and address underlying issues. Their authenticity enables VIs to connect with individuals involved in conflicts, offering guidance and alternatives to violence.

We know already what happened. Who already got shot and the reason why, or what led up to it, because we that much connected within the community, right? So we go up in there with that understanding. – Violence Interrupter

Safety Assessments Prevent and Address Conflict

Violence Interruption team members highlighted the importance of safety assessments and risk management. According to these individuals, safety assessments are crucial to prevent and address conflicts within their communities. This assessment involves a meticulous process of gathering information from their communities or drawing upon their own street knowledge and personal connections to get to the root of conflicts or potential violence. Through safety assessments, VIs are able to identify key players, affiliations, and the history of conflicts in Oakland.

Each one of them [Mediations] is a risk. Each one, you take it as a risk because we really don't know the mentality at that moment. So everything is high risk till you get to go through our initial steps. But everything is approached as high risk because it could take a turn at any given moment. – Violence Interrupter

VIs also evaluate the risk of retaliation and escalation in conflicts, and team members noted this was crucial for determining the most effective intervention to prevent violence. Insights from safety assessments guide their approach, whether mediating conflicts, facilitating dialogues, or arranging relocations in high-risk cases. This comprehensive approach helps keep communities safer and contributes to neighborhood peace and stability.

You measure it by your communication. So if you are able to contact somebody that knows somebody and they're open for a meeting, they're gonna go from high to medium. And then that's how we try to address that. And then if we get a resolve or come to a meeting ground, then that's low. And then sometimes it's just unknown. They came to it, they said they agreed, but their body language said it was different. – Violence Interrupter

Challenges and Obstacles

VIs face notable challenges and obstacles in their roles. One significant challenge highlighted by VIs is the obstruction they often face from law enforcement. This can come in the form of not allowing VIs into crime scenes to speak to victims or witnesses in the immediate aftermath of violence or the perception that VIs and law enforcement work collaboratively. Despite viewing their work as crucial for community safety, VIs sometimes face resistance or a lack of understanding from law enforcement personnel.

Because of our street credibility we can't be out getting labeled a snitch. It's like that incident, we were on the scene last month and one of the girls was like, that's [staff member name], she worked with the police. I was like, 'Oh no, I don't work with the police, I work with the families and mediate. – Violence Interrupter

The nature of the VI role itself presents unique challenges, as the work is demanding and operates around the clock. VIs need to be constantly available to prevent and mediate conflicts promptly, which can be mentally and emotionally draining.²⁸ This demanding schedule can strain their personal lives and work–life balance. However, VIs remain dedicated to their mission of reducing violence and advocating for peace within their communities. Their resilience in the face of these obstacles underscores their commitment to creating safer and more peaceful communities.

Sometimes they want us [VIs] to be cool 'cause they don't know if we're the police, or don't know what's going on, so sometimes they say it's cool, but then that energy is like nah. Or they say he cool but it ain't. So everything is hot. – Violence Interrupter

Impact

The VIs' work extends beyond conflict mediation to organizing community events that bring together individuals from different neighborhoods and rival gangs, promoting peace through tangible demonstrations of alternatives to violence such as baseball, basketball games, and community events.

The impact of Violence Interrupters in their communities highlights the potential for positive change when trust, community engagement, and authentic connections drive violence prevention efforts.²⁹ They demonstrate that individuals deeply connected to their communities can make a lasting impact on neighborhood safety through grassroots initiatives and collaborative efforts. One interviewee described the importance of engaging with the community and bringing people together to play baseball:

North Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco - these are different areas that usually don't hang out with each other. To bring everybody together as one, that's a big success. Because these are some guys that, once upon a time, have shot at each other, that tried to kill each other. – Violence Interrupter

²⁸ Bounds, D.T., & Posey, P.D. (2022). A resistance framework for racially minoritized youth behaviors during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 32(3), 959–980. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12792>

²⁹ Kingston, B. E., Zimmerman, M. A., Wendel, M. L., Gorman-Smith, D., Wright-Kelly, E., Mattson, S. A., & Trudeau, A.-R. T. (n.d.). Developing and implementing community-level strategies for preventing youth violence in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 111(S1), S20–S24. [10.2105/AJPH.2021.306281](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306281)

Khadafy Washington Project

The analysis of focus groups and interviews with the founder of the Khadafy Washington Project and its staff revealed five key themes. These themes include Origins in Grief and Empathy, which explores the motivations behind establishing or joining KWP; Cultural Sensitivity and Individualized Support, which highlights KWP's commitment to recognizing cultural diversity and providing personalized support; Emotional Impact and Self-Care delves into the emotional effects of staff involvement and discussions on self-care practices; Challenges and Resource Needs covers the difficulties faced within the project and identifies resource requirements for addressing these challenges; and Measuring Success through Impact examines the methods and criteria used to assess KWP's success by evaluating its impact on the community.

The Khadafy Washington Project (KWP) sends crisis responders into the immediate aftermath of each Oakland homicide to support families and friends of the victim. KWP connected with 353 individuals impacted by recent homicides. Their initial objective was to reach 225, so this means that KWP exceeded this objective by 57%.

In August of 2000, Marilyn Washington Harris lost her son Khadafy to gun violence at McClymonds High School. The aftermath of this tragedy was filled with chaos and confusion for the family, and there was no one there to help. The Khadafy Washington project emerged out of Marilyn's determination to support other people facing similar situations. She reported that there had to be an easier way for parents who have to deal with grief and trauma from the loss of a child. She stated:

I started looking at some of the things that I had to go through from the coroner's office to victims of crimes, to talking to the mortuary. It just didn't make sense. So I figured out a way to make it shorter, for any parent that came after me, that was what started the Khadafy Washington Project.

KWP's staff described their commitment to creating a safer and more nurturing community. KWP staff mentioned being motivated by their own encounters with gun violence and family involvement in gangs. Their personal experiences motivate them to provide support and resources to those affected by violence while also working to break the cycle of violence in their community.

