CHAPTER 19

A MULTI-LEVEL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE VIOLENT COMMUNITY

Stuart W. Twemlow and Frank C. Sacco

Lethal violence does not occur in a vacuum. Most traditional psychological approaches to violence focus on family violence, battering, and child abuse. These approaches see violence as an event that stems principally from individual causes such as genetic predisposition, addiction, past abuse, and other family dynamics. The role of the violent community often serves only as a backdrop or an after-the-fact tally sheet for these individual events. In this chapter, the authors argue that diagnosis of the violent community is a necessary first step before interventions to deal with the lethal violence can be successful. While acknowledging the importance of individual and family factors, the authors have found that such factors are significantly affected by the mores of the large group — the community and the socio-economic conditions which reflect those mores. The authors’ findings derive mainly from projects in Jamaica, but also from work in progress in east coast and midwestern cities in the U.S. (Twemlow, 1995a,b; Twemlow and Sacco, 1996; Sacco and Twemlow, 1997).

Studies have shown varying and often contradictory trends in lethal violence rates. Browne and Williams (1993) studied homicide reports and discovered little variance in victim rates for men but found that unmarried women experienced a dramatic increase in homicide victimization by their partners. Brownstein et al. (1994), in a detailed study of female murderers, discovered that women involved in the drug trade resorted to violence to resolve their conflicts. Thus, domestic violence alone does not explain women’s lethal violence.

Bachman (1993) studied patterns of lethal victimization in older persons. Results suggested that they are more at risk in their own homes. The highest levels of violence toward older persons were non-lethal attacks by strangers during the commission of another felony. Thus, it seems the elderly are more passive targets for criminals, while younger, predominantly female victims die at the hands of more familiar males.

In a Canadian study, Silverman and Kennedy (1993) found that males chose to shoot their victims more often than did females, but that shooting overall has declined for most males. Surprisingly, males have more often beaten or stabbed their victims, according to crime/stranger homicide rates. These findings may
point to an evolving cultural influence driving the shifts in how lethal violence is perpetrated.

Block (1993) and Block and Block (1992) studied Hispanic Americans in Chicago. Again, there was a clear link to community and cultural factors in how lethal violence unfolded. This study found a comparatively high risk overall for homicide in Hispanic Americans vs. whites. Further, there was a clear age factor within the Hispanic American community, with teenage males ages 15 to 19 being at high risk to be the victims of lethal violence, but this effect decreased dramatically with age. The two main causes of lethal violence were gang-related homicides and male-on-male expressive confrontations. These patterns suggest how culture and community shape the violence response. Baron (1993) studied the differences in child murder from state to state in the U.S. The findings support the hypothesis that as the level of gender inequality increases, child homicide increases. Thus, gender inequality, a culturally transmitted attitude, contributes to the social climate conducive to lethal violence toward children. These findings point to specific mechanisms within violent communities that lead to the acceptance of a domination and submission dialectic between the sexes which transfers directly to children. If it is culturally acceptable to hurt women, then it is likewise acceptable to hurt children. These studies also pointed to the impact of single-parent families and alcoholism as causal factors in explaining variances in the child homicide cases.

In an Australian study, Polk and Ransom (1991) found that 51% of homicides involved victims and offenders linked by some form of sexual intimacy. Possessiveness was the dominant characteristic of male violence toward their female partners. The younger the female, the more likely jealousy was the causal factor in the lethal violence. Older females were most often the victims of desperate males in the *folie a deux* of murder-suicide. Men were most often killed by women partners in self-defense. The culture, the authors argued, shapes the lethal violence response according to the values and attitudes of the community, male/female relationships, and the care of the young and the old.

Rose and McClain (1990) studied black homicide rates in large urban environments. Citing Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics over a 25-year span, they found that the transition from the industrial to the post-industrial state generated trends for increased black male involvement in lethal violence both as victims and perpetrators. The age of involvement also slowly decreased. Thus, as job opportunities faded, black males often entered the illegal economy, which clearly increases the risk of involvement in lethal violence. In contrast with this more usual statistic is a highly creative study by Greenberg and Schneider (1994), who found that in three marginalized communities (high incidence of ghettos, unwanted land use, and unwanted people), the homicide rate traditionally seen as highest in young black males, ages 15 to 24, is no higher in this group than in whites, Hispanic Americans, females, middle-aged, and older people.

