

2020 National Public Health Week: Violence Prevention



Violence

According to the U.S. CDC, violence is a serious public health problem in the U.S. From infants to the elderly, it affects people in all stages of life. In 2017, more than 19,000 people were victims of homicide and more than 1.7 million were treated in hospital emergency departments for an assault-related injury. The number of violent deaths and injuries is just part of the story. Many people survive violence but have permanent physical and emotional scars. Violence also erodes communities by reducing productivity, decreasing property values, and disrupting social services.ⁱ



The Impact of Violence on Health

- Violent crimes cause physical harm as well as social and emotional distress, including injury, disability, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and premature death.ⁱⁱ
- Exposure to violence is a strong predictor of committing future violence.ⁱⁱⁱ
- A public health approach to violence prevention fosters healthy gender norms and relationships, bolsters trauma-informed services and works to mitigate racism, changing norms and behaviors that lead to reductions in violence.^{iv}
- When there is disinvestment in communities, and violence in their neighborhoods, kids are more likely to experience abuse or neglect at home. Community risk factors include high rates of poverty, residential instability, unemployment and a high concentration of alcohol retailers.^v

Violence in Maine

- In 2019, 17.9% of Maine middle schoolers reported that violence in their home, or the threat of violence, made them want to leave home, even if only for a short while.^{vi}
- In Maine, a domestic violence assault is reported to law enforcement every 2 hours and 22 minutes, representing 34% of total reported assaults.^{vii}
- 1 in 5 Mainers will experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetime.^{viii}
- In 2018, the overall gun death rate in Maine was 10.33 per 100,000, lower than the U.S. rate (11.9 per 100,000). However, the suicide gun death rate was 9.47 per 100,000, higher than the U.S. rate (7.04 per 100,000).^{ix}

Take Action

- Work with colleges and universities to prevent sexual violence, such as offering bystander intervention training.
- Urge lawmakers to provide research funding on par with the nation’s gun violence epidemic, and to pass measures that reduce the risk of gun deaths and injuries.
- The U.S. CDC has developed technical packages to help states and communities take advantage of the best available evidence to prevent violence – including, intimate partner violence, suicide, youth violence, sexual violence, and child abuse & neglect. The strategies and approaches represent different levels of social ecology with efforts intended to impact individual behaviors as well as the relationship, family, school, community, and societal factors that influence risk and protective factors for violence. They are intended to work together and to be used in combination in a multi-level, multi-sector effort to prevent violence. Access all 5 technical reports here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/technical-packages.html#yv>.

Maine Resources

- **1-866-834-HELP (4357):** The statewide Domestic Violence Helpline connects callers with advocates at Domestic Violence Resource Centers and provides information, crisis counseling, emotional support and advocacy.
- For a list of resources in Tribal communities visit: www.mcedv.org/get-help/
- [Maine CDC Violence-Injury Prevention Program](#)
- [Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence](#): Seeks to create and encourage a social, political, and economic environment that fosters communities where diversity, dignity, and contributions of all are respected and celebrated, and domestic abuse and violence no longer exist.
- [Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#): Organized to end sexual violence and to support high-quality sexual violence protection and response in Maine communities.

ⁱCenters for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. Violence prevention: A public health issue. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/index.html>.

ⁱⁱUnited Health Foundation. 2020. America’s Health Rankings Annual Report: Violent Crime. <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Crime/state/ME>.

ⁱⁱⁱWeaver CM, Borkowski JG, Whitman TL. Violence breeds violence: Childhood exposure and adolescent conduct problems. *J Community Psychol*. 2008;36(1):96–112.

^{iv}American Public Health Association. 2018. Violence is a public health issue: Public health is essential to understanding and treating violence in the U.S. <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/28/violence-is-a-public-health-issue>.

^vCenters for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. Violence prevention: Risk and protective factors. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/riskprotectivefactors.html>.

^{vi}Maine Department of Health and Human Services & Maine Department of Education. 2019. 2019 MIYHS Middle School Report. https://data.mainepublichealth.gov/miyhs/files/2019_Reports/Detailed_Reports/MS/MIYHS2019_Detailed_Reports_MS_State/Maine_Middle_School_Detailed_Tables.pdf.

^{vii}State of Maine Department of Public Safety. 2018. Crime in Maine 2018. <https://www.maine.gov/dps/msp/sites/maine.gov.dps.msp/files/inline-files/Crime%20in%20Maine%202018.pdf>.

^{viii}Dumont, R & Shaler, G. (2015). *Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities*. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

^{ix}The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. 2020. Gun violence in American: An analysis of 2018 CDC data. http://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Gun-Violence-in-America_An-Analysis-of-2018-CDC-Data_February-2020.pdf.