Growing up in West Oakland back then all the community moms were your mom. So she [Mrs. Washington] was like one of the community moms and just knowing that he

[Khadafy Washington] passed away, it just really hurt me. I lost a lot of family and friends to gun violence. – KWP Staff

Cultural Sensitivity and Individualized Support

The Khadafy Washington Project places a strong emphasis on cultural sensitivity and individualized support when assisting families affected by violence. This approach considers the cultural values, beliefs, and traditions of each family in order to ensure that support is relevant and sensitive to their needs.²¹ KWP's staff also report that, in taking these measures, they foster trust and encourage families to confidently seek assistance.

There's no cookie cutter way to do it. You have to do everybody as an individual. Some people are not going to be in an Orthodox way to work with some will and some won't. But the majority of the people, all they really want to know is that somebody cares enough to come and try to help them. – Marilyn Washington Harris

Factors such as the severity of violence, financial situation, emotional needs, and preferred coping methods are also considered.

Emotional Impact and Self-Care

Supporting families affected by violence is emotionally taxing for KWP staff. Due to the nature of the work, staff report experiencing compassion fatigue.³⁰ As noted earlier, the team works deep in the trenches, providing assistance to individuals experiencing severe grief and trauma.

One thing that I've definitely implemented is to get connected to everything, but attach to nothing, because you could easily find yourself getting attached to families. And unfortunately, there's times where it's an ongoing case, where today I'm helping a mom with one of her sons and tomorrow it could be her husband or somebody else. – KWP Staff

As a result, KWP staff mentioned the importance of prioritizing self-care, setting boundaries, and developing coping strategies. Staff reported actively engaging in these activities to sustain themselves along with seeking support from colleagues, friends, and mental health providers; practicing mindfulness; and pursuing personal hobbies.

Lack of Resources Impedes Healing

Interviewees spoke about the financial burdens, particularly funeral costs, many families face after the loss of a loved one. KWP recognizes the importance of financial aid and offers support to alleviate this stress, allowing families to focus on healing rather than financial concerns. Overcoming barriers to accessing financial support is also a

³⁰ Rossi, A., Cetrano, G., Pertile, R., Rabbi, L., Donisi, V., Grigoletti, L., Curtolo, C., Tansella, M., Thornicroft, G., & Amaddeo, F. (2012). Burnout, compassion fatigue, and compassion satisfaction among staff in community-based mental health services. *Psychiatry Research*, 200(2-3), 933–938. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2012.07.029>

challenge that KWP acknowledges, and the staff actively seeks strategies to assist families in overcoming these obstacles.

There aren't any resources for youth. So of course, they're going to go to the street because it's not where dad works, mom stays home or whatever. Sometimes it's a single mom raising more than five kids. So more resources for them as well, because we know that the streets will chew up our kids and spit them out in a heartbeat. – KWP Staff

As highlighted by the previous quote, KWP staff emphasized the need for more resources, especially for at-risk youth, to prevent their involvement in violence or harmful activities.³¹ Collaborating with various stakeholders, social services, mental health professionals, and community organizations is a fundamental strategy employed by KWP to create a comprehensive support network. Through financial assistance, advocacy, collaboration, and unwavering commitment, KWP plays a crucial role in helping families overcome challenges, find hope, and heal in the face of adversity.

Measuring Success through Impact

Families who receive assistance often become advocates for violence prevention and positive change within their communities. This transformation from recipients of aid to advocates exemplifies the enduring influence of KWP on individuals and the broader community. By addressing the root causes of violence and promoting unity, KWP contributes to creating a safer and more compassionate community.

I was able to see some of the moms there, [at the Celebration of Life Ceremony]. They had moments where they cried or they laughed or they hugged. So it was just beautiful to be able to have that safe space because as women, it's a challenge to trust one another, but because the trust and the relationship was built and that was already established, they were able to do that together. – KWP Staff

The Khadafy Washington Project serves as a powerful example of how personal grief, empathy, and a steadfast pursuit of positive change can converge to inspire a broader community to strive for a safer, more compassionate, and hopeful future.

³¹ Fagan, A. A., & Catalano, R. F. (2013). What works in youth violence prevention: A review of the literature. *Research on Social Work Practice, 23*(2), 141–156. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1049731512465899>

Discussion of Findings and Impact on Goals

Leveraging both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the evaluation team identified several successes and challenges linked to the experiences of individuals enrolled in services through Pathways and Violence Interruption programs, as well as those affiliated with the Khadafy Washington Project.

This report section will explore the goals and objectives set by Youth ALIVE! for the BSCC grant, with a particular focus on highlighting Youth ALIVE's approach and advancement in meeting the measurable objectives outlined in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4.

Goal 1: Reduce Re-Victimization and Promote Healing

As discussed earlier, the three focal programs under consideration have showcased their efficacy in achieving the goals of fostering healing and preventing re-victimization. Specifically, these programs have demonstrated an ability to successfully intervene in the pervasive cycles of violence and retaliation that can too frequently trap young people within the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Youth ALIVE! operates within a community-oriented framework that distinguishes it from law enforcement and the court system. The organization has a network of interconnected programs that respond swiftly to incidences of violence, work to mediate, and deescalate conflicts while addressing safety need and promoting long term healing.

*We work from a community standpoint. We're not the police, and we're not the court system, so **we work to help the persons that are involved on both sides.** We look to be able to **mediate the problem before it escalates.** But we also try to **provide whatever services** that the city is providing for our people. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member*

*You have to remember when you lived there. I [didn't] want no handout, I [wanted] an opportunity. **You gotta find out what people have— and then give them opportunities and hope.** Then they'll take advantage of the resources; then they can navigate through the system. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member*

As shown in Table 2, Youth ALIVE! achieved or surpassed nearly all of the outlined measurable objectives. They connected crisis responders to victims, conducting safety assessments, reducing re-victimization, and providing intensive case management. Urgent safety and health needs are met through wraparound services, and sustained healing is facilitated by linking individuals to various essential resources. Although the program aimed to enroll 25% of victims

in mental health counseling for trauma healing, it fell slightly short of this ambitious goal.

Objectives & Results

Table 2: Youth ALIVE! objectives for Goal 1.

