



Healing Hurt People:

A Violence Intervention Program

Every day in Philadelphia, young people are sent to the emergency room by intentional violence – assaults, stabbings or shootings. In most cases, those who are not hospitalized are discharged back into their neighborhoods without any connection to follow-up services. Another injury, or an act of retaliation, is a familiar next step. However, the Drexel University College of Medicine, School of Public Health, Hahnemann University Hospital and St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children are collaborating in an effort to create a different outcome.

The Healing Hurt People violence intervention program was conceived by an interdisciplinary team consisting of an emergency physician, an internist, a psychiatrist, a social worker and a psychologist with extensive expertise in violence prevention and trauma. Leading the program is Dr. Theodore Corbin, an assistant professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Drexel University College of Medicine, and Dr. John Rich, chair of

the Department of Health Management and Policy at the School of Public Health. They work in collaboration with Dr. Sandra Bloom, a Board-certified psychiatrist and creator of the trauma-informed Sanctuary Model. Dr. Bloom is a renowned expert in the impact of traumatic experience on individuals, families, organizations and cultures, and is also an associate professor in the Health Management and Policy Department in the School of Public Health.

Healing Hurt People was designed to address the needs – physical, emotional and social – that victims of violence face after being released from the emergency department (ED). Often, individuals who have been violently injured report that, while in the emergency department, their thoughts are to either change their way of life or to retaliate. Most often these youth return, without any supports, to the hostile environment in which they were injured. Healing Hurt People uses a trauma-informed approach to capitalize on this potentially life-





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changing moment to address the needs of these young people.

When a patient is seen in the ED for intentional injury, hospital staff contacts Healing Hurt People staff who then engage the patient to connect him/her to a variety of services, such as: emotional support for post-traumatic stress; support groups for victims of violence and their families; mentoring; substance abuse treatment, victim compensation; parenting education and support; job training and placement; medical insurance; and after-school program referral. Staff ensures that the patient has a safe place to go upon leaving the hospital.

Follow-up is made through phone calls and scheduled home visits after discharge to ensure that clients have successfully connected to referred support services. Support continues on a periodic basis to ensure progress. Healing Hurt People staff serves as a navigator for the client to the various support services, providing transportation when necessary, accompanying youth to appointments,

and providing much-needed support and mentoring. Weekly case reviews are conducted with the interdisciplinary team to ensure function of the program and management of challenging cases.

Healing Hurt People is the cornerstone program of the Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice at the School of Public Health and Drexel University College of Medicine. The mission of the center is to decrease violence and trauma through public health policy, practice, research and training.

The Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice was established with generous support from the Thomas Scattergood Behavioral Health Foundation. Additional support for the center and the Healing Hurt People program is provided by the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health.

For more information about Healing Hurt People and the Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice, visit www.nonviolenceandsocialjustice.org. 



When victims of intentional violence come into the emergency department at Hahnemann, they are introduced to Healing Hurt People™, a violence intervention program.