As American families shift away from traditional relationships, there is a decrease in the affiliation and association of blood kin. Daly and Wilson (1988) posited that increased lethality is related to a lowering of blood-kin immunity to violence. Children are abused more frequently and severely by nonblood relatives within a family. Their study further found that the rate of lethal violence between blood relatives in Miami in 1980 was 1.8%, while the rate of homicide between marital relatives (nonblood) was 10%. Similarly, in Detroit in 1972, 19% of homicide victims were related by marriage, and 6% were related by blood.

Zimring et al. (1983) studied 151 homicide victims in Chicago and discovered that white males killed females with whom they were intimate twice as frequently as white males were killed, whereas, black males were twice as likely to be killed by their female intimates as to kill them. This cultural pattern suggests a different code of ethics among black males.
that leads them to kill their intimates less frequently than white males. Smith and Parker (1980) confirmed the importance of social variables in predicting homicide rates. Poverty was shown to be a causal factor in motivating higher rates of homicide for economically disadvantaged individuals.

Living in violent communities increases the probability of violent behavior, according to Liddell et al. (1994), who studied South African children from four different communities. It was shown that children from violent communities were significantly more likely to be involved in aggressive acts, particularly when the children had more contact with older boys and men. Paddock (1975) studied communities in Oaxaca, Mexico, where there was an opportunity to compare several towns, some of which were non-violent without heavy police activity, and others more violent. Low violence in communities seemed to result from (1) the near absence of "machismo", (2) contrasting practices of child rearing, (3) very few close friendships linking adults of the same sex, and (4) a strong social role for women.

Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) outlined a model for understanding the causes and consequences of community violence, emphasizing that violence within cultures impacts on children’s development. Fitzpatrick and Boldizar (1993) described how young black children suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to living in violent communities. Friedlander (1993) argued that living in a violent community, not violent media programs, accounts for increased violence. In fact, he reported that prosocial messages on television have a greater effect on behavior than do violent messages. Richters and Martinez (1993) brought to light the complex interaction between environmental context and family. They investigated the early predictors of adaptive success and failure of 72 children living in a violent community. It was not the mere accumulation of environmental adversities, but the erosion of the home life that explained success or failure in adaptive behavior. Thus, if the family is strong, the impact of the violent community is lessened, and if the family is weak, adaptability is greatly at risk.

Responding to violence in the community demands a balanced approach. Clarke (1994) found that increasing per capita incarceration from 1975 to 1992 did not significantly reduce the per capita violent crime index or motor vehicle theft. Cahn and Cahn (1993) suggested collaborative efforts based on Project Alliance, an approach developed by the Massachusetts Attorney General, stressing coordination of law enforcement and treatment. DeJong (1994) offered school-based intervention called the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), based on work in the New York city schools. In this model, peaceful schools were the beginning of the evolution of a peaceful neighborhood.

Jaros (1992) saw community violence as a public health problem requiring the promotion of community education and the development of problem-solving work groups. Munoz and Tan (1994) described a program that brought youth, police, and community leaders together for a 2-day retreat to solve problems and develop projects to reduce community violence. Cordner (1993), Mastrofski (1993), and Walker (1993) suggested ways police could work with citizen groups to reduce violence in the community.

The National Crime Prevention Council, through the U.S. Department of Justice Assistance, has developed kits to help create safer communities — Working Together To Stop the Violence: A Blueprint for Safer Communities (1994). DeBry et al. (1988) describe community efforts that address reducing violence in Native American and Alaskan Inuit communities.