Objective	Result
A. Within 48 hours of victimization, connect crisis responders to social networks of 95% of homicide victims	100%
B. Outreach to 95% of inpatient victims within 1 hour of referral and 90% of outpatient victims within 48 hours	100%
C. Conduct 110 hospital bedside safety assessments to address retaliation and re-victimization risks	491
D. Reduce re-victimization for high-risk victims, with a benchmark of less than 5% injury recidivism	4%
E. Enroll 300 victims in intensive case management	488
F. Set victims on positive life trajectory as measured by 95% making progress on life plan goals	** ³²
G. Enroll at least 25% of victims in mental health counseling to support healing from trauma	19%
H. Engage the community and police in trust building by fostering communication and pursuing policy changes to make the department more victim-centered in at least 2 meetings/engagements per year	Yes

Youth ALIVE! relies on a network of interconnected programs designed to quickly respond to incidents of violence, tailoring interventions to the specific needs of the client. The interconnected programs are also able to meet **urgent safety and health needs** as well as promote **sustained healing and violence reduction**.

Urgent Safety and Health Needs

We got, like, wraparound services . . . the person first talks to [the client] and finds out what's going on directly with them. 'Cause everybody's situation is different, and then we push them to whoever in our office can help them. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

In the immediate aftermath of violence, the focus is on rapid identification, support for urgent needs, and assessing safety risks. Crisis responders reach out to the individuals who have been harmed and their social networks to conduct safety assessments and

³² Not Available - Based on the available data, we cannot measure this objective.

enroll in intensive case management. Staff members use the safety assessment to inform intervention strategies.

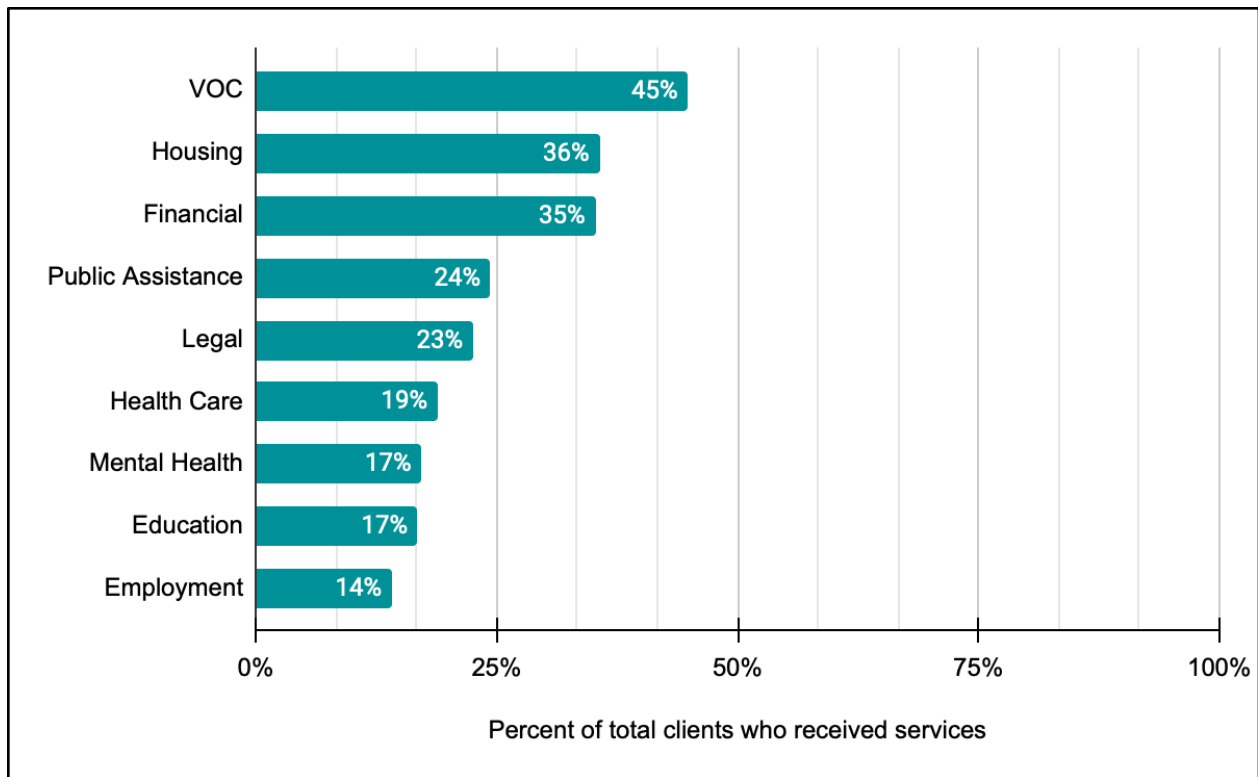
One staff member describes the process:

We do a safety assessment [once we speak to the victim]. We'll get all their info, ask them if they feel like they're going to be a shooting victim again, do they feel like their life is in danger, do they know who shot them . . . We don't necessarily want to know who shot them because we don't want any police involvement, but we do ask them if they feel safe . . . and then we have a basic conversation and learn about them . . . and then we try to offer them services. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

During the grant reporting period, VIs conducted 491 hospital bedside safety assessments and enrolled 488 clients into intensive case management. Clients received multiple types of services depending on their assessed needs (See Figure 10). As one staff member stated:

If they want to accept [the services], then we provide them . . . But not all the time [they] do [want to accept the services] . . . We just let them know we'll be around. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

Figure 10: Percent of participants receiving services by type.



Sustained Healing and Violence Reduction

The long-term focus of Youth ALIVE! is on sustained healing and violence reduction. Youth ALIVE! provides ongoing support that extends beyond the immediate aftermath, linking individuals to essential resources such as housing assistance, education and employment services, legal aid, public assistance, and more. Recognizing and addressing challenges and resource needs is crucial to achieving the overarching goals of reducing re-victimization and promoting healing. Notably, less than 5% of clients were referred with new violence-related injuries during the reporting period.

Goal 2: Reduce Retaliatory Violence

The positive impact of Youth ALIVE! programs is multifaceted. They not only address the immediate consequences of violence but also proactively disrupt patterns that contribute to the perpetuation of harm. In doing so, these programs and their staff function as pivotal agents of change. Furthermore, the success of these programs is rooted in the tangible stories of transformation and empowerment shared by the participants. Through a nuanced combination of therapeutic interventions, mentorship, and skill-building activities, these programs empower individuals to break free from cycles of violence, providing them with the tools necessary to identify and work towards their own goals.

