



**National Network  
For Safe Communities**  
Saving Lives, Saving Communities

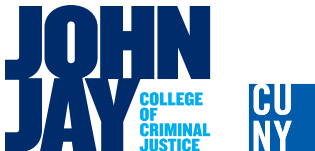
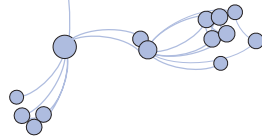
# GROUP VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY



## Practice Brief: Call-In Preparation and Execution

*Vaughn Crandall and Sue-Lin Wong*

Center for Crime Prevention and Control  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice



**COPS**  
COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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**COPS**

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

*Dear Colleagues,*

*We at the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) are proud to support the work of the National Network for Safe Communities. I hope this resource will prove useful to both law enforcement practitioners and the variety of stakeholders, from social services to the community moral voice, who are integral to the Group Violence Reduction Strategy.*

*GVRs, also known as “Operation Ceasefire,” has evolved significantly over the years since it began in Boston in the 1990s. As such, we must continue to provide new information to the field as new concepts, ideas, and tools emerge to help us in the effort to reduce violence.*

*Practice Brief: Call-In Preparation and Execution is part of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy series, resources we have been working on to help cities implement the GVRs and Drug Market Intervention models. This publication is meant to help key project planners while they are preparing for an offender notification, also known as a call-in, which is a face-to-face meeting between GVRs representatives and street group members. The call-in is just one part of the overall strategy to reduce street group violence.*

*Last year we released Four Case Studies of Swift and Meaningful Law Enforcement Response, also part of the GVRs series, to help agencies reinforce a credible enforcement message through concrete actions. Furthermore, the COPS Office will publish a comprehensive implementation guide for the entire Group Violence Reduction Strategy later this year.*

*Thank you for taking an interest in this promising set of practices. We hope it can aid cities far and wide in reclaiming their right to safe, healthy, and thriving neighborhoods.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard A. Melekian".

*Bernard Melekian, Director  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*



**The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested nearly \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.
- By the end of FY2011, the COPS Office has funded approximately 123,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- As of 2011, the COPS Office has distributed more than 6.6 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Office resources, covering a wide breath of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—are available, at no cost, through its online Resource Information Center at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov). This easy-to-navigate website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.



## NATIONAL NETWORK FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES

The **National Network for Safe Communities** represents and supports cities around the country to apply and advance proven strategies to reduce serious violent crime and to close overt drug markets.

The National Network recognizes that both law enforcement and the community must play a critical role in addressing these problems—but that neither can do it alone. Therefore, its strategies combine the best of law enforcement and community crime prevention approaches to improve public safety dramatically.

Launched by the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York in 2009, the National Network comprises more than 50 cities actively implementing and advancing two specific strategies: the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS), first implemented as “Operation Ceasefire” in Boston in the mid-1990s, and the Drug Market Intervention (DMI), also known as the “High Point Model,” after the North Carolina city that pioneered it.

More than 20 years of field experience and a substantial body of research demonstrate that these strategies:

- Reduce serious violence
- Shut down overt drug markets
- Reduce arrests and imprisonment
- Strengthen disadvantaged communities
- Use existing resources

The National Network is committed to “saving lives, saving communities” by taking its strategies to a national scale and serving the nation’s most vulnerable communities. The National Network is designed to represent and support its members by raising the visibility of their work, offering them technical assistance, recognizing and helping others learn from their work and innovations, supporting peer exchange and education, and conducting research and evaluations.

Please visit [www.nnscommunities.org](http://www.nnscommunities.org) for detailed information on the National Network’s mission, strategies, research findings, media coverage, events, and membership.

## How to Use This Document

This practice brief is intended to assist practitioners with designing and executing call-in meetings with street group members. The *call-in* is the central communication tool of the National Network for Safe Communities' Group Violence Reduction Strategy. This brief is not a comprehensive implementation guide for the entire strategy but rather a focused manual for call-in preparation and execution.<sup>1</sup> It is intended for practitioners who are already implementing the Group Violence Reduction Strategy and are ready to design their first call-in.

If you are in the early stages of implementation, have recently completed your problem analysis, and are building your partnership, **please begin with Part I.**

If you have already organized the appropriate community, law enforcement, and social services partners; have identified your street group members; and are ready to actually hold a call-in, **go directly to Part II.**

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1. A comprehensive strategy implementation guide is forthcoming from the National Network for Safe Communities.



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# PART I: Preparation

## Introduction

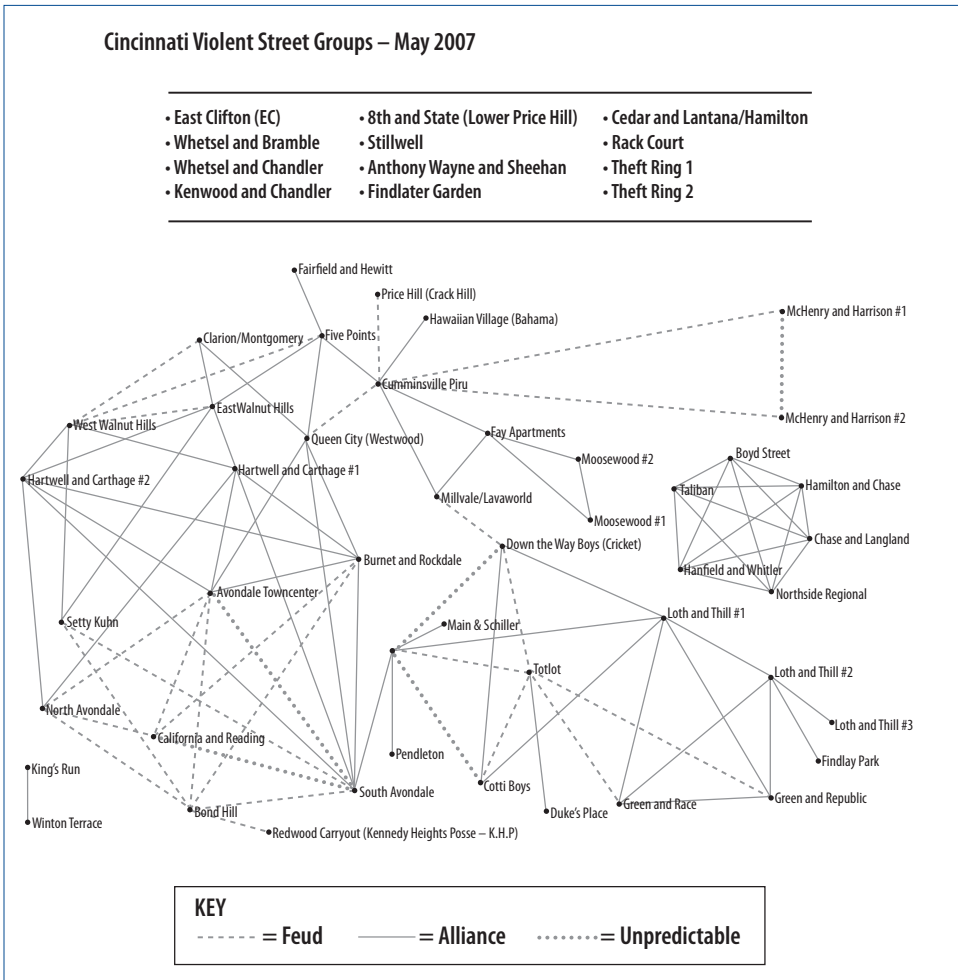
The National Network for Safe Communities' Group Violence Reduction Strategy seeks to reduce violence quickly and dramatically by influencing the behavior of the small number of street groups that are responsible for a majority of violence in disadvantaged communities and are disproportionately involved in a wide variety of crime. These groups, and the relationships between these groups, drive the majority of shooting and killing in most American cities, and research and field experience routinely finds that they comprise less than 1 percent of a given city's population and are directly connected as victim or suspect to 50 to 75 percent of all homicides.<sup>2</sup> These groups may be gangs, with at least some level of organization, structure, and cohesion; more often they are loose, fluid drug crews, or "sets."

As a result, the National Network for Safe Communities uses the term *group* or *street group* instead of *gang* throughout this practice brief. An exclusive focus on gangs, as often defined, will exclude a significant number of groups that contribute heavily to serious violence, such as loose neighborhood drug crews. The National Network's experience is that worrying about whether a particular city has gangs, or whether a particular group is a gang, is an unnecessary distraction. Many high-rate offenders associate in groups, and these groups drive serious violence. Many such groups will not fit the statutory definition of a gang or the common perception of what constitutes a gang. Such groups may or may not have a name; common symbols, signs, or tags; an identifiable hierarchy; or other shared identifiers. Aware of the different forms groups can take from one community to another, the Group Violence Reduction Strategy has proven effective.

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2. Braga, A. A., and D. L. Weisburd. 2011. "The Effects of Focused-Deterrence Strategies on Crime: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Evidence." *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 1–36.

**Figure 1:** Violent street groups in Cincinnati—2008



Source: Policing Institute, University of Cincinnati, Ohio

In Cincinnati, Ohio, for example, about 60 such groups with a total of approximately 1,500 individuals (0.3 percent of the city’s population) can be directly linked to nearly 70 percent of the homicides in the entire city. Figure 1 is a network map of violent groups in Cincinnati and the nature of their relationships (in conflict or allied) in 2008. It represents a typical example of the type of network that the Group Violence Reduction Strategy seeks to influence.

The Group Violence Reduction Strategy is rooted in direct communication with such violent groups by a partnership of law enforcement, service providers, and community figures.<sup>3</sup> Together, the partnership delivers a unified “no violence” message, explaining that further acts of violence will bring heightened law enforcement attention to entire groups while articulating community norms against violence and offering social services and alternatives to group members. The strategy may be adapted to any given jurisdiction, but it relies on a core set of operational ideas that guide any adaptation. Repeated notifications combined with consistent follow-through on both the law enforcement and social services promises can effectively reduce communitywide levels of violence, typically achieving 35 to 50 percent reductions in homicides and a significant but lesser reduction in shootings citywide.

The *call-in* is a one-way communication device. Its primary purpose is to deliver clearly the strategy’s key messages to the street group members and then, through them, back to the entire groups with whom they are associated. Law enforcement tells group members it will be responding to violence in a new way and provides an advance warning that violence will attract enhanced enforcement attention from local, state, and federal agencies to entire groups for all crimes they are committing. Community members tell group members about the damage the violence is doing and that it must stop. And social services providers tell group members that help is available for those seeking to change their lives.

The call-in is not the entire strategy. The call-in represents an organized partnership of law enforcement, social services, and community partners that must be assembled before the partnership can begin holding call-ins. The following should be accomplished before a partnership begins preparing for its first call-in:

1. **Secure key commitments from project partners:** All essential law enforcement partners—including decision-makers from police, local and federal prosecutors, and probation and parole agencies—commit to the strategy and to the Working Group process. Community moral voices and social services representatives are usually added to this group as part of strategy development.