There have been many studies linking violence and poverty. Hanson (1997) took an interesting historical viewpoint; in his article, “Why Don’t We Care About the Poor Anymore?”, he noted that today poverty has lost its meaning; the modern view of the poor is that they are responsible for their own plight.
with little attempt by communities to understand or make a place for the poor. Hanson (1997) pointed out that during the middle ages, poverty was “no social pathology but, rather, an intrinsic part of the established social order. Rich and poor alike were said to owe their positions to the grace of God rather than to anything they themselves had done, and all were expected to accept their lot with humility.” In those days, there was no stigma attached to poverty; in fact, there was significant social status, because the poor were considered to have certain mystical powers and to be available to the rich as a means to atone for their sins like the Sadhu — the holy man — who begs in India. By the 19th century, however, the poor were despised instead of honored. Poverty became a social cancer to be eradicated. The mystical poor had been replaced by poor people who were enraged and criminal. In the 20th century, there was a brief respite through socialism when the poor were considered to be helpless victims of a corrupt political system dominated by the wealthy. Now, instead, modern contemporary individualism blames the poor for their lot. This hard-nosed approach to poverty led to the abolition of welfare programs in parts of many countries, including the U.S. The failure to deal with the psychological underpinnings of poverty will and has led to conditions that approach anarchy in countries where politicians legislate or demand that the poor care for themselves. Poverty wreaks havoc with the logically functioning, anxiety-free mind; the rage of the poor can auger poorly for the safety and health of the wealthy.

A violent community is particularly harsh with regard to the place of the poor. At best, the poor are seen as freeloaders with a possibility of rehabilitation if sufficient incentives, punishments, or both, are given for laziness. At worst, the poor are seen as a danger to the stability of the affluent middle class and are considered to be a sub-human group that needs to be eliminated. This all-or-nothing oversimplified approach to human psychology is characteristic of violent communities. The literature reflects some of these findings: Hsieh and Pugh (1993) concluded that poverty and income inequality are both associated with violent crime. Sampson and Laub (1994) pointed to social class and poverty as inhibitors of normal family functioning and thus as facilitators of violence. Hagan (1994) noted that, in Norway, inequality breeds violence, especially when inequality involves segregation by race and residence.

Huff-Corzine et al. (1991) reviewed crime statistics in the U.S. and concluded that severe poverty is related to increased lethal violence rates for both blacks and whites. Kruttschnitt et al. (1994) found that poverty increased the likelihood of child abuse. White (1994), in an Australian study, pointed to the power of poverty to create a permanent “underclass” blocked from advancement through limited access to employment. Anderson (1990) conducted field work in two urban communities and concluded that poverty contributed to loss of leadership in a community, ultimately resulting in increased violence. Osman (1992) studied street gangs in the U.S. and concurred that reducing violence requires targeting the community, not alienated or aggressive individuals. Warner and Price (1993) clearly outlined the link between violent crime and neighborhood characteristics, including poverty, social disorganization, and isolation of racial groups.

The great “War on Poverty” declared by President Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s illustrates how global targeting of poverty failed to eradicate the negative impact of poverty on communities. Despite entitlement programs, community mental health centers, and anti-poverty programs, the problems of poverty and violence persist, and the federal dollars to fund such initiatives have become scarce. According to a study by the Children’s Defense Fund (1993), black children are poorer today than in 1968; the gap between infant mortality of black and white infants was greater in 1993 than at any other time since 1940. The Children’s Defense Fund and the Annie E. Casey Fund (1993) advocate courses of action that
target the enrichment of community life for poor black children.

This chapter reports first on direct observation of the community of Montego Bay, Jamaica, by a group of psychodynamically oriented professionals who worked within that community to reduce violence and improve the residents’ quality of life. The community was viewed as an organism with structures, roles, and dysfunctions, much like a patient; the diagnosis of “violent community” was based on criteria summarized by Twemlow and Sacco (1996a). They were derived from questionnaire data administered to Jamaican police officers, direct observation of the city, analysis of crime information, content analysis of media reports, and talks with local and central government officials. These criteria will be elaborated upon in much more detail to form the substance of this chapter.