As shown in Table 3, throughout the grant lifecycle, VIs conducted 522 mediations between groups and individuals identified as having disputes. The mediations are designed to de-escalate tensions and resolve disputes peacefully, therefore reducing the likelihood of further violence. Out of these mediations, 93% ended in resolution. In some cases, when the risk is deemed high, VIs may also be involved in facilitating relocations for the safety of community members. Youth ALIVE! has had 151 requests throughout the grant lifecycle and has relocated 55 individuals.

Objectives & Results

Table 3: Youth ALIVE! objectives for Goal 2.

Objective	Result
I. Conduct 350 mediations between identified individuals and groups	522
J. Resolve at least 90% of identified disputes mediated	93%
K. Arrange emergency relocation for 75 families deemed in immediate danger	55
L. Identify potential safety issues, with a benchmark of a report on retaliation risks within 12 hours and a status report within 72 hours for at least 75% of referrals	Yes

The foundational principles contributing to the success of the Violence Interruption program include its adeptness in establishing community trust and its proficiency in

evaluating risk, safety, and tension. The program's capacity to build trust within the community, rooted in shared backgrounds and genuine interactions, positions VIs as trusted allies. Their street knowledge and personal connections further empower them to skillfully assess risks and mediate conflicts.

The threat of violence on the streets of Oakland is ongoing and ever-shifting. Our intervention programs work directly with young people caught up in the cycle of violence. We step into the tensest situations to discourage retaliation, defuse hostilities, and provide victims pathways to a safer, healthier life. – Youth ALIVE! Intervention Programs Description

“We push a guns-down movement and we work from a community standpoint. We’re not the police, and we’re not like the court system, so we work to help the persons that are involved on both sides. We look to be able to mediate the problem before it escalates. But we also try to provide whatever services that the city is providing for our people.” – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

Community Trust

You’ve got to be dedicated, you’ve got to bleed Oakland. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

You can’t come into this . . . looking at it like it’s a job . . . It takes a lot of passion. You’ve got to be dedicated to these streets, to this community. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

After we’re done doing our job, we still do it. You can’t sit here and tell a person that told you everything that it ain’t [your] job, ‘cause it’s bigger than that. We’re still engaged, [even if] it’s not on paper. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

We’re here for the community. The majority of us, I think we all feel that we owe the community a great deal. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

The effectiveness of VIs hinges on community trust, which is fundamental to their work of detecting and assessing conflicts accurately. As one VI stated,

Our safety assessments depend on our intel from the streets. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

By embedding themselves in communities where they have established or are working to establish deep relationships, Youth ALIVE! staff can identify tensions and present themselves as experts for community members to turn to when needed. It is more than “walking a beat” and even more than responding to incidents. The staff are aware of everything happening. As one staff member described it,

You’ve got to know who gave out the turkeys for Thanksgiving, who had the school supplies, who’s the daycare lady we could trust. You’ve got to know everything about your community. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

One critical element to establishing community trust is ensuring VIs are viewed as credible within their communities. It means finding people who are aware of the “street knowledge” of the community and are “somebody the community accepts.”

Coming into this work, [Youth ALIVE!] knew that my community trusted me. That's how I got into this work. [Before I was a VI], I was just out in the streets, and [when anybody] had a problem in my neighborhood, it was always brought to my attention. So my community, they trust me to the fullest.

Youth ALIVE! staff state that their credibility within the community comes from their shared background, street knowledge, and authentic interactions with the community. These staff members come from the same neighborhoods they are working in, and they have a firsthand understanding of the challenges, issues, and complexities unique to those areas. They are seen as individuals who have experienced many of the same struggles and obstacles faced by residents. This shared background can create a sense of trust, as community members recognize them as authentic representatives of their neighborhoods. These Youth ALIVE! team members also know about the local dynamics, power structures, and personal connections that exist within the community. They can identify key influencers, potential sources of conflict, and the underlying causes of disputes quickly. This deep insight enables them to intervene effectively and mediate conflicts while addressing the root issues. VIs serve as role models, mentors, and allies in their communities, contributing significantly to the well-being and safety of those they serve.

VIs also acknowledge Ambassadors as supporting community trust building. During the grant cycle, 29 formerly incarcerated individuals were employed as Ambassadors. Ambassadors play a pivotal role in collaborating with the Violence Interruption team to further the program’s mission.

Another good thing is we hire Ambassadors from the street. So if we know you have influence over here, then we could get you a little paycheck to help keep the energy down.

Another important component to building this trust is ensuring individuals that VIs are not connected to the police. They are working towards de-escalation, not justice. When responding to an incident, VIs are not focused on justice or accountability; they are focused on keeping people in their communities safe. This is critical to violence reduction. Violence reduction requires operation outside of the traditional legal system (specifically police) given that the traditional legal system seeks “accountability” in a way that likely results in punitive measures, but never truly addresses the harm. Working for justice within the legal system continues the cycle of victimization, while VIs are interrupting that cycle.

You can't read a book and do this kind of work. Or come straight out of college and think you're going to be able to do this kind of work. You've got to be strictly from the hood to

know what's going on. You've got to have that street knowledge. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

In summary, community trust serves as the critical element of VIs' work, aiding them in building connections, fostering safety, and reducing future violence within the communities they serve.

Assessing Risk, Safety, and Tension

VIs work to identify, prioritize, mediate, and diffuse conflict as quickly as possible. Key to this work is safety assessments. The safety assessments involve a multifaceted approach that uses staff members' unique street knowledge and personal connections to identify key players, understand their affiliations, and assess the history of conflicts and grievances. Importantly, staff members evaluate the risk of retaliation and escalation in conflicts. They analyze the potential consequences of interventions or any actions taken by community members involved in disputes. This assessment is critical for determining the most appropriate and effective course of action to prevent further violence.