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3. Braga, A. A., and D. M. Kennedy. 2002. “Reducing Gang Violence in Boston.” In *Responding to Gangs: Evaluation and Research*, edited by W. L. Reed and S. H. Decker. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice.

2. **Convene a Working Group:** The Working Group process is the core of the design and implementation effort. The Working Group includes relevant officials from each of the essential law enforcement agencies and other key stakeholders. This group needs to be assembled, and meeting regularly, before call-in preparation begins.
3. **Complete a problem analysis:** A quantitative and qualitative problem analysis gathers and synthesizes intelligence on street groups and their connection to violence in each community. The problem analysis provides essential information to guide the adaptation of the strategy to local street group dynamics.

**If you have accomplished all three of these key activities, you are ready to begin general call-in preparation.** If you have not and would like more information and guidance on securing key commitments, assembling a Working Group, or conducting a problem analysis, please contact the National Network for Safe Communities at:

### **National Network for Safe Communities**

Center for Crime Prevention and Control

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

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New York, NY 10019

Tel: 646.557.4760

E-mail: [infnssc@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:infnssc@jjay.cuny.edu)

Website: [www.nnscommunities.org](http://www.nnscommunities.org)

## **Law Enforcement Call-In Preparation**

Implementing the Group Violence Reduction Strategy in your community means that law enforcement is changing the way it responds to violence. The new response will be strategically street group-focused and use legal tools in creative ways to bring swift and certain sanctions against as many group members as possible. It will also be a last resort; law enforcement will first notify those groups at highest risk about this new way of operating, so that they are informed, ahead of time, about the consequences of future violence. Communicating this key enforcement message effectively is critical to the strategy and takes careful planning in terms of the content of the message, the setting in



which it is delivered, who delivers it and how, and who receives it. The following steps need to be accomplished by the law enforcement partners of the Working Group before a call-in can be successfully held:

### **STEP 1: Identify members of violent street groups.**

The problem analysis will have identified an initial snapshot of active, violent groups currently operating in your jurisdiction as well as their patterns of conflicts and alliances. Once you have this information, you are in a position to identify the members of these groups—the first essential step in call-in preparation.

This serves three purposes:

1. You will know the potential pool of individuals who can be directed to attend the call-in.
2. You will be able to respond swiftly and effectively to subsequent violence following the call-in.
3. You will be able to assemble a social services structure with sufficient capacity to serve the likely portion of street group members who will seek such help.

For all three purposes, it is essential that the partnership have a current and accurate list of active street group members, including individuals currently serving jail or prison sentences. It is important to also identify group members cycling in and out of jail or about to be released from prison because this can impact group activity.

While there are a number of different ways to assemble this list, the most common pathway begins with police executives charging their front-line gang, patrol, and vice officers, etc., with identifying group members. This often includes:

- Reviewing any existing informal information they may have: e.g., books and lists
- Reviewing existing formal information: e.g., case files, field stops, and gang databases
- Conducting surveillance and deploying informants, if necessary

- Reviewing this information at the executive level for reliability
- Using social network analysis, as several National Network sites have done, to map and expand the knowledge of street group membership and structures using administrative data

Law enforcement may already have this information or may have to gather it through internal reviews or actual fieldwork, intelligence gathering, and criminal informant debriefing. Generally, a full picture of group membership can be gathered in 2 to 6 weeks.

Many jurisdictions worry about validating street group members for purposes of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy. While jurisdictions may have legal and operational reasons to maintain validation lists, the Group Violence Reduction Strategy does not need the group members to be validated. For group members to be included in the list, front-line law enforcement simply must know that they are actively involved in a street group at the current time.

Furthermore, if your jurisdiction is under intense pressure regarding time or violence is spiking dramatically, a shorthand version of Step 1 is to identify several probationers/parolees in each street group. Charge front-line officers, probation and parole, and other law enforcement partners with identifying two to three members of each group currently under supervision. This is sufficient for implementing the call-in but requires additional information-gathering if a group becomes subject to a law enforcement action due to further violent behavior.

**Product: List of all street groups and all active members.**

## **STEP 2:** Determine community supervision status of street group members.

Once the initial group member list is complete,<sup>4</sup> provide it to community supervision agencies (i.e., probation and parole) to identify which group members are currently under supervision and thus can be directed to attend the call-in. Institutionalizing this process will perpetuate regularly updated information on group membership and supervision statuses (in advance of every call-in).

**Product: List of all potential call-in participants from all street groups who can be directed to attend the call-in.**

## **STEP 3:** Perform criminal history review of all street group members.

Steps 1 and 2 are all that are necessary to identify the potential pool of call-in participants. An important supplementary step is to perform a criminal history review of all group members (not just those under supervision). This exercise informs law enforcement about those who are eligible for enhanced prosecution if their group behaves violently after the call-in. It can also help justify to community stakeholders why the strategy is focusing on certain individuals.

Having a criminal history review in advance is optimal, but it is not necessary until a homicide or shooting occurs following the call-in. This exercise can be labor-intensive, particularly for cities with numerous group members. The law enforcement partners can proceed with Steps 4 and 5 below while compiling criminal histories.

**Product: Criminal histories of all group members for all street groups.**

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4. Street group membership lists will be living documents that are continually updated over time with new intelligence, as membership is generally fluid.

**STEP 4:** Identify street groups that should be represented at the call-in.

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This could be all groups identified in Step 1. Ideally, the number of street group members in a call-in does not exceed 40. If there are too many groups to manage at one call-in or there are security concerns that require separate call-in sessions, the partnership can decide which groups will be directed to attend which call-ins. Jurisdictions can also identify the most active groups based on recent and historical violence and hold a single call-in or schedule multiple call-ins.

**Product: List of violent street groups selected for call-in(s).**

**STEP 5:** Identify a violent street group for an initial demonstration enforcement action.

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The purpose of the demonstration enforcement action is to establish the credibility of the law enforcement message—that special law enforcement attention can and will be paid to entire groups whose members commit violence after the call-in.

The street group to target for this enforcement action should be *one of* or *the most* violent group in your jurisdiction. The demonstration group is typically selected by the law enforcement team of the partnership. Once all members of this target group have been identified, the law enforcement partners assess the legal vulnerability of the members and develop an enforcement plan to build as many cases against as many group members as possible. Running criminal history checks on group members will assist in this process. Completing this step of the process will, for example, identify a group's legal vulnerability by enhancing state or federal prosecutions based on prior criminal records and applicable statutes.

Investigations and preparation for the demonstration enforcement action can begin while you are identifying the members of all street groups. In practice, group enforcement actions generally fall into the following three categories (many such actions may fall in between these categories, which are not mutually exclusive):

1. **Quick enforcement action:** The law enforcement team of the Working Group selects the street group that is to become the focus of its attention. In the first call-in, this is usually a street group known to both law enforcement and the community as having a reputation for and record of significant violent behavior. In subsequent call-ins, it is either the most violent group or the group that commits the next act of violence after the most recent call-in. In either case, the Working Group puts together a plan to respond quickly to this violent behavior.

Generally, the law enforcement team will assess the current legal exposure of street group members as well as identify and pull any legal levers currently available to them. These actions often include:

- Revoking the parole or probation status of street group members who violate the conditions of their community supervision
- Vigorously enforcing the conditions of their probation or parole
- Enhancing those conditions
- Serving outstanding arrest warrants against group members
- Imposing street drug enforcement: e.g., performing drug buys and executing drug arrests
- Reviewing current cases for state enhancements and/or federal adoption
- Withdrawing plea deals from group members
- Reviewing the sources of bail and bond funds
- Serving warrants for outstanding child support
- Checking group members for unregistered cars
- Performing housing code enforcement where they live

This typically can be performed in 3 to 6 weeks, depending on resource and operational constraints. These actions often result in arrests, detentions, and short-term jail sentences as well as some shorter state sentences for street group members.

2. **Medium-term enforcement action:** In this case, the law enforcement team engages in a brisk state-level drug or conspiracy investigation. This often involves medium-term undercover investigations, usually aimed at narcotics sales or trafficking, though it can also involve conspiracy cases and wiretaps. These take longer than quick crackdowns but can normally be completed in 2 to 3 months. The investigations often result in serious state sentences under street group certification, habitual felon laws, or related statutes. These actions can include federal review and adoption of some cases.
3. **Major/long-term enforcement action:** In this case, there is a federal or a joint state-federal long-term drug and RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) Act conspiracy investigation that results in the wholesale adoption and prosecution of all or most cases in federal court. This type of action generally results in the heaviest sentences and generates significant attention from media, the public, and offenders; but it is rare, resource intensive, and slow.

All such group enforcement actions can proceed and be effective without necessarily bringing a formal case against a perpetrator for a homicide or for any crime. Often, these actions can focus on impact players within a shooter's group and bring available sanctions to bear against these individuals.

Violent groups are often already the subject of pending state and/or federal investigations. If these investigations are completed within reasonable proximity to your call-in, they can be used for demonstration purposes. For this to work effectively, (1) the investigation must be street group-focused in some way (this does not mean the prosecution has to use group-related statutes such as RICO or gang enhancements, but the enforcement action must be directed at a criminal group), and (2) the street group must be known as being violent.

The following list outlines the six essential steps to conducting a demonstration enforcement action:

1. Select the standout violent street group.
2. If not already done, identify all group members, especially impact players—usually known as such by front-line personnel.
3. Assess the legal vulnerabilities of group members: e.g., current cases, old cases, warrants, probation/parole status, drug activity, child support, and IRS prosecution.
4. Frame an interagency enforcement plan focusing directly on group members (whether short-, medium-, or long-term).
5. Conclude the investigation and enforcement action 1 to 2 weeks prior to the call-in. Ideally, this results in a high-profile sweep in which arrests, warrant services, and violations are happening at once.
6. Notify a trusted media outlet and community partners regarding the enforcement action to ensure the public knows of the activity.

In the first call-in, the demonstration enforcement action helps prove that you are serious about responding to violence in a different way. In most jurisdictions, law enforcement cannot respond to every group-involved homicide in this special way. Law enforcement needs to be specific about the new enforcement rules going forward to change the behavior of the street group members. If the promise about the special enforcement response is too general, or it isn't followed through, the street groups will not respond.

To ensure the message is both specific and feasible, the National Network recommends that law enforcement frame its enforcement promise in each call-in as “worst group, next group.”

Following the call-in, the law enforcement partnership will focus this special attention on all members of the most violent group (measured by group-involved shootings and killing) and the next group to kill someone after the call-in. This means that, at any time, law enforcement must have the capacity to conduct two group enforcement actions of the types described above—one focusing on the worst group and one focusing on the next group. For enforcement agencies that can't meet this operational promise, the best choice is often to commit to focusing only on the next group.

When assessing violence, law enforcement often looks for group-motivated violence. The Group Violence Reduction Strategy doesn't worry about motive—because much of the violence is not motivated by or in the interest of street groups. For the strategy's purpose, the shootings and killings simply need to involve street group members as victims, suspects, or both.