A smaller scale project in two elementary schools in midwestern U.S. is then briefly described to show how schools function as a barometer of community health. Violent communities always have violent and dysfunctional schools. The project’s approach enabled the school to stabilize and its surrounding community support structure became participant-observers in the school, rather than mere critics and skeptics.

If community intervention is to be successful, the diagnosis must be accurate. There is a critical mass or optimal anxiety level within the group which, when attained, can lead to widespread change with relatively small input of catalyzing resources (Yalom, 1985; Twemlow and Sacco, 1996).

Montego Bay, Jamaica

The intervention team included mental health professionals, police, and martial artists who visited Montego Bay, Jamaica, for 2 years, delivering approximately 100 hours of specialized leadership training to the police and school teachers. Programs were developed with the police and teachers as partners within the community. This project is described in detail in other works by the authors (Sacco and Twemlow, 1997; Twemlow and Sacco, 1994, 1996). Table 19.1 summarizes the training procedures and theory of community growth used in the project.

A core group of visionary private sector individuals observed that the emerging violent nature of Montego Bay directly threatened its commerce, tourism, and quality of life for citizens, and approached the team for help. The community of Montego Bay is a mid-sized community in St. James parish with a population of approximately 125,000. Although it did not have the devastating inner-city problems of Kingston, Montego Bay’s homicide rate was climbing. The police had search-and-seizure powers similar to those existing during emergency conditions, and corruption of police and other officials was pervasive.

Cross-Cultural Comparison

The team’s interventions and observational analysis would likely be more difficult in a more evolved nation such as the U.S. The complex nature of the politics and bureaucracy even in the most destitute communities of the U.S. would likely prohibit as much involvement, dialogue, and freedom to initiate experimental programs as was possible in Jamaica. Working in an evolving nation often allows for more innovation in both the study and the application of community development principles.

There were striking differences between the roles of men and women in Jamaica and in the U.S.; for example, in the percentage of female police officers — some 20% or more in Jamaica, compared to single-digit figures in the U.S. At the same time, although women appeared to be generally assertive, male chauvinistic roles seemed entrenched in the day-to-day husband/wife relationships, with men often being violent and conjugal rape common. Jamaica had no formal entitlement programs for financial aid, other...
Table 19.1
A Seven-Step Flow Chart for Community Violence Prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data gathering</td>
<td>Anti-intellectual, action-oriented</td>
<td>1. Counter attack approach to law and order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community diagnosis</td>
<td>Violent community</td>
<td>1. Diagnosis established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of</td>
<td>1. Law and Order</td>
<td>1. Police and military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>2. Education</td>
<td>2. School teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stabilizing systems</td>
<td>3. Health</td>
<td>3. Medical personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Spirituality</td>
<td>4. Church leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding Principles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step IV</td>
<td>Peacekeeper/peacemaker training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of community</td>
<td>Leaders catalyze large group change by</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic group theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>change agents</td>
<td>role modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common goals increase cohesiveness</td>
<td>Sociology and psychoanalytic theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and reduce community violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders should be strong and gentle</td>
<td>Martial arts training and theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental clarity, self-awareness, present</td>
<td>Zen theory and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>centeredness and personal responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sublimations reduce impulsivity</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic ego psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective self is enhanced by self-</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic object relations theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>awareness and role modeling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Altruistic impulses can motivate</td>
<td>Literature on altruism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>change in individuals and community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

than child care for children up to age 15 months. There was no formal Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) equivalent. There was a Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program which provided minimal foodstuffs for younger mothers until their babies reached 15 months of age. Jamaica was similar to the U.S. approximately 40 years ago in its attitude toward teenage pregnancy. Young women who became pregnant while in junior high or high school were not welcomed at school and experienced significant rejection by their families and home communities.
During 10 years of visiting and working with Jamaica's school children, the authors have observed, through hundreds of conversations, that Jamaican children have a much different attitude toward education than do American youth. In almost every case, a Jamaican child is highly motivated to pursue an education. Actually, education is seen as the sole road to economic security. Even in homes for delinquent youth, the children still value education and welcome the opportunity to absorb available information. This attitude remains fixed throughout the Jamaican citizen's life cycle. When the intervention team provided workshops for the Jamaican Constabulary Force (JCF), all of the faculty marveled at how intensely focused, energetic, and absorbed these very undereducated, poorly paid Jamaican police officers were.