VIs also highlighted skills that VIs need to be successful in the field responding to conflict. According to VIs, these skills cannot be acquired solely from textbooks or formal training, but rather from their lived experience:

It's got to be in you. If you want to go by the book or go by the trainings, you might as well go to OPD. A lot of the cops, they don't have street training. They're going right off the book. They go to the academy, and they become police officers. They don't know the streets. All they know is what they taught in the academy and what they learn from their partners. So those types of people need to become police. The people like us—we VIs—we got a whole different training that the police don't have. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

Goal 3: Reduce Justice-System Contact

Pathways provides comprehensive support in life planning, education and employment goals, and mentoring to participants, aiming at *permanent freedom from the justice system*. As illustrated in Table 4, Youth ALIVE! surpassed the outlined objectives across all measurable criteria for which data were accessible. The evidence suggests that the organization provided support and services needed to help youth clients attain personal, academic, and professional goals while concurrently reducing their involvement in the justice system.

You let them know: "Hey man, you stay out of trouble. We've got these different resources." We give them things to entice them to do better. – Youth ALIVE! Staff Member

Also, within the scope of this study, Youth ALIVE! enrolled 101 previously incarcerated youth and adults in intensive care management through the Pathways program. Notably,

96% of these participants reported no additional sustained charges following their engagement with the program (i.e., reduced law enforcement contact – See Table 4).

Objectives & Results

Table 4: Youth ALIVE! objectives for Goal 3.

Objective	Result
M. Identify and enroll 60 previously incarcerated youth and adults in intensive case management	101
N. Reduce law enforcement contact for these clients, with benchmark of 75% reporting no additional sustained charges	96%
O. Set clients on positive life trajectory as measured by 95% making progress on life plan goals	** ³³
P. Support client's pro-social behavior as measured by 80% showing growth in social-emotional learning	** ³⁴
Q. Engage 15 formerly incarcerated individuals as "Ambassadors" to support Violence Interruption	29
R. Provide opportunities for 90% of Ambassadors help facilitate a conflict mediation	100%

There were two key components highlighted within the data around reducing justice-system contact: **support services** and **individualized mentoring**.

Support Services

I had joined it because, you know, I was getting into trouble and there was a lot of stuff going on . . . throughout my [legal proceedings], they were supporting me, they were helping me . . . They helped me get out of [juvenile hall] on an ankle monitor and then they helped me get off the ankle monitor.” – Youth ALIVE! Youth Participant

Pathways provides comprehensive support to participants. As one participant stated, “Whatever help I need . . . I can ask for it.”

While participants highlighted various supports, two supports were identified as the most impactful: **education** and **employment**.

³³ Progress on life plan goals is captured qualitatively in monthly case management notes. However, this data does not translate well to quantitative measure. Youth ALIVE! is exploring how to best capture progress quantitatively moving forward.

³⁴ Despite the best effort of Impact Justice and Youth ALIVE! staff, the follow up survey response rate remained low. As outlined in the methodology section, only 17 youth completed both Survey 1 and Survey 2. Despite this low sample size preliminary analysis was completed but no discernible differences were observed. Consequently, we are unable to furnish the percentage for this specific objective.

Between 2020 and 2022, Pathways supported 72% of participants with enrolling or re-enrolling in school. Youth ALIVE! staff worked with participants to identify and work towards education goals, as well as providing ad hoc support, such as tutoring sessions or helping fill out applications. According to staff and participants, these elements provide structure, accountability, and individualized support that empower youth to set and achieve academic goals, attend school consistently, and ultimately achieve higher grades.

Additionally, between 2020 and 2022, Pathways supported 32% of participants in obtaining employment.

Furthermore, interview and survey results suggest that the Pathways program has had a positive impact on participants' attitudes and behaviors in several areas, including community connection, conflict resolution, and optimism. As one participant stated:

I feel like my growth and mindset from coming into this program until right now, it's very different . . . I joined this program because I did have some anger built up in me . . . and through this program [I was able to] get rid of that anger and turn it into something beautiful. – Youth ALIVE! Participant

Youth ALIVE! staff work with participants to develop and use a life map and set personal goals to empower them to envision and actively work towards safer, more successful futures. These tools provide clarity, motivation, accountability, and empowerment, enabling youth to stay focused on their objectives and make tangible progress towards achieving them. As stated by one Youth ALIVE! staff member,

Our main priority is that we lead them to a place where [they] know [they've] been through this, but [they] can still make something good out of it.

Individualized Mentoring

It's nice having [the Youth ALIVE! staff member] there and being able to talk to [them] about college and things I'm stressing about. [They] would always give me solutions and personal advice and build relationships with my teachers. – Youth ALIVE! Youth Participant

*[Youth ALIVE!] staff say that sometimes the teenagers they work with are resigned to death; they joke about it, make predictions on when—and how. They talk about the friends they have already lost. But there's a shift when they begin to develop a relationship with one of our [staff members]. **Having an adult who cares, who shows up, who does what they said they would do, brings healing.** – Youth ALIVE! 2021-22 Annual Report*

Participants described the mentorship they receive from staff as pivotal to their success in the Pathways program. Beyond emotional assistance, mentors provided a reliable space for youth to express themselves and process experiences. In a program often dealing with youth who have experienced trauma or adversity, this emotional support

can be transformative, aiding participants in processing their experiences and building resilience.

Participants highlighted that mentors assisted them in setting and achieving a range of goals, whether short-term or long-term, including education, employment, and life skills. They provided guidance and encouragement, empowering youth to take control of their futures. Additionally, mentors offered valuable personal advice and shared life experiences, aiding participants in making informed decisions and developing life skills. This comprehensive mentorship fosters personal growth, maturity, and life skill development.

In summary, the comprehensive support provided by Pathways, particularly around support services and individualized mentoring, have shown positive results. The mentors offer more than just emotional support; they create a safe environment and trusting relationship for Pathways participants to work through their trauma and be vulnerable. Mentors also help participants set and achieve various short-term and long-term goals encompassing education, employment, and life skills. They provide guidance, encouragement, and personal advice, empowering the youth to take charge of their futures. This comprehensive mentorship approach promotes personal growth, maturity, and the development of life skills.