**Product: A marketable group enforcement action that can be presented to members of violent groups in the call-in as evidence that future violence and criminal activities will be met with swift, focused law enforcement attention to entire groups.**

### **STEP 6:** Identify representatives from each street group to attend the call-in(s).

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The most important consideration is that all active street groups are represented in the call-in. To be successful, the call-in does not have to include street group leaders, as these individuals are not always immediately recognizable, but rather must simply include members of the group who can take the call-in's messages back to their associates.



Some National Network sites have begun using social network analysis to identify so-called connectors: i.e., individuals whose position in the group indicates that they could most effectively transmit the key messages within the group. There is additional research and development work to be done in this area.<sup>5</sup>

**Product: List of call-in attendees.**

## Summary

The law enforcement partners' requirements for the call-in are met once they have identified all members of active street groups, identified which members are under supervision, selected the groups and individuals to be called-in, and conducted a demonstration enforcement action. Other target groups will self-select if they are identified as the most violent group by law enforcement data and intelligence and/or commit violent acts after each call-in.

The National Network strongly recommends that law enforcement practitioners also review "Practitioner Brief: Group Enforcement Actions and Talking Points,"<sup>6</sup> as this brief provides more detailed guidance on enforcement actions and how best to communicate them in a call-in.

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5. For more information on this approach, see Margolis, Jennifer, and DaWana Williamson. n.d. "Notes from the Field: Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy—Applications of Social Network Analysis." [www.nnscommunities.org/Chicago\\_VRS\\_SNA\\_Notes\\_from\\_the\\_Field\\_0505\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.nnscommunities.org/Chicago_VRS_SNA_Notes_from_the_Field_0505_FINAL.pdf); National Network for Safe Communities. 2011. "Using Social Network Analysis in Crime Prevention." Webinar series. <http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/using-social-network-analysis/id465067322?i=97222903>

6. National Networks for Safe Communities. 2010. "Practitioner Brief: Group Enforcement Actions and Talking Points." Group Voice Reduction Strategy. [www.nnscommunities.org/pdf/NNSC\\_Practice\\_Brief\\_Group\\_Enforcement\\_Actions\\_V1\\_2010.pdf](http://www.nnscommunities.org/pdf/NNSC_Practice_Brief_Group_Enforcement_Actions_V1_2010.pdf)

## Social Services Call-In Preparation

Providing help to street group members is a critical part of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy. The provision of social services has several roles in the strategy. First, experience demonstrates that even seasoned street group members will accept the offer for help and change their lives. Many of them are tired of being surrounded by violence, cycling in and out of jail and prison, and fearing for themselves and their loved ones.

If the offer for help is genuine, and made in such a way that group members take it seriously, many will respond. This is imperative for them, their families, and their communities. If they can navigate this transition, many of these individuals can also have a powerful desire to give back to their communities and can become valuable assets to ongoing anti-violence and community development work.

Experience has shown that relatively few will come forward and accept assistance. In many National Network jurisdictions, with some exceptions, about 20 percent of group members identified come forward to accept the offer for help. This service uptake can be influenced by the skill and credibility of the social services representative who makes the appeal in the call-ins, the quality of the services provided, the presence of effective street outreach, the reputation of the lead social services provider, and the experiences of those group members who do come forward.

Second, service provision is important in mobilizing the right kind of community figures who can influence the behavior of street group members. Community members are more willing to deliver the needed moral messages against violence when they know that group members have a standing, genuine offer for help.

Sufficient social services are usually present and available in any community for the purposes of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy. The Working Group typically identifies which social services providers are willing and able to work effectively with group members seeking assistance. Ideally, they will be organizations with a good track record of serving such populations.

The services should be organized such that there is one access point available for group members; this access point has one phone number, and group members who call that number can get help immediately. Ideally, these group members will be prioritized for immediate intake and assessment. The right social services providers often already offer reentry services for individuals coming home from prison.

**Social services providers, and their law enforcement and community partners, should never promise street group members employment.** This promise often cannot be delivered. Furthermore, promising anyone a job in exchange for not shooting and killing people is inappropriate. The community has a moral right to demand that the violence stops. Independent of that, the partnership would also like to help group members. The social services' promise is that "the violence must stop, and we would also like to help you change your life in any way that we are able."

To organize an effective social services structure, the Working Group should complete the following five steps:

### **STEP 1: Identify social services providers.**

Ideally, providers should be able to offer in-house as many of the needed reentry-style services as possible, including mental health treatment, case management, education, employment training and placement, crisis intervention, drug treatment, housing, mentoring, and emergency services. These providers should have reputations for effectively delivering services to individuals with extensive criminal justice histories, especially to those whose histories include crimes of violence and street group involvement.

The National Network recommends that from the outset the Working Group make clear to potential social services providers that funding will not necessarily be available. Many cities have found that the best providers understand the merit of the work and are already working with this population in some capacity. These providers are typically best suited to join the Group Violence Reduction Strategy partnership.

## **STEP 2:** Educate social services providers on the strategy and gain commitment.

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From those providers that meet the above criteria, the Working Group will have to obtain a commitment to provide rapid, priority attention to street group members as part of the overall strategy. If possible, the provider or network of providers creates a one-stop access point for street group members, so they have to make only one call for assistance.

## **STEP 3:** Identify a lead social services provider.

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If multiple social services providers will be involved, the National Network recommends that the partnership identify one provider to handle intake assessments and case management for all street group members that come forward. A representative of this lead provider is typically included in the Working Group going forward.

The other providers then supply support services after receiving referrals from the central provider. They ideally have a reliable service-delivery record and the capacity to track and report on both service enrollment and outcomes.

It is especially important that the intake provider be able to access information from any partner to whom the intake provider refers participants; this may require interagency memorandums of understanding (MOUs). Ideally, the intake provider can supply most or all services in-house without having to provide multiple referrals.

All social services providers must be able to work with law enforcement partners and have good standing within the community.

**STEP 4: Ensure quick response and assessment.**

Upon contacting the social service providers, street group members should receive a prompt response and be provided an individualized assessment as soon as possible. Together with social services staff, group members can develop their case management plans and/or treatment goals.

Ideally, group members who accepted the offer for help would be partnered with an advocate who would help them navigate the system and ensure they have the tools and support needed for successfully completing the program.

**STEP 5: Develop and modify a tracking database.**

The lead provider, in partnership with the other social services providers, collects and analyzes data on all street group members who request services for help to track the population, the members' adherence to the process, and the outcomes of the program.

The Working Group must determine what defines a successful outcome: e.g., completion of life-plan goal, employment, and no further involvement in violence. Outcomes can then be measured by the lead social services provider and reported back to the Working Group.

## Summary

The requirements of the social services providers are met for the call-in once one or several of them have agreed to supply the needed services in a streamlined and coordinated manner, agreed to prioritize street group members, identified a single intake point, and agreed to track service uptake and outcomes.

Creating an appropriate social services structure can take 1 to 4 months (or longer) depending on capacity and resources. Developing a strong social services component depends on the availability of appropriate providers able to (1) meet the needs of this population and (2) partner with law enforcement effectively.

## Community Moral Voices Call-In Preparation

Identifying community moral voices is different and distinct from the social services component of the strategy. Community moral voices are local community figures that have the respect of street group members, particularly around issues of violence and safety. These moral voices are those who can influence how group members think and act.

It is common to address group violence through law enforcement or social services providers. However, it is not common to address this violence by also organizing community members to speak to street group members in certain ways.

**The central goal of involving community moral voices is to promote informal social control.** Research consistently shows that the most important influences on whether someone obeys the law, or commits a crime, is (1) whether he or she thinks doing so is right or wrong, (2) whether people he or she cares about and respects view a given act as right or wrong, and (3) whether the community he or she belongs to thinks a given act is right or wrong. Even in communities with the highest levels of crime, most people obey the law most of the time.<sup>7</sup>

Many researchers believe that the ability of the criminal justice system to impose punishment—also known as formal social control—has the least influence on a person's decision to commit or not commit a crime. The police are not present at every potential crime scene. Most crimes committed are never reported. Most of those that are reported are never cleared by an arrest. And most arrests do not result in meaningful sanctions.

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7. Sampson, Robert J. 1986. "Crime in Cities: The Effects of Formal and Informal Social Control." In *Communities and Crime*, edited by Albert J. Reiss Jr. and Michael Tonry. Vol. 8 of *Crime and Justice*, 271–311. University of Chicago Press; Sampson, Robert J., and John L. Laub. 1990. "Crime and Deviance over the Life Course: The Salience of Adult Social Bonds." *American Sociological Review* 55 (5): 609–627.

What matters the most are the norms and values of individuals, peer groups, families, and communities that declare general crime or specific crime is wrong for various reasons. Scholars show that informal social control—both internal (e.g., conscience and shame) and external (e.g., beliefs of peers, loved ones, families, and the community)—have a tremendous impact on people’s actions. Research continues to show informal social control is far more potent, overall, than formal.<sup>8</sup>

One way of thinking about informal social control is in terms of norms and narratives. *Norms* are standards for behavior; they establish rules to which people conform in order to fit into general society. Within street group culture, a common norm is that one must respond to perceived disrespect with violence. *Narratives* are the histories, stories, and various other kinds of explanations that individuals, groups, and communities use to understand and explain the world around them.

Furthermore, narratives can lead to norms. For example, the narrative that law enforcement is an illegitimate presence in the community can lead to the norm that good people don’t talk to the police—and that those who do are snitches. The street group norm that real or perceived disrespect requires violence often leads group members to behave violently.

Changing norms and narratives can have a direct impact on crime. A street group or a member that comes to believe disrespect does not require or justify violence will be less violent. A community that no longer believes law enforcement is intentionally oppressive is more likely to express standards against violence. A police department that recognizes group members do care about their families and are largely rational will engage with those group members in different ways. Deliberate attention to norms and narratives, and steps to change them, is thus an important, practical way of addressing crime. This is the heart of community moral voice work.

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8. *ibid.*

Regarding the idea of legitimacy, another way of framing these issues is to consider that people will do the right thing, including obeying the law, when they think (1) it is the right thing to do; (2) that, if they have doubts, those making the rules are legitimate; and (3) that the rules will be applied fairly.<sup>9</sup> If people are not sure that refraining from violence is right, if they do not understand that their own community disapproves of violence, and if law enforcement is seen as illegitimate, then violence will be more likely.

Informal social control and law enforcement action will be more powerful and effective if group members' own views about violence can be shifted, community norms against violence can be clarified, and law enforcement comes to be seen as legitimate and fair.<sup>10</sup>

Research shows that even communities with the highest crime rates care deeply about stopping violence.<sup>11</sup> In practice, all that is necessary to make this component of the strategy effective is for the Working Group to reach out to individuals in the community who are already passionate and active around this issue and work with them. The strategy provides an opportunity for active individuals to communicate clear community standards against violence to the street groups that drive the bulk of serious violence.