In the U.S., there is often a built-in adversarial relationship between school and home because the...
“them vs. us” approach of required meetings between parents and school personnel. In Jamaica, authority was questioned far less. Parents usually did not engage in ongoing conflict with the school concerning strong disciplinary action with their children. They more often cooperated with the school and police around disciplinary issues. It was virtually unheard for parents to take legal action against a school concerning harsh disciplinary action against their children. It was clear that Jamaicans value education, devalue entitlement of financial aid, and prefer simple social systems over more complex ones. Whatever the etiology of these cultural differences, Jamaicans tended to accede to international authority and to value educational intervention more highly than we do in the U.S. Although there were remnants of a form of racism derived from strong British colonial rule until 1963, racism of the kind seen in the U.S. was not prominent. Splits within communities were more usually along political, religious, or socio-economic issues rather than on racial grounds.

Psychological Attributes of a Violent Community

The community can be viewed as having certain beliefs that drive cultural attitudes and, ultimately, the actions of its members. Freud (1920) studied large groups, more particularly, the functioning of the church and the military. He observed that such large groups exert a contagious effect on other groups and on their members, who become suggestible. Often, there is a submersion of the critical facility of individuals to a group agenda, resulting in impulsivity, a loss of the search for the truth, and an increase in affective pitch. He also observed that group members often subjugate their own personal goals to the ideals of their leader. The psychiatric literature abounds with research studies on how groups remain cohesive, work-oriented, and rational (e.g., Yalom, 1985). Some, McDougall (1920) for example, concluded that to be cohesive, groups must have continuity, a tradition, and a definite structure. The individual must understand how the group works, and the group must recognize that other groups are equally valid. In spite of these and other complex factors which maintain the peaceful structure of a community, identification of the central role of leadership in cohesiveness and work function of a group is the unique contribution of psychoanalytic authors in the field; leadership training was the main focus of this multi-level community intervention. Bion (1959) concluded that small groups search for three types of leaders: (1) a caring and reliable leader (dependency assumption); (2) a frightening, ruthless leader (fight/flight assumption); and (3) a messianic, omnipotent leader who will solve problems in his or her own unique way and in a way that does not need to be understood by the members of the group, as in cults, (pairing assumption). From the authors’ observations, at different times, large groups, including violent communities, also react in these various ways toward their leaders.

Another valuable conceptualization of how a community obtains and constructively uses knowledge is relevant to the functioning of healthy as compared to violent communities. Bion (1970) stated that the knowledge a group develops is always in a context. It does not arise a priori and is not fixed or permanent. Thus, knowledge is not a possession but a process and not individual property but a function of a relationship and a cultural context. Knowledge changes constantly, or, as Bion stated, the individual learns from experience in a process of continuous reflection and transformation. Knowledge, according to Bion, can be employed for discovery and exploration and can also be employed to avoid painful and frustrating experiences (Grinberg, 1985). Knowing something exists within the context of a container — the community. Without that containing function, knowledge does not become useful, according to Bion. Bion referred to useful knowledge as plus K-linked. The opposite of knowledge — minus K — is an envious and greedy spoiling of the cultural context.
or the container for the knowledge. Parker (1996) called it "the celebration of deliberate and studied stupidity, the pushing away and ruin of knowledge." In violent communities, as the leadership structure collapses, minus K dominates groups and solutions that involve working together break down. The individualist solution to problems dominates in an attempt to avoid catastrophe or chaos, i.e., minus K is substituted for plus K and thus for conscious collective cooperation. Thus, the rules that hold communities together become tangled and meaningless; for example, organized crime flourishes and sick and destructively tyrannical leaders emerge. Sick leadership cannot be indicted as the cause of the violent community, because the violent community and the leadership structure are in an intimate dialectical relationship with each other. Thus, each is interdependent on the other for its destructive functioning in a way similar to Bion’s (1970) “container and contained” concept.