Summary

Youth ALIVE! employs a multifaceted approach to achieve its goals, with a focus on reducing re-victimization, retaliatory violence, and justice-system contact. They have achieved notable success in connecting crisis responders to homicide victims' social networks, conducting safety assessments, and reducing re-victimization. The organization prioritizes community trust, leveraging staff members' shared backgrounds to establish credibility and emphasizing a lack of connection to the police, as they focus on de-escalation rather than justice. They assess risk, safety, and tension to inform interventions effectively. In addition to reducing re-victimization, Youth ALIVE! conducts numerous mediations and successfully resolves disputes. They enroll previously incarcerated individuals in intensive case management through the Pathways program, achieving a significant reduction in further justice system involvement. Support services, including education and employment support, have been instrumental in achieving these positive outcomes. Individualized mentoring provides emotional support and guidance for setting and achieving various goals.

However, there is still room for growth. Youth ALIVE! fell short in enrolling victims in mental health counseling and emergency relocations. Although Youth ALIVE!'s may have fallen short of its own ambitious objectives, it may be in line with national trends and may be above the national average when it pertains to youth. According to the CDC, data from the National Health Interview Survey shows that in adults 18-44, 23.2% received some type of mental health treatment. Also from the CDC (Sandstone Care), for ages 12-17, approximately 12% of youth engaged in counseling or therapy, while 15% were treated (medication and counseling) overall. Additionally, the projected goal for emergency relocations is something that is directly connected to the levels of community violence within the grant period and number of clients served is determined by factors outside of Youth ALIVE!'s control. Falling short of the projected relocation goals could be seen as a positive trend as the community need did not rise to the level initially anticipated.

Overall, Youth ALIVE! has made substantial progress but can further enhance their efforts by addressing service access barriers, ensuring staff well-being, and considering younger Violence Interrupters to better engage with youth.

Recommendations

1. Identify and alleviate potential roadblocks for clients in accessing services: While many clients accessed various services, there was still a substantial amount that did not. For example, despite a goal of 25% enrolling in mental health, only 19% did so. Youth ALIVE! should explore the reasons why folks are not accessing these services, especially given how effectively they were described as being for participants.
2. Ensure staff wellbeing: Offer resources and tools for staff to prioritize their own mental health and well-being. This may include access to counseling services, stress management workshops, and flexible work arrangements.
3. Staff younger VIs to connect with youth: Many VIs suggested that younger VIs might better connect with younger participants.
4. Implement a retroactive post-survey to more accurately assess the impact of Pathways: Retroactive surveys can be more appropriate than traditional pre- and post-surveys, especially when evaluating behavioral changes and mitigating survey fatigue commonly associated with traditional pre- and post-surveys.
5. Offer tailored training: Develop training programs that are specifically tailored to the needs and realities of VIs. Training should be informed by the experiences and expertise of VIs themselves. It should focus on real-life scenarios and practical skills needed on the streets.
6. Provide reliable community resource access: Ensure that VIs have access to resources that can be used to support their work in the community. This may include funds for emergency interventions, community events, or assistance to individuals in need.

Appendix

Appendix. 01. Demographic Characteristics of Pathways Survey Participants

	n	%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black	28	55%
Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic	21	40.4%
East Asian	2	3.8%
Unspecified/Unknown	1	*
Total	52	
Sexual Orientation		
Straight	43	82%
Gay/Lesbian	3	5.8%
Bisexual	6	11.5%
Total	52	
Gender Identity		
Man	35	68.6%
Woman	16	31.4%
Unspecified/Unknown	1	*
Total	52	

Appendix. 02. Demographic Characteristics of Violence Interruption Survey Participants

	n	%
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black	27	60%
Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic	11	24%
Native American	1	2.2%
Pacific Islander	1	2.2%
White	2	4.4%
Prefer not to say	3	6.7%
Total	45*	100%
Gender Identity		
Man	18	43%
Woman	21	50%
Prefer not to say	2	7%
Total	41	

*Survey participants were instructed to select all that apply

Appendix. 03. Code Book – Pathways Program

Appendix. 03. Pathways Interviews– Codes/Definitions				
Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
Overall Satisfaction	Program Impact	This code is assigned when a participant's response indicates an overarching sense of satisfaction with the Pathways program and program staff. It encompasses how satisfied participants are with the support, assistance, and interactions with the program and staff.	<i>They have always supported me. I've always felt comfortable enough where I could just tell them straight up what I was going through without worrying.</i>	Pathways Interviews 1-7
	Program Delivery			
	Program Resources			
Positive Life Changes	Personal Growth	This code is assigned when a participant's response indicates significant and favorable transformations or improvements in various aspects of their life as a result of their participation in the Pathways program. It encompasses positive developments in personal growth, relationships, and overall well-being.	<i>I was committed to changing my grades and just bettering myself in school instead of just doing bad. So I was at least putting in effort to get better and get stuff done." Pathways interviewee</i>	Pathways Interviews 1-7
	Change of Mindset			
	Improved Opportunities			
Mentorship	Motivation and Inspiration	This code is assigned when a participant's response involves a relationship or interaction where Pathways Mentor provided guidance, support, or expertise. It encompasses discussions of mentor-mentee relationships,	<i>They don't really be too hard on you. They are really trying to motivate you and get you to where you need to be. Like whatever you are going through, they're gonna try to make it positive. Pathways Participant</i>	Pathways Interviews 1-7
	Confidence and Self Esteem			
	Reliability and Trust			

Appendix. 03. Pathways Interviews– Codes/Definitions

Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
		guidance, support, its impact on participants		
Academic Success	Goal Setting and Motivation Program Support	This code is assigned when a participant's response indicates achievements, positive outcomes, or notable experiences related to their academic pursuits or educational journey while in the Pathways program. It encompasses academic accomplishments, improved grades, attendance, educational milestones, and the attainment of academic goals.	<i>When I got goals, it's easier for me to reach 'em. It makes me wanna go to school... It makes it a little bit more attainable</i>	Pathways Interviews 1-7
Future Aspirations	Community Involvement Career Goal Education Goals	This code is assigned when a participant's response expresses their personal or professional goals, ambitions, or desires for the future. It encompasses the participant's vision for what they aim to achieve, accomplish, or become in the future.	<i>It's your ability to develop relationships with the mentors, relationships with younger students, and it kind of gives you career insight. . . . I want to be in their shoes because one of the reasons why I want to work with kids now is because of this program. This program has taught me like, okay, maybe like my passion is working with kids. Pathways Participant</i>	Pathways Interviews 1-7
Challenges	Overcoming Challenges	This code is assigned when a participant's response identifies obstacles, difficulties,	<i>Therapy, in the beginning, I didn't wanna talk to him. Then [staff] found me</i>	Pathways Interview 1, 4, 5