This is not traditional community organizing. One reason other violence prevention strategies often do not work is because they seek impossible goals, such as reaching absolute consensus with all parties doing community or prevention work. Law enforcement and social services providers can make communities safer if they work in the right way with the right community partners and focus specifically on the small number of street group members most likely to kill or be killed.

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9. Tyler, Tom. 2006. *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

10. Meares, Tracey. 2009. "The Legitimacy of Police among Young African-American Men." Presentation at the Barrock Lecture on criminal law at Marquette University Law School, February 19.

11. Kirk, David S., and Andrew V. Papachristos. 2011. "Cultural Mechanisms and the Persistence of Neighborhood Violence." *American Journal of Sociology* 116 (4): 1190–1233.



To assemble community moral voices, the Working Group should complete the following two steps:

### **STEP 1: Identify a small number of community moral voices.**

The community moral voices you bring into the partnership should be those whom your specific street group members will listen to, such as:

- **Parents who have lost children to gun violence.** These parents have particular moral authority with street group members. They can speak to the pain the violence has caused in their lives and the damage it is doing to the community. Active group members are influenced the most strongly by people whom they respect and perceive as authentic.
- **Formerly incarcerated people** who have lived through crime and violence and no longer wish to act in this way. They frequently feel a powerful desire to give back to the community and have tremendous standing in the eyes of younger offenders. Working with them in the call-ins, in street outreach, or in diversion programs can be extraordinarily powerful. Ex-offenders are among the strongest allies you can have in delivering a non-violence message; they can challenge the street code and speak to the possibility of redemption.
- **Local grassroots leaders** whom street group members recognize as authentic and whom they respect. They are not traditional community leaders—usually they are not elected or appointed officials. They are often grandmothers, neighborhood elders, barbers, coaches, clergy members, or leaders. These authentic community leaders can speak to community aspirations for growth and change.

When trying to identify community speakers, keep in mind that most communities already have people actively involved in addressing issues that are related to violence reduction or neighborhood development. They are often engaged in street outreach, in the prisoner reentry field, or in existing community groups (e.g., Parents of Murdered Children). They can be grassroots leaders in affected neighborhoods; faith leaders of small, local congregations; or prominent, local public figures such as neighborhood activists, coaches, and local business people.

The best approach is to identify a small set of such figures and arrange private meetings with them. Work through their questions and concerns about the strategies in private. Some will understand the strategy and be willing to speak in the call-in or support the work in other ways. To broaden the roster of community moral voices, ask them for access to their social networks to find others whom they trust, who would be able to play this role, and with whom they would want to work.

The process of engaging with specific community figures to secure their partnership in implementing the strategy is best not done in open-door meetings, at least not at first. It is often a good idea to brief key community constituencies about the strategy design and purpose and to address their questions and concerns, but that should not be done with the purpose of adding more community moral voices to the call-in.

Identifying and engaging sufficient community moral voices to hold the first call-in can generally take several weeks to a few months. This then becomes an ongoing component of the strategy—to continue to identify and engage with different community residents who can play these roles both in and between call-ins.

### **STEP 2:** Organize the community moral voices for the call-in.

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Generally, three or four community moral voices will speak during a call-in. They must take a clear, direct community stand against the violence. They convey to the street group members that (1) the violence is unacceptable, (2) they are being given a chance to stop, and (3) the community cares about and values the street group members but rejects their behavior.

A larger, non-speaking group representing the moral voice of the community can be physically present during the call-in. It is important that these community members understand and accept that only a few of them will speak on behalf of their group. The more community members who are willing to be physically present the better. This is symbolically important and shows that a large network of community residents is standing together against violence.

Begin working with community moral voices in the months before the call-in. This is important in helping them to develop their talking points and overall message. Tools that can help these community members to develop their talking points are included in the appendices.

## Summary

Once you have identified the right community moral voices, educated them about the strategy, secured their support and participation, and worked with them to develop their talking points, you are ready to hold the call-in.

## Recommended Media Strategy

The Group Violence Reduction Strategy takes an unusual approach to reducing group violence and as a result is sometimes misrepresented in media accounts. To facilitate the most accurate press coverage, the Working Group may want to engage with existing media contacts or develop a working relationship with a reporter or media outlet to cover the process of strategy implementation—ideally before holding the first call-in.

It can be helpful to try to limit media coverage and attention, to the extent this can be controlled, in the early design phases of the project. Early, intense media coverage can set unrealistic expectations for implementation timelines and initial outcomes; moreover, it can spread inaccurate information about the model and its objectives at a time when there is no operation in effect to counteract these misrepresentations. However, the media are a key partner once the project becomes operational and call-ins begin.

The following five steps outline how best to work with the media to utilize their resources to the fullest:

### **STEP 1: Identify a trusted reporter and media outlet.**

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The simple truth is that no media coverage is perfect. The key to a productive relationship with the media is to engage a reporter or media outlet with whom you have worked productively in the past. The Working Group or project manager should conduct this outreach in the early stages of strategy implementation.

### **STEP 2: Obtain a working agreement.**

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It is helpful to reach a clear working agreement with a reporter. The reporter may provide inaccurate coverage if he or she does not fully understand the strategy; this is particularly true if he or she has not yet observed a call-in. The reporter can be promised full rights to the story as long as he or she agrees to document it, in its entirety, and wait to release the story until after the call-in.

### **STEP 3: Educate the media representative on the strategy and call-in.**

To ensure the most accurate coverage by a reporter, the Working Group should educate him or her on the overall strategy and purpose of the call-in early in the process.

The reporter is then given access to observe the call-in. Reporters are best not given permission to record the call-in in any way. Interviews of anyone who attended or spoke at the call-in should not take place until after the call-in.

### **STEP 4: Prepare a press release.**

Following the call-in, the National Network recommends that the Working Group also issue its own press release. This ensures that at least one accurate account of the project and the call-in is in public circulation.

### **STEP 5: Prepare a community flyer.**

After the call-in, the National Network recommends that the Working Group create a flyer with information about what happened at the call-in and about the strategy at large—including enforcement actions, social services, and community activities—and distribute it to community members.

## Summary

A good relationship with a reporter or media outlet is helpful in ensuring accurate reporting about strategy implementation in general and the call-in in particular. To the extent that it can be controlled, media coverage should be restricted during the design phase of the strategy to limit expectations. However, once implementation is underway and the first call-in has been held, an important element of implementation is making good use of media resources to communicate the strategy's key objectives both to the community directly affected and the public at large.



## PART II: The Call-In

### Call-In Design and Execution

By implementing the Group Violence Reduction Strategy in your community, you are changing the way you respond to violence. Law enforcement will operate differently from now on in its response to violence. Community members will be taking a strong stand against violence. And new, special help will be made available for street group members.

In order to change their behavior accordingly, street group members need to know these things. The purpose of the call-in (also known as a “notification”) is to communicate the key messages—the new law enforcement “rules of the game,” the clear community message that the violence is wrong, and the offer for help for those who want it—to all street groups in your community through the street group representatives in the room.

The call-in is ideally scheduled within a week or two of the initial demonstration enforcement action or subsequent enforcement actions (see Part I, Law Enforcement Call-In Preparation, on page 4).

The call-in itself carries great meaning. It is highly unusual for law enforcement, community figures, and social services providers to appear together before street group members and to speak with one message against violence. That alone sends a new and powerful signal. While there is no absolute script for the call-in, basic principles and practices for designing and executing the call-in have emerged.

It is important that the tone of the call-in strongly convey that the partnership regards the street group members as rational and responsible and expects them to make good use of the information that they will be provided. Further, the partnership has to convey that any law enforcement consequences that fall upon group members for noncompliance are direct results of violent behavior, not personal prejudice. **Avoiding derogatory terms, maintaining a business-like tone, and speaking to participants with respect is important.** In unison, all speakers must convey the message that there is no justification for the violence and that they all believe the group members can make the right decisions around violence.

In addition, the National Network recommends that law enforcement in particular “play against type” in both its demeanor and its actual messages. For a variety of reasons, many group members expect that law enforcement is “out to get them.” They expect the police to treat them badly, threaten them, and use derogatory language. Many truly believe members of law enforcement want to see them dead or in prison and don’t really care about keeping them or the community safe.

An important part of the call-in is debunking these perceptions and showing street group members that law enforcement wants them to live and succeed and that future law enforcement action is actually intended to keep them safe.

## Designing Call-Ins

The following four steps address specific issues in the design and execution of a call-in. Typically, these steps are accomplished by the project manager and/or members of the Working Group, in line with their respective areas of expertise:

### **STEP 1: Select speakers to deliver the core messages of the call-in.**

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The National Network recommends that no more than three representatives deliver the law enforcement message. These people usually include a police executive, the district attorney, and a representative of the U.S. Attorney’s Office or another federal agency. Other enforcement agencies can stand up in support or simply say, “My agency is fully committed to this initiative.”

One representative from the social services provider team typically speaks on behalf of the entire services structure. And three or four individuals typically deliver the community moral voice (representing the categories outlined in Part I, Community Moral Voices Call-In Preparation, Step 1, on page 21).



The call-in usually also involves a moderator selected by the speakers and/or Working Group. The moderator's role is to open the meeting, set the tone, and summarize the key messages at the beginning and end of the call-in. This person must be able to control the room if attendees become disruptive and ensure efficient execution of the meeting. (For more details on the moderator's role and responsibilities, see *Designing Call-Ins*, Step 4, on page 31.)

Experience has shown that the community message is often the most powerful. Ideally, law enforcement delivers its core messages in 20 to 30 minutes, service providers in 5 to 10 minutes, and community moral voices in about 20 to 30 minutes.

## **STEP 2: Select the location and setup of the call-in.**

The call-in is best held in a location that can be physically secured, so that the right individuals (e.g., those directed or invited to attend the call-in) can be admitted in an orderly manner, the wrong individuals can be kept out (e.g. anyone who may prove disruptive), and the overall safety and security of all attendees can be ensured.

For this reason, court rooms have often been selected as call-in locations. However, in recent years, many cities have paid increasing attention to street group members' perceptions of the legitimacy of the strategy. The physical setting of the call-in can convey important cues to group members that enhance or detract from the actual messages delivered by the speakers. Street group members generally do not have positive associations with court rooms—they are places associated with punishment.

Holding a call-in at, for example, a community center or African-American history museum rather than a court room may indicate to participants that they are viewed as part of the community, rather than excluded from it. This may reinforce the overall message that the call-in is a community-led intervention, that the group members themselves are part of the community, and that they can be agents of change.

This line of thinking has led many cities to become more creative with their call-in locations. Generally, the call-in is best held in a place of civic importance—this can be a community center, park building, library, museum, or other place of meaning to the community—as well as one that is able to accommodate appropriate security precautions.

Usually, the room is set up so that speakers are situated in the front of the room and facing the street group members who are seated audience-style. Chairs for observers often circle around the group members, symbolizing they are part of the community.