Appendix. 03. Pathways Interviews– Codes/Definitions

Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
	Support Addressing Challenges	setbacks, or adversities they have encountered in their life, while in the Pathways program. It encompasses personal, academic, or situational difficulties.	<i>a good one. She told me I didn't have to sit on the zoom and talk for a long time.</i>	

Appendix. 04. Code Book – Pathways Program

Appendix. 04. Violence Interruption Program Interviews – Codes/Definitions				
Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
Community Engagement and Trust Building	Building Relationships	This code is assigned when a participant's response highlights efforts, strategies, or experiences related to actively engaging with the community and building trust within Oakland. It encompasses actions, initiatives, or behaviors aimed at fostering connections, collaboration, and mutual respect among community members.	<i>That's how I got into this work. When I wasn't a VI, but just out in the streets, and people had a problem in my neighborhood, it was always brought to my attention. So my community, they trust me to the fullest.</i>	VI Focus Groups 1-2 VI Interview 1
Authenticity and Street Credibility	Trust and Connections Respected by Peers and Community Connection to Community	This code is assigned when a participant's response highlights the importance of authenticity and street credibility as VIs for the work they do. It encompasses behaviors, expressions, or attributes that contribute to a VIs genuineness, credibility, and acceptance among peers or the community.	<i>What helps a lot is just having that credibility. Being involved with both sides and still being in the streets and carrying that respect.</i>	VI Focus Groups 1-2 VI Interview 1
Safety Assessment and Risk Mitigation	Risk Identification Connection to Community Conflict Mediation	This code is assigned when a participant's response discusses the evaluation of safety-related factors and the implementation of strategies or measures to identify, minimize, or	<i>Each one of them [Mediations] is a risk . Each one, you take it as a risk because we really don't know the mentality at that moment. So everything is high risk</i>	VI Focus Groups 1-2 VI Interview 1

Appendix. 04. Violence Interruption Program Interviews – Codes/Definitions

Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
		manage potential risks. It encompasses discussions of the program's methods for identifying, preventing, and mediating violence, with an emphasis on enhancing community safety.	<i>till you get to go through our initial steps. But everything is approached as high risk because it could take a turn at any given moment.</i>	
Challenges and Obstacles	Community Resistance Law Enforcement Resistance Trust Building	This code is assigned when a participant's response identifies difficulties, barriers, hurdles, or adverse circumstances that they have encountered as a VI. It encompasses discussions of difficulties, setbacks, limitations, or resistance faced by VIs in their efforts to prevent and address violent incidents within the community.	<i>Sometimes they want us [VIs] to be cool 'cause they don't know if we're the police, or don't know what's going on, so sometimes they say it's cool, but then that energy is like nah. Or they say he cool but it ain't. So everything is hot.</i>	VI Focus Groups 1-2 VI Interview 1
Impact	Reduction in Violent Incidents Reduction in Retaliation Community Building	This code is assigned when a participant's response discusses the influence or effects of the Violence Interruption program in Oakland. It encompasses discussions of the program's influence on reducing violence, improving safety, fostering community relationships, and achieving its intended goals and objectives.	<i>North Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco - these are different areas that usually don't hang out with each other. To bring everybody together as one, that's a big success. Because these are some guys that, once upon a time, have shot at each other, that tried to kill each other.</i>	VI Focus Groups 1-2 VI Interview 1

Appendix. 05. Code Book – Khadafy Washington Project

Appendix. 05. Khadafy Washington Project – Codes/Definitions				
Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
Origins in Grief and Empathy	Personal Loss	This code is assigned when a participant's response discusses their motivation for starting or working for the Khadafy Washington Project, particularly focusing on the role of grief and empathy as driving forces. It encompasses discussions of the emotional and personal experiences that led participants to creating or joining KWP.	<i>I started looking at some of the things that I had to go through from the coroner's office to victims of crimes, to talking to the mortuary. It just didn't make sense. So I figured out a way to make it shorter, for any parent that came t after me, that was what started the Khadafy Washington Project</i>	KWP Focus Group 1
	Empathy			KWP Interview 1
	Motivations			
Cultural Sensitivity and Individualized Support	Individualized Support	This code is assigned when a participant's response highlights the Khadafy Washington Project's commitment to recognizing and respecting cultural diversity and providing personalized support to individuals or communities. It encompasses discussions of efforts to ensure that programs and initiatives are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and	<i>There's no cookie cutter way to do it. You have to do everybody as an individual. Some people are not going to be in an Orthodox way to work with some will and some won't. But the majority of the people, all they really want to know is that somebody cares enough to come and try to help them</i>	KWP Focus Group 1
	Cultural Awareness			KWP Interview 1

Appendix. 05. Khadafy Washington Project – Codes/Definitions

Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
		tailored to the unique needs of participants.		
Emotional Impact and Self-Care	Emotional Challenges Self-Care Practices	This code is assigned when a participant's response discusses the emotional impact of their involvement in the Khadafy Washington Project, as well as discussions related to self-care practices. It encompasses reflections on how the program has affected staff emotionally and the strategies employed to address their emotional well-being.	<i>One thing that I've definitely implemented is to get connected to everything, but attach to nothing, because you could easily find yourself getting attached to families. And unfortunately, there's times where it's an ongoing case, where today I'm helping a mom with one of her sons and tomorrow it could be her husband or somebody else</i>	KWP Focus Group 1 KWP Interview 1
Challenges and Resource Needs	Financial Challenges Resource Constraints	This code is assigned when a participant's response discusses the challenges encountered in the context of the Khadafy Washington Project and identifies the resource needs or requirements necessary to address those challenges. It encompasses discussions of obstacles, difficulties, or limitations faced by staff and the strategies or resources required for overcoming them.	<i>There aren't any resources for youth. So of course, they're going to go to the street because it's not where dad works, mom stays home or whatever. Sometimes it's a single mom raising more than five kids. So more resources for them as well, because we know that the streets will chew up our kids and spit them out in a heartbeat</i>	KWP Focus Group 1 KWP Interview 1