Some cities have experimented with the seating arrangements, intermingling law enforcement, community members, social services providers, and street group members by seating them in a circle. This tends to work better with smaller call-ins (20 or fewer participants) and emphasizes that the group members are viewed with respect and are equals with law enforcement and the community.

### **STEP 3: Notify street group members.**

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As part of your problem analysis, your jurisdiction will have identified all violent groups currently operating in the area. Following the completion of your problem analysis, the Working Group will have identified as many active members of these groups as possible. Once these individuals are identified, their names are cross-checked with probation and parole to determine if any are under criminal justice supervision (see Part I, Law Enforcement Call-In Preparation: Steps 1, 2, and 3, beginning on page 5). The first call-ins will often proceed without a full group list. All you need is a couple of supervisees for each active group.

The community supervision agencies then direct one or several representatives of each group to attend the call-in as a condition of their supervision. Whenever possible, the parole or probation officer should hand-deliver an invitation instructing these group members to attend the call-in to ensure they receive it.

It is important to deliver these invitations to summoned parole and probationers at least 1 week to 10 days prior to the call-in. Hand delivering one invitation 2 weeks ahead of the call-in and a reminder closer to the date is often most effective.

There may also be impact players or other influential group members not under community supervision whom you have an active interest in attending the call-in. In this case, these individuals can be invited to attend voluntarily. This is a recent innovation, and the results have varied widely. In some places, it has worked well and in some it has not. Several jurisdictions have experienced success by utilizing street outreach workers, community figures, or a respected law enforcement officer to deliver the invitations. When a respected individual hand-delivers an invitation to a street group member, in the presence of a positive influence or family member, many group members will attend the call-in.

#### **STEP 4:** Prepare and rehearse the call-in.

Once speakers and a moderator have been identified, scheduling a rehearsal and preparing a set of talking points for each speaker are essential.

The Group Violence Reduction Strategy is an intervention of information and messaging. If this messaging goes off script, it can be not only ineffective but also actively damaging. Disrespectful and challenging messages can actually provoke group members to act out following the meeting. For this reason, the National Network recommends that cities using the strategy hold a full dress rehearsal every time they are planning a call-in.

The rehearsal is critical for other reasons, too: speaking at call-ins is usually more difficult than people imagine, and speakers often get the messages wrong or go off script. The moderator should run the rehearsal and be prepared to provide constructive feedback to each speaker. Speakers should also provide each other with feedback.

The project manager typically creates an agenda for the rehearsal that clearly outlines the order and time limit for each speaker; this same agenda can be used for the call-in. However, cities can arrange their call-ins differently. Many open the call-in with the moderator, move to law enforcement speakers, then services, then community voices. Others partnerships prefer to have community speakers go first to emphasize that the intervention is community led, with law enforcement there to support the communities' demand that the violence stop. Other cities have social services providers go last, allotting them a 20-minute window to engage directly with call-in participants before the meeting is adjourned. The most important thing is that all three components of the partnership are represented and their key messages delivered.

Call-ins ought to be timed to highlight recent street group enforcement actions. Especially in your initial call-ins, the explicit purpose of talking about group enforcement actions is to establish the credibility of group-focused sanctions. To do this, the project manager or Working Group creates a visual display of the street group that was the focus of your first or most recent crackdown. This typically includes mug shots or other pictures of each group member. If there was a meaningful hierarchy to the group, you may want to arrange the pictures accordingly. It is often useful to list the actual or potential sentences or sanctions that fell on each group member under their picture. A key point to communicate is that **these individuals would still be in the community if their gang had not self-selected for law enforcement attention by committing acts of violence.**

The rehearsal is best scheduled within 1 week of the call-in (often the day before), in the same location where it will be held (this is optimal but not necessary if circumstances do not allow it), with all individuals who have speaking roles.

At the rehearsal, all of the speakers typically recite their talking points as if they are actually speaking before a live audience of street group members and practice keeping to their assigned time limits. Participants can offer constructive criticism and feedback to each other to ensure all messages are clear, concise, respectful, and effective. The rehearsal allows speakers to learn the messages of others, avoid repetition, and enhance community building for the partnership.

## Moderating

More specifically, the moderator's roll is to open the call-in, set the appropriate tone, frame the meeting, manage the transition between speakers, and close the meeting. It is important to have someone who represents the call-in as a community and law enforcement partnership. Some cities have used co-moderators to model this partnership.

The moderator is also responsible for ensuring the meeting stays on track and speakers don't run long. From the adrenaline of the moment, speakers can sometimes go off message. If this happens, the moderator corrects course by reiterating the core themes. Should any street group members become unruly, the moderator addresses this and, if necessary, can ask probation or parole officers to escort them out of the room.

Finally, the moderator must ensure that the speakers do not engage in conversation with the street group members—this includes not allowing or answering their questions. If group members who are under supervision engage in a two-way conversation with law enforcement representatives in this setting, it can be considered a custodial interrogation. More importantly, the partnership can quickly lose control of the room and of the essential messaging. For this reason, **street group members must be asked to hold any questions until after the meeting**, when they may seek out and talk with individual speakers.

## Sample Talking Points

The National Network recommends that each speaker receive or prepare a set of talking points in advance of the rehearsal. The below sample talking points and key messages can be customized for each speaker, but the core themes are generally the same from community to community. Again, the order of speakers can vary and should be determined by the Working Group.

### Law Enforcement Talking Points

In the call-in, law enforcement practitioners must not over-promise what they can and will deliver. The critical purpose of the call-in is to establish that (1) new law enforcement rules are in place that are focused on specific acts of violence and (2) special attention will be paid to all members of the most violent group and/or the next group that shoots or kills somebody after the call-in (depending on the operational capacity of the jurisdiction). This is the promise that law enforcement must make and keep. For group members to believe that things have changed, this enforcement promise must not be diluted with other promises that cannot be kept. (For more information about the enforcement promise, see Part I, Law Enforcement Call-In Preparation, Step 5, on page 8.)

The demonstration enforcement action is discussed during the law enforcement portion of the call-in, specifically when the partnership talks about the new rules. The following are some recommendations on how to talk about enforcement actions and law enforcement's new way of responding to violence in the call-in:

- ♦ **Articulate the purpose of meeting:** “Today is a new day in your jurisdiction, and we are here to tell you the rules. From now on, whoever commits the prohibited acts of violence [usually shooting and killing] will bring special attention to their entire group for any and all crimes they may be committing.”
- ♦ **Articulate the strengthened law enforcement agency partnership:** “All of our local, state, and federal partners are on board with this. We are working together to ensure that violence is going to be met with swift and certain consequences from now on.” (If you can, you should state that you have special understandings with local and federal prosecutors that will limit plea bargaining and provide enhanced federal review and adoption of cases, etc.).
- ♦ **Clearly state the new enforcement rules:** “We know that the violence is driven by the street groups in your jurisdiction. From now on, we are going to follow through with delivering the consequences of breaking the law. We can't pay special attention to all crimes at all times, but we are going to be paying special attention to the most violent group in your jurisdiction at any given time. In addition, the next time there is a shooting or homicide [depending on the levels

of violence and operational capacity] after this meeting, we will come after that group. We will go after the shooter for the shooting and the entire group for any and all other illegal activities.”

- ♦ **Use the demonstration action to illustrate that this is a credible promise:**  
“Up on the wall are pictures and charts of the last group [or the worst group] that shot/killed someone in your jurisdiction. If you look at this chart, you will see some familiar faces. This was [group name]. They committed the last prohibited act in your jurisdiction and/or they were the most violent group. The shooter is now [location/sentence/pending charges]; his associates are [list of consequences faced by all members in the group]. These guys would all be walking around right now if their associate hadn’t shot someone. This is what we mean. This is how things will be from now on.”
- ♦ **Instruct the group members to take this message back to their group:** “This is not personal, but the violence must stop. You are here to listen to this message and take this information back to your associates.”
- ♦ **State that their community needs the violence to stop and help is available:**  
“We hope you listen to the members of your community here today and stop the violence. We would prefer that you accept the help being offered by the social services providers. If nothing else, put your guns down.”
- ♦ **State that the new rules are now in effect:** “Starting at the end of this meeting, this entire law enforcement partnership is coming after the next person that kills somebody in your jurisdiction and everyone in his group for all crimes they are committing. Similarly, this partnership will go after all members of the most violent group for all crimes they are committing. Now you know how things are going to work. If you see members of your group about to involve themselves in violence, tell them to stop. If they do not stop, your group will become the focus of special local, state, and federal law enforcement attention.”

Another important talking point is that of legitimacy. As discussed in Part I, Community Moral Voices Call-In Preparation (see page 18), and in the introduction to this chapter (see page 27), National Network cities are paying increasing attention to community and street group member perceptions of law enforcement legitimacy and the stories (narratives) that both law enforcement and communities tell about each other. These stories often explain a lot about why it has been difficult for the community and police to work together and why group members think violence is necessary.

In many places, law enforcement is willing to focus further on challenging street group narratives that say law enforcement doesn't care about the group or the safety of the community. The following talking points can help correct such narratives:

- + “None of us have been entirely in the right; all of us would like to change.”
- + “Law enforcement respects you and believes you can make the right decision.”
- + “Law enforcement has been part of the problem; what we have been doing hasn't worked well enough; we haven't kept you safe, and we want to change that.”
- + “We know you are the ones getting hurt and killed, and that is not okay. We are going to make sure from now on that you don't get hurt.”
- + “Law enforcement does not want to put you in prison or see you dead; law enforcement would prefer that you succeed and your community thrive.”
- + “Law enforcement will tell you exactly how to stay out of prison.”
- + “Law enforcement wants you with your family and children—alive and out of prison.”



## Social Services Provider Talking Points

In essence, the key messages of the social services providers are that help is available to street group members who want to change their lives. The speaker should stay away from technical jargon, such as “case management plans” or “needs assessment,” and focus on speaking plainly about how they can help. Overall, the provider’s messaging can take the following form:

- ♦ **Articulate the overarching message of the call-in:** “There is no justification for the violence. We agree with law enforcement and the community that the violence has to stop.”
- ♦ **State that help is available and unconditional:** “We are ready, willing, and able to work with you and your group. We want to help you and will do the best we can to help you change your life. This offer is not conditional; if you want help, we will help you.”
- ♦ **Clearly articulate the special social services structure:** “A new service structure has been created for you and members of your group who want help. Our agency works with people with your backgrounds and are prepared and qualified to help you. You can access these services by calling [provide one phone number for one point of contact]. We will give you immediate priority attention. The services available to you include [describe what is available]. We can’t promise you employment,\* but we promise to do the best we can to help you get a job if you want one.”
- ♦ **Speak as plainly as possible:** “We can help you with a drug problem. We can help you find a place to live, and we can get you drug treatment/job training/education.”

\* **It is critical that the social services provider not promise jobs.** Generally, this is not a promise that can be delivered for many reasons. As such, providers can promise job training and work with street group members to find jobs but cannot and should not guarantee jobs.

## Community Moral Voices Talking Points

While the different types of community members have powerful messages to deliver specific to their areas of expertise or experience, it is important that each speaker also discuss the general themes listed below. These overarching messages need to be repeated by each speaker so that the message is made indelible:

- “This community needs the violence to stop.”
- “There is no justification for the violence—it destroys people, families, and this community.”
- “Killing and shooting people are wrong.”
- “We are justified in demanding that you stop, and we will help you if we can.”
- “You are important and valuable to the community. We need you alive, out of prison, and with your family and children for this community to grow and thrive.”

The community speakers can also state that the following ideas of the street code are wrong, expressing that “these ideas are empty—they are not true, they do not justify violence, and will destroy you and this community”:

- “Disrespect requires violence.”
- “We’re not afraid of death or prison.”
- “We handle our own business; a man doesn’t go to the police.”
- “We’ve got each other’s back; the enemy of my friend is my enemy.”
- “We’re justified in what we do; history, racism, oppression, and neglect make it okay.”

As for the different types of community members, they can overlap in some areas and should reiterate the general themes listed above, but particular people are often better suited to deliver particular messages (see Part I, Community Moral Voices Call-In Preparation Step 1, on page 21). Key talking points for specific community moral voices include:

- **Ex-offenders who challenge the street code and speak to the possibility of redemption:** “This was what I did. There was no justification for what I did. It was wrong. The ideas of the street code are wrong and destructive. Redemption is possible; learn from my example. I have lived the life you are living now, and I am here to tell you change is possible and life can be different.”
- **Mothers of murdered children or other victims who speak to the community pain:** “The violence destroys families and the community; here is what it did to me. This is what it will do to your family.”
- **Authentic faith or community leaders who speak to community aspirations:** “Your acts of violence are inflicting immeasurable harm on the community. You are currently poor role models for your children and others. The community needs to grow and thrive, but it needs you alive and out of prison to do so.”

## Call-In Execution

Call-ins typically have been held in the early evenings and are no longer than 90 minutes. Street group members are asked to report to the call-in location at least 30 minutes before the call-in starts. The National Network recommends that street group members not be allowed to arrive late or enter the room once the call-in has started.

Once all speakers have delivered their key messages, the moderator closes the meeting and tells the street group members they are free to go but may stay and talk with speakers, service providers, or others if they choose.

For additional call-in talking points, sample scripts, and preparation checklists, please see the appendices.

### Tips for Success

In many cities, the partnership invites street group members to stay, share some food, and talk with the speakers and other participants. Anecdotally, this seems to be an effective way to reinforce the overall themes that the partnership respects the group members, that it wishes to see them succeed, and that any enforcement action is not personal but about controlling violence and community safety. This can also be a time that social services providers and street outreach workers build connections with group members.

The National Network also suggests the following:

- Use a timekeeper to ensure the call-in stays on schedule.
- Keep speakers' messages brief and effective.
- Put together an RSVP list of observers for both security purposes and to control the total number of people in the room.
- If resources are available (e.g., manpower and time), the project manager is strongly encouraged to meet with each speaker privately to help the speaker work through his or her talking points prior to the call-in rehearsal.

### Follow-Through: Keeping Call-In Promises

Once the call-in has been successfully executed, it is absolutely essential that both the law enforcement and social services promises are kept. The next group that shoots or kills someone in your jurisdiction (depending on how you defined the prohibited behavior in the call-in) and/or the most violent group must become the focus of the interagency enforcement Working Group. The streets will test the partnerships' ability to follow through on this promise. Reporting back to the street groups on the results of these enforcement actions is a critical part of your ongoing call-in strategy.

Similarly, the social services promise must be kept. Those who call the number must get special, intensive help to the greatest extent possible. Reporting back to the street groups on the success of social services providers in helping those who come forward is also an important part of your ongoing call-in strategy. The National Network is also working to develop further community moral voice work between call-ins and will be supporting cities to test new pilots and innovations in this area.

## Law Enforcement Follow-Through

The key tasks for law enforcement following each call-in are to detect and monitor group-involved violence; assemble an enforcement committee; and respond with special, coordinated law enforcement attention to entire groups (whether worst or next) for any crimes they are committing.

### Detect and Monitor Group-Involved Violence

Law enforcement, usually the police, must monitor homicides and shootings carefully to detect those that have group involvement as either suspects or victims (again, motive doesn't matter for this purpose; only group involvement by the shooter and/or victim matters). The National Network recommends that the police regularly review and assign shootings (fatal and non-fatal) by street group in order to track and determine who will get the special enforcement attention. This can generate a scoreboard, or matrix, by group. This allows the law enforcement partnership to know, at any given time, which are the most violent groups in the city—as well as to detect which is the first group to shoot or kill someone after each call-in.

### Assemble Enforcement Committee

Once a street group has been selected for special attention (because it is the most violent or the next to kill after the call-in), it becomes the focus of an enforcement committee comprised of law enforcement members/agencies of the overall Working Group. This committee should align the full resources of the criminal justice system—local, state, and federal—to act on the “worst group, next group” promise. This will flow directly from the members of the Working Group. The purpose of this committee is to focus enforcement on all members of a street group if the Working Group selects it to receive the special attention. The enforcement committee chair is

usually a commander within the police department who uses department resources to initiate and further Group Violence Reduction Strategy cases.<sup>12</sup> The agencies represented on the committee must be fully informed about the committees' activities and be willing to offer all available resources as needs arise. The committee chair ensures that the supervisors of all committee members are aware when members of their command or agency are tasked with enforcement duties.

### Respond with Coordinated Law Enforcement Action

If a case appears to be eligible for federal prosecution, the enforcement committee should take it to the U.S. attorney for review with prior approval of the committee chair. The committee should mark all group-involved cases for local and federal prosecutors to ensure maximum prosecution. Once street group members are arrested and charged, the enforcement committee chair works with team members to ensure that the prosecution secures rapid indictments, demands high bonds, and argues for less leniency with respect to plea bargaining. The group-targeted enforcement ends when essentially all street group members and associates (of the worst group or next group) have been arrested and charged as a result of the committee's actions. This is ultimately the decision of the committee, which has to consider current intelligence and resources that would need to be expended to see additional returns. The Working Group can then present the enforcement action as a warning and evidence of follow-through to the other street groups in the next call-in.

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12. The following are usually represented on the enforcement committee:

- Police: intelligence unit, vice, violent crimes squad, mobilized arrest teams, and the affected district commander
- District attorney (usually an assistant DA)
- U.S. attorney (usually an assistant U.S. attorney)
- Parole
- Probation

## Social Services Follow-Through

In the call-in, street group members are offered special help to change their lives. For many reasons, tracking service uptake and outcomes is important. The lead social services provider should report service uptake (i.e., individuals who come forward), service engagement (i.e., services received), and outcomes (e.g., employment and continued engagement in programming) to the Working Group on a monthly or quarterly basis.

To track the provision of social services post-call-in:

- Collect information on the number of street group members who have sought help
- Track referrals from the lead provider and follow-through of partner social services providers
- Ensure that all social services providers are prioritizing group members
- Track retention rates for services obtained by group members
- Prepare a brief update of success stories and service uptake for use in the next call-in
- Assess street group members subsequent participation in violence

As with the follow-through enforcement actions, social services successes are reported back to street group members at subsequent call-ins.

## Community Moral Voices Follow-Through

Sustaining relationships between moral community figures and street group members between call-ins is a critical yet underdeveloped component of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy. This component is a research and development priority of the National Network's Leadership Group. Over the next several years, a number of Leadership Group cities will be testing and refining models to enhance this component of the strategy. For more information, visit the National Network for Safe Communities at [www.nnscommunities.org](http://www.nnscommunities.org).

For additional preparatory checklists, tools, scripts/talking points, and other materials, please review the appendices and visit the National Network online.

Furthermore, the National Network welcomes your feedback on this practice brief and can be contacted via e-mail at [infnssc@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:infnssc@jjay.cuny.edu) with any questions, thoughts, or recommendations.



## Appendixes

### Appendix A: General Speaker Guidelines

This list represents a summary of the basic themes and talking points presented in the body of the practice brief. The following points are the fundamental guidelines for the call-ins:

- The call-in is all about violence—not crime in general.
- The goal is not to scare these young men but to ensure they understand the following:
  - Their choices regarding violence have costs and consequences.
  - People in their community care about them and will help them if they step away from violence.
  - They have a choice.
- Keep it short—don't lecture or sermonize.
- Treat and speak to the men with respect and a caring attitude.
- Be careful not to make promises you can't keep; the social services providers in the room will do their best, but they cannot guarantee a job or other services.

The key is to put these ideas into your own words so they come alive in the meeting. Use your life experience, and review the transcript and audio and video recordings of other call-ins as the basis for your presentation.

## Appendix B: Preparation Questions for Community Speakers

*Some community speakers find following a script of talking points difficult. In those instances, the National Network recommends that speakers be given a list of questions they can answer ahead of the call-in to help them think about their presentation and to guide their message. The following is an example of such guidance and questions:*

You have been asked to speak as a voice of the community, to speak of the outrage, the harm, the broken dreams that the violence is causing. We would like you to articulate the following messages based on your own experience:

“The community will no longer stand for the violence. The violence is killing the community, and we need it to stop. We need you to help heal the community; we need you to do better because, as a community, you are our kids, our loved ones, and we can’t have you continue killing our community, the community you live in. We cannot continue to live among broken homes where fathers are sent to prison and kids are being raised by only their mom or grandma. We cannot continue to let you kill yourselves in front of us because when you do this, you kill our dreams, too. This is not a plea, not a negotiation. This is us, your loved ones, your parents, your kids, telling you that we need you to do better for us. The violence, the killing, stops now.”

Because it is sometimes hard to read from a script, we want to provide you with a few questions to think about when you speak tonight. We hope this will help you guide the message you have been asked to deliver:

- Who are you? What does your community mean to you? How long have you lived in your neighborhood? Did you grow up there? How are you invested in the community?

- How bad is the violence in your neighborhood? Are community members scared? Do mothers let their kids play outside? Has the violence gotten worse? Has it remained the same? Are you outraged with the violence? Why did you become outraged with the violence?
- Why is the violence unacceptable? Why does the violence need to stop? Is it so that kids won't be afraid to play outside? Is it so that your community can heal and start rebuilding itself?
- What are your hopes for the community, the families, and the street group members?

The following lists some typical beliefs of the streets. Do any of these speak to your own experiences? If so, please speak about these. We want you to challenge these beliefs because they are false:

- Many believe that if they are disrespected, they must respond with violence. Did you also feel this way?  
The message is: *You no longer or never felt that way. Responding to disrespect with violence does not make you a man.*
- Many believe that the enemy of my friend is my enemy. This is not true; it just causes more pain.
- Some believe that going to prison is a badge of honor and a rite of passage. Did you also feel this way?  
The message is: *No, because it causes your family and loved ones terrible pain.*
- Many believe that their fellow street group members have their back. Do they really have your back when you are in prison? Do they send you money? Do they look after your mom or grandma? Or do they steal your girlfriend?
- Many believe that it is ok to die and that they are going to die before they are 20.  
The message is: *It is not okay to die.*

- Many believe that there is no way out of a street group. How did you leave?
- Many think they can make their riches by being in a street group, that by being in a group they are protected. Was this true for you?