Appendix. 05. Khadafy Washington Project – Codes/Definitions

Theme	Code(s)	Code Definition	Example	References
Measuring Success through Impact	Individual and Community Well-being Support Provided	This code is assigned when a participant's response discusses the methods, criteria, or indicators used to measure the success of the Khadafy Washington Project through its impact on the community. It encompasses reflections on how KWP staff assesses and evaluates its effectiveness in achieving its intended goals and outcomes.	<i>I was able to see some of the moms there, [at the Celebration of Life Ceremony]. They had moments where they cried or they laughed or they hugged. So it was just beautiful to be able to have that safe space because as women, it's a challenge to trust one another, but because the trust and the relationship was built and that was already established, they were able to do that together</i>	KWP Focus Group 1 KWP Interview 1

Appendix. 06. Pathways Survey Results

Appendix. 06. Pathways Survey Results Percent of Survey participants who agreed or disagreed with the following statements										
Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I have hope for my future	0	0%	0	0%	14	27%	38	73%	52	100%
I've learned how to take care of my mental health.	0	0%	2	4%	30	58%	20	38%	52	100%
I believe that life is often not fair to me	5	10%	20	38%	18	35%	9	17%	52	100%
I have goals and plans for my future.	1	2%	0	0%	15	29%	36	69%	52	100%
If I am in trouble, I can think of someone who can help me.	1	2%	1	2%	30	59%	19	37%	51	100%
I feel I can make a difference in my neighborhood.	3	6%	20	38%	22	42%	7	13%	52	100%
I plan to work to improve my neighborhood.	5	10%	13	25%	27	53%	6	11%	51	100%
There is an adult outside of my family who looks out for me.	1	2%	3	6%	24	46%	24	46%	52	100%
I care about what my community thinks of my actions.	5	10%	10	20%	26	51%	10	20%	51	100%
When something good happens to me, I like to share the good news with my friends.	4	8%	6	12%	23	45%	18	35%	51	100%
I can figure out ahead of time how certain situations may get me into trouble.	1	2%	3	6%	34	68%	12	24%	50	100%
I can say no to activities that I think are wrong.	3	6%	0	0%	28	54%	21	40%	52	100%
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	0	0%	3	6%	34	65%	15	29%	52	100%

Appendix. 06. Pathways Survey Results
Percent of Survey participants who agreed or disagreed with the following statements

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I consider the positive and negative effects of my behavior.	0	0%	3	6%	36	71%	12	24%	51	100%
I understand how situations cause me to feel happy, sad, angry, or frustrated.	0	0%	1	2%	32	62%	19	37%	52	100%
Someone who doesn't fight back when other kids push them around will lose respect.	7	13%	12	23%	22	42%	11	21%	52	100%
If I really want to, I can usually talk someone out of trying to fight with me.	6	12%	13	25%	28	54%	5	10%	52	100%
If I refuse to fight, my friends will think I'm afraid.	11	21%	21	40%	13	25%	7	13%	52	100%
Sometimes you have to physically fight to get what you want.	11	21%	16	31%	16	31%	12	23%	52	100%

Appendix. 07a. Violence Interruption Survey Results

Appendix. 07a. Violence Interruption Survey Results Percent of survey respondents who agree or disagree with the following statements?					
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
If I walked away from a fight, I'd be a coward.	14%	21%	33%	31%	100%
I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with being mad.	5%	7%	43%	45%	100%
I can usually talk someone out of trying to fight me if I want to.	12%	26%	43%	19%	100%
It's okay to hit someone who hits you first.	29%	46%	17%	7%	100%
People like me don't have much of a chance in life.	2%	21%	31%	45%	100%
Whether I get in trouble is just a matter of chance.	14%	40%	40%	5%	100%
I can pretty much decide what will happen in my life.	0%	19%	52%	29%	100%
There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need help.	5%	14%	40%	40%	100%
I don't feel there is anyone I can turn to for guidance in times of stress.	10%	26%	38%	26%	100%

Appendix. 07a. Violence Interruption Survey Results
Percent of survey respondents who agree or disagree with the following statements?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I have someone I can talk to about important decisions in my life.	5%	10%	38%	48%	100%
There are people I feel comfortable talking about my problems with.	2%	14%	40%	43%	100%
Ignore the situation and get the person later?	7%	31%	48%	14%	100%
Suggest peer mediation?	5%	26%	45%	24%	100%
Try to see the other person's point of view.	5%	7%	55%	33%	100%
Try to reduce your anger.	2%	7%	55%	36%	100%
My life goals & priorities have evolved.	2%	5%	50%	43%	100%
I have more compassion for people.	0%	7%	52%	40%	100%
Ideas about what is important changed.	2%	10%	50%	38%	100%
I'm more mindful and reflective.	0%	7%	52%	40%	100%
I accept needing others.	2%	19%	45%	33%	100%

Appendix. 07a. Violence Interruption Survey Results
 Percent of survey respondents who agree or disagree with the following statements?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
New opportunities are available to me, which wouldn't have been possible.	3%	10%	55%	33%	100%
Being able to accept the way things work out.	7%	10%	57%	26%	100%
An appreciation for the value of my own life.	0%	2%	41%	56%	100%

Appendix. 07b. Violence Interruption Survey Results

Appendix. 07b. Violence Intervention Survey Results					
The next time you find yourself angry at someone or something, how likely are you to					
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Ignore the situation and get the person later.	7%	31%	48%	14%	100%
Suggest peer mediation.	5%	26%	45%	24%	100%
Try to see the other person's point of view.	5%	7%	55%	33%	100%
Try to reduce your anger.	2%	7%	55%	36%	100%

Appendix. 07c. Violence Interruption Survey Results

Appendix. 07c. Violence Intervention Survey Results				
Please indicate your level of agreement about the following statements:				
Statement	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Total
Carrying a gun makes people feel safe.	5%	45%	50%	100%
Carrying a gun makes people feel powerful and strong.	0%	43%	57%	100%
I'd like a gun so people would look up to me.	83%	12%	5%	100%
I wish there were no guns in my neighborhood.	14%	43%	43%	100%