*Most community speakers will be able to discuss freely and clearly how violence affected them, challenge the code of the street, and express their aspirations for the community. However, asking them to review the above questions and talking points before a call-in will help them to stay focused on the core anti-violence messages and ensure they are delivered in the right context and tone.*

## Appendix C: Detailed Sample Talking Points

Moderator: 5 minutes

- Begin the call-in by welcoming the street group members:
  - “Welcome. We are glad you are all here with us today. We have gathered here to talk about violence in our community.”
- Provide a brief self-introduction
- Explain the purpose of the meeting and why the group members were invited:
  - “The violence has to end.”
  - “All of us are here today because the violence must stop.”
  - “We have asked you to be here because each of you has been identified as a member of a violent group.”
  - “We are here because we know that you, and the people in your group, are the most likely to kill or be killed.”
  - “You have been identified as being at risk of being a potential victim or perpetrator of violence.”
  - “The community needs you alive and out of prison. Law enforcement does not want to put you in prison. We are all here because we care about you and this community needs you.”
  - “We believe you can make good choices. Today we are here to give you the information you need to do that.”
- Explain what the group members should do with the information they hear today:
  - “Take what you here today back to your street group.”
  - “Today you are going to hear some important information. Take this information back to your group, so they can hear what we are speaking about now.”
  - “We recognize that you are influential in your community and with your group.”
  - “This meeting is not personal; we are not talking to you personally. We want to talk *through* you, so that you take this message back to your group.”

- Introduce the different types of speakers:
  - “Today you are going to hear from law enforcement, social services providers, and members of your community.”
  - “Law enforcement representatives are going to tell you the new rules of the game and how to keep yourself out of prison. These new rules will go into effect tonight—so you need to take what you hear back to your group.”
  - “The social services workers are going to talk to you about the assistance that is available to you.”
  - “Members of your community are going to talk to you about the impact the violence has had on their lives and on the community.”
- Explain the rules of the call-in:
  - “We ask you to listen to this first part of the meeting.”
  - “We have some things we need to say, and this is not a conversation. After the presentation, we invite you to stay and talk with us so that we can answer any questions you may have.”
- Introduce the next speakers:
  - “You are now going to hear some important information from law enforcement.”

### *Law Enforcement: 20–30 minutes total*

Law Enforcement Member 1: Police Executive—5 minutes

- Reiterate the purpose of the meeting:
  - “This meeting is not personal. You are here as a representative of an active street group.”
  - “This meeting is about the killing and shooting happening in your community.”
- Summarize the new law enforcement rules now in place:
  - “From now on, we are doing things differently, and I’m here to tell you ahead of time exactly how we’re going to do that.”
  - “This is a new and important opportunity for you. You will leave here today knowing exactly what will happen to everyone in your group if anyone in your group decides to use a gun.”

- “We know who you are and whom you hang with; that is why you are in this meeting.”
- “We know whom you are allied with and whom you are beefing with.”
- “We are now putting you on notice that future violence will now bring special attention from this partnership of law enforcement agencies to entire groups that behave violently for all crimes they are committing.”
- “All law enforcement agencies are working together on this, including the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the state’s attorney’s office; the department of correction, parole, and probation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). We are working toward one goal—eliminating the violence.”
- “All of us here in law enforcement tonight will be focusing on two things from now on: the most violent group and the next group to kill someone.”
- “Our message is clear: The most violent group in this neighborhood or the next group that kills someone after this meeting will draw all of our attention. We will start with the shooter, but every associated group member will also get special attention from the police department, the U.S. attorney, the county district attorney, parole, probation, the FBI, the DEA, and the IRS when it applies.”
- “If you or your group commits an act of violence, we will focus on and prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law for any and all crimes you may be committing.”
- “We will serve outstanding warrants; we will look for outstanding child support, unregistered cars, everything and anything.”
- “If you or any of your group members are on parole, we will use any and all sanctions available to us to enforce your conditions and potentially violate you. We can have you put on electronic monitoring, initiate building inspections, and increase curfew checks.”
- “I hope you listen because this partnership has committed resources to making this work.”
- Explain what the group members should do with the information they hear today:
  - “You are here as a representative of your group; take what you hear today back to your friends.”
  - “We have asked you to be here tonight because we know who you represent and that you can take this message back to your group.”

- “Put down your guns, and tell your group to put them down as a matter of self-preservation.”
- “If you see one of your guys picking up a gun, tell him to put it down.”
- “It is in your best interest and the interest of your group to not shoot someone or commit further acts of violence.”

■ Stress that the strategy represents a partnership between law enforcement and the community:

- “We are here because we have heard from your community, and we will help them to stop the violence.”
- “This community has had enough of the violence. The violence must stop.”
- “This community cares about you, and it wants you to stop the shooting.”

■ Express concern for group members’ safety and your desire to protect them:

- “We know that the next person who gets shot in this community is likely to be one of you or your people because of these conflicts.”
- “We want you alive, not dead. We want you to succeed. We do not want you in jail or prison.”
- “This is not personal; we want you to live, and we want the violence to end.”

Law Enforcement Member 2: District Attorney/Local Prosecutor—5 minutes

■ Reiterate the message that enforcement methods are changing and explain the new working partnership:

- “We are here because the violence must stop. There has been [insert number] shootings in your jurisdiction. Your street groups are responsible for the violence.”
- “My office is fully committed to this initiative.”
- “We are working with your police department.”
- “We are here to inform you of the attention your group can face with future violence committed by any member of your group.”
- “We will prioritize the prosecution of street group members who are associated with the next violent crime in this community for any crimes they may be committing. This can include expediting case reviews, seeking maximum state penalties, and seeking career criminal prosecutions.”



- Provide clear examples of the legal risks groups members now face under state law:
  - “The potential legal risks you are facing include drug convictions, gun convictions, and parole violation, among others.
  - “Any special and rarely used statutes, such as habitual offender laws and street group enhancements, will also be used.”
  - “We are working with a special street group focus and therefore will be able to investigate and prosecute selected groups successfully.” (Experienced group offenders know that laws are often not applied; they need to know that in this case they will be.)
- Reiterate the core call-in message:
  - “Go back to your group and tell them that the violence must stop.”

#### Law Enforcement Member 3: Federal Prosecutor—10 minutes

- Explain the legal risks group members now face under federal law:
  - “I am here as a member of this partnership. I will discuss the federal laws you could face at the next act of violence in this community.”
  - “The U.S. attorney of this jurisdiction is fully on board with this initiative.”
  - “We will be reviewing cases associated with the most violent group and the next group that shoots someone after the call-in. If you or your group members commit acts of violence, and you meet the federal guidelines, you have a much greater chance of ending up in federal court.”
  - “The federal legal system is very different from the state system. I am now going to show you our conviction rates and mandatory sentencing guidelines.”
  - “We have a 95 percent conviction rate.”
  - “No bond is set in federal court. If you do go to trial and the judge determines that you were lying, your sentence will increase. And 85 percent of the sentence has to be served in a federal prison.”
  - “We can send you anywhere in the country.”
  - “We will consider going outside our normal office guidelines for these group-related prosecutions. We can send someone to federal prison for 15 years for one bullet. We hardly ever do that, but group-related violence will get that kind of attention.”

■ Reiterate the core call-in message:

- “Go back to your group and tell them that the violence must stop.”

Moderator: 2 minutes

■ Reiterate one or two main points quickly from law enforcement and then introduce the next speakers:

- “You have heard some important information from law enforcement.”
- “They are telling you what they are going to do ahead of time, so you can make the right decisions and protect yourself and your people.”
- “We are asking you to put down the guns.”
- “You are now going to hear from [name of social services provider], who is here to offer help to you, or any member of your group. They are offering help to you, your friends, and your family to change your lives for the better.”

Social Services Provider: 5–10 minutes

■ State that help is available to those who wish to change their lives for the better:

- “My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m here on behalf of the [name of social services provider].”
- “We are offering our assistance to those who want it.”
- “We very much want you to succeed and have a better life, and we will do anything we can to help you.”
- “Services we will make available to you and your group members include:”
  - Counseling
  - Substance abuse assistance
  - Job skills training and placement
  - Housing
  - Help for your families
- “We understand change is hard, but we are here to help.”

- Provide a number for group members to call and explain the process:
  - “To help you the best way we can, we will provide you with one name and number to call.”
  - “There is no wait list for those of you who want our assistance.”
  - “Please feel free to pick up my card and talk with me about our services.”
  - “We welcome you any time from today forward.”
- Reiterate the core call-in message:
  - “Take back our message of assistance to your group and stop the violence.”
  - “Participation in our services is optional; stopping the violence is not.”

Moderator: 2 minutes

- Reiterate one or two main points quickly from the social services provider and then introduce the next speakers:
  - “You have now heard that there are people out here who want to help you.”
  - “They are offering you and your group one phone number, one place to go.”
  - “Take the number back with you. There is help available today or whenever you or other members of your group are ready.”
  - “You are now going to hear from some members of the community about their experience on the street and the impact of the violence on themselves and on the community.”

### *Community Moral Voices: 20–30 minutes total*

Family Member 1: 8 minutes

- Deliver the key message that group violence hurts the community and families:
  - “My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a [mother, grandmother, etc.]”
  - “I lost a loved one to gun violence in this neighborhood.”
  - “Group violence killed my loved one.”
  - “[He or she] was beautiful.
  - “[He or she] had huge potential.”
  - “Violence not only hurts you but also me, my family, and our community.”

- “This is the pain violence has caused me and my family—my life will never be the same.”
- “The community can no longer be this way.”
- “The violence must stop.”
- “It is not the natural order for parents to bury their children.”
- “If you go out and kill someone after this meeting, their mother or grandmother will be standing here. Her life will be destroyed.”
- “If you get killed, your mother or grandmother will be standing here. Her life will be destroyed.”
- “Do not do this to your mother or grandmother.”
- “It is not worth it. Killing people is wrong. The violence has to stop.”

Family Member 2: 8 minutes

- Reiterate that the community needs the group members to help it heal:
  - “The violence has damaged our entire neighborhood.”
  - “The community cannot grow and flourish like this. We cannot live well if our kids cannot go outside, if people are injured or killed in the street over nothing.”
  - “This community needs you to stop the violence, stay out of prison, and raise your families.”
  - “Help us to change what is going on—you must stop the violence.”
  - “The community wants to thrive; you are important people in the community, and we need you to be part of the process of changing this neighborhood for the better.”
  - “Stop the killing. Tell your group to stop the violence.”

Community Voice of Redemption and Aspiration: 8 minutes

- Talk about having been in a street group:
  - “My name is \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “I used to be in a street group.”
  - “I used to be just like you and your guys.”

- “I used to stand on the same corners you stand on now.”
- “I ran with guys like the ones you run with now. I have seen many of the same things you see now. I have seen the cost of the violence on this neighborhood.”
- Discuss the cost of violence:
  - “I was arrested and sentenced to federal prison.”
  - “The federal prosecutor told you the truth about their system and the prisons.”
  - “I lost the prime years of my life, being separated from my family and friends.”
  - “I have seen the price of violence on people, families, and this neighborhood.”
- Explain that street group members can change their lives for the better:
  - “I am here to tell you that the violence is wrong and you don’t have to live like that.”
  - “I have sat where you sit—and now I am out of that life; I make legitimate money with my own business.”
  - “I am no longer worried about being arrested and incarcerated for something I did or what my friends did.”
  - “I am no longer afraid when I see a police car.”
  - “I am no longer afraid of being robbed by one of my associates or a competitor.”
  - “I employ people from this neighborhood who have lived a life like mine. I give back to this community—because I helped to destroy it when I was younger.”
  - “I care about you. The people standing with me here today care about you. We know you have value and can do great things, like I am.”
- Challenge the street code:
  - “What they tell you on the street is wrong.”
  - “Killing people over disrespect is wrong.”
  - “Going to prison does matter—it destroys your family and kids and hurts you.”

■ Reiterate the core message:

- “Stop the killing. Put your guns down, and tell your group to put them down.”

Moderator: 2 minutes

■ Conclude the call-in by reiterating the purpose and promises of the call-in:

- “We are all here because the violence needs to end.”
- “We believe you can make good choices.”
- “Take what you have heard tonight back to your friends.”
- “This is the new way of business starting tonight.”
- “Once you leave, the clock starts ticking.”
- “The community needs you alive and out of prison.”
- “We are all here because we care about you and this community needs you.”
- “If you take nothing else away with you, remember that the violence must stop.”

■ Invite group members to stay after:

- “Feel free to enjoy some food and talk with any of the speakers or other folks who are here.”
- “Good luck.”

## Appendix D: Sample Call-In Invitation Letter

*To be printed on letterhead from probation or parole:*

Dear Mr. Doe:

You are required to attend a meeting on **Thursday, February 24, 2011, at 6:30 pm.** **The meeting will be held at [insert name of community center] located at [insert street address]. Please arrive no later than 6:00 pm.**

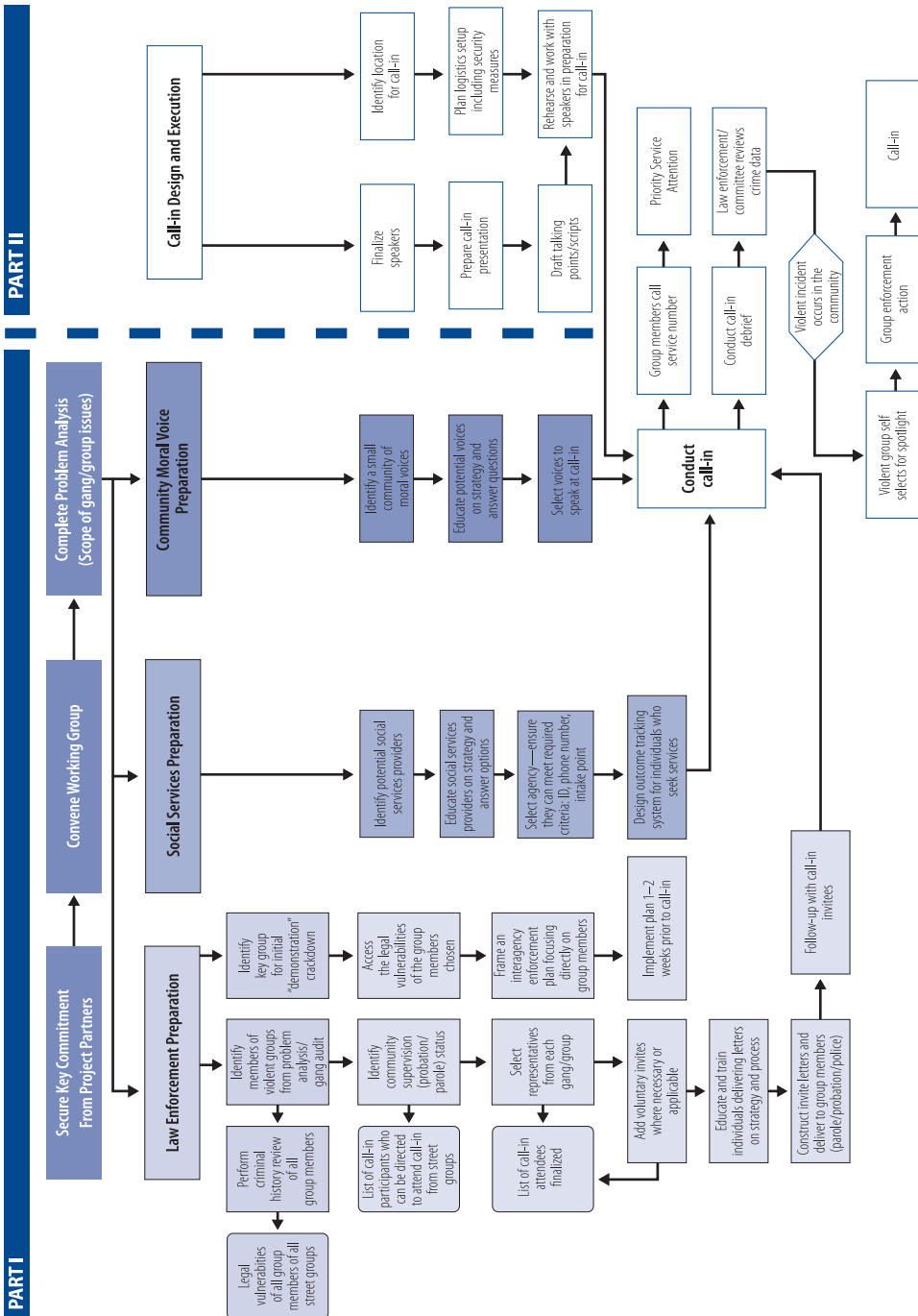
During this meeting, which will last approximately an hour and a half, you will be given important information about violence in [insert your jurisdiction] from law enforcement representatives, social services providers, and community members. This will include information on law enforcement activities in the neighborhood, opportunities to access services for help, and stories from community members about the impact of the violence on the community.

**Your attendance is MANDATORY. If you fail to attend this meeting, you may be in violation of [specify probation or parole]. Please talk to your [probation or parole] officer.** Attendance will be taken. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact your [probation or parole] officer immediately.

Sincerely,

[Insert signature of local police executive and/or probation or parole authority]

## Appendix E: GVRs Flow Chart





## Appendix F: Sample Call-In Operational Plan

*This operational plan can and should be modified as the call-in planning process moves forward to reflect the local context of your city.*

### 4 Weeks Prior to Call-In

Action Items	Person(s) Responsible	Status	Notes
Choose approximate call-in date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select date</li> <li>Determine if it would be desirable to schedule more than one session on the same day / coordinate with demonstration crackdown</li> </ul>	Project manager		
Coordinate call-in date(s) and time(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reserve room and review logistics: e.g., seating, break room, and pre-staging room for street group members (if desired)</li> <li>Develop list of key speakers</li> <li>Send meeting confirmation notice to key speakers</li> </ul>	Project manager		
Coordinate call-in notification procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine street group members to be invited</li> <li>Produce and distribute finalized list of desired street group members</li> <li>Approve language of notification</li> <li>Coordinate with probation/parole agencies to make sure letters go out on time</li> <li>Document who is actually notified and method of notification</li> </ul>	Project manager in collaboration with police department and probation/parole agencies		

### 3 Weeks Prior to Call-In

Action Items	Person(s) Responsible	Status	Notes
Coordinate call-in rehearsal date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule rehearsal for approximately 2 days before call-in</li> <li>Select rehearsal venue and coordinate logistics</li> </ul>	Project manager		
Finalize call-in speakers and group members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize and distribute comprehensive lists of call-in speakers and group members with contact information included</li> </ul>	Project manager		

### 2 Weeks Prior to Call-In

Action Items	Person(s) Responsible	Status	Notes
Send out reminder letters to call-in group members	Project manager in collaboration with police department and probation/parole agencies		
Coordinate call-in rehearsal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send out talking point to all speakers</li> </ul>	Project manager		

## 1 Week Prior to Call-In

Action Items	Person(s) Responsible	Status	Notes
Create and finalize visual for demonstration crackdown	Project manager in collaboration with police department and probation/parole agencies		
Create press release for distribution after demonstration crackdown	Project manager		

## 2 Days Prior to Call-In

Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Status	Notes
Hold call-in rehearsal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide timely notice to all speakers</li> </ul>	All speakers		

## Day of Call-In

Action Item	Person(s) Responsible	Status	Notes
Secure call-in location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take attendance at call-in (e.g., group members, speakers, audience members, if invited)</li> </ul>	Law enforcement		

## Appendix G: Sample Call-In/Rehearsal Agenda

### Call-In Rehearsal and Feedback Agenda

[Location]

February 24, 2011

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

15 minutes – Opening and set up

5 minutes – Moderator: Welcome and introductions

20 minutes – Law enforcement message

5 minutes – Police executive

5 minutes – District/state’s attorney

10 minutes – Assistant U.S. attorney

3 minutes – Moderator: Transition

30 minutes – Community moral voices message

7 minutes – Violence victim: Discuss community pain

7 minutes – Grassroots leader: Discuss community aspiration

7 minutes (each) – Ex-offenders: Discuss redemption

First speaker: Mr. Smith

Second speaker: Mr. Doe

3 minutes – Moderator: Transition

10 minutes – Social services provider message

3 minutes – Moderator: Closing message and adjourn

“Stop the violence. Put your guns down—you and your associates.”

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The National Network for Safe Communities' Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS), also known as "Operation Ceasefire," has repeatedly demonstrated that serious violence can be dramatically reduced when law enforcement, community members, and social services providers join together to directly engage with violent street groups to clearly communicate (1) a law enforcement message that future violence will be met with clear and predictable consequences, (2) a community moral message that violence will no longer be tolerated, and (3) a genuine offer of help to those who want it.

The strategy's central tool to communicate these messages is a call-in—a face-to-face meeting between GVRS representatives and street group members. *Practice Brief: Call-In Preparation and Execution* is intended to help law enforcement, community, and social services partners already engaged in implementing GVRS to design, prepare, and execute their first and subsequent call-ins.

This publication is part of an ongoing series by the National Network for Safe Communities about its two core crime reduction strategies: the Group Violence Reduction Strategy and Drug Market Intervention. A comprehensive implementation guide for the entire GVRS strategy is forthcoming.



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