In the team’s model (summarized in Table 19.1), the community peacemakers/peacekeepers function to return the violent community to a collaborative work group mode, modeling qualities of self-reflection, and caring and compassion for others and the environment.

The intervention team in Jamaica observed the following psychological trends within Montego Bay that were considered to contribute to the violent climate there.

**Anti-Intellectualism.** A trend of anti-intellectualism was clearly observed during many dialogues with various individuals in the Montego Bay community. The concepts of abstract thinking and intellectual discussion were seen as luxuries beyond most citizens’ grasp. Despite the value Jamaicans place on education, the idea of reflection, intellectual dialogue and debate, and other methods of reflective regulation of aggression in dealing with community problems were minimized under the regressive drag of the violent community group dynamics.

Thinking and intellectual pursuits were seen as gentle arts that were antithetical to the everyday struggle for survival. Thus, the community placed much greater emphasis on action and shorter term, stop-gap solutions than on reflection, abstraction, and the use of thought-through intellectual solutions to a wide spectrum of community problems. Intellectual discussion was reduced to a form of street debate. The average Jamaican was quite readily able to debate most world topics; however, this type of debate and dialogue was not used when it came to dealing with local community problems.

This noughtful, action-oriented dynamic was evidenced in two police initiatives observed during the project period of 1992 to 1994. The first was titled Operation ARDENT, a response to increased citizen violence involving the use of police and military personnel in joint patrols of the Montego Bay tourist areas. Military personnel dressed in fatigues and carrying automatic weapons were visible along the main tourist strip (Gloucester Avenue). This approach quickly failed because it frightened off tourists and did not reduce violence.

After ARDENT came Operation ACID. This approach used police and military personnel in cooperative raids and roadblocks designed to strike at the heart of Jamaica’s criminal gangs or posses. This operation, again, failed to reduce community violence and certainly did not improve the community’s or the tourists’ sense of safety.

**Personal Power Comes From Violence; Altruism Is Weakness.** Community forums were organized by the intervention team using an engineered conflict model (Twemlow and Sacco, 1996). Members of the community were challenged to debate their views of violence in the community with a large group of JCF police officers. The moderator, a clinical psychologist, engineered the debate to elicit the deep feelings of mistrust and disgust felt by both the community and the police for each other, while moving the group to a realization of convergent concerns and goals.
Both the community and the police shared the belief that action or violence was the most desirable response toward ensuring the public’s safety. Through seminars and supervision, the intervention team addressed the false basis of this approach to lasting peace.

Anyone who offered goods or services gratis was viewed as weak and their motives as suspicious. There was very little trust that good could come from being altruistic, and being anything other than strongly self-interested was viewed as not only weak, but ridiculous. The concept that powerful individuals can be altruistic seemed quite contradictory to most Jamaicans. The notion that criminals would respect strong, yet minimally violent interventions was viewed as ludicrous. Thus, the pretest primary vision of power revolved around domination, coercion, and ultimately, violence, to induce submission, exemplified within organized crime.

There was also clear evidence of a high rate of lethal violence used by the JCF in fighting crime. The JCF was reported to be responsible for upwards of 20% of deaths by weapons in Jamaica. There were a host of causes advanced for this phenomenon, including (1) very strict gun laws which forced gun fights during arrests, (2) unbelievably poor working conditions and pay for the police, and (3) an almost total lack of community support and respect for the police.

There was little emphasis on police training of any sort. Police were neither oriented to a community police model nor trained to see themselves as involved, stable, police officers who helped prevent crime as interactive members of the community. Some older JCF officers communicated to team members that this punitive social control attitude of the police began during the colonial period. The police were expected to be the tools of oppression against the field hands working the sugar plantations. When the JCF was first commissioned in 1867, its primary role was to maintain law and order among oppressed workers for the plantation industry. Thus, rank and status within the community were obtained by exerting unquestioning control over the oppressed workers in the plantations. The roots of an oppressive law enforcement approach ran deep in this evolving nation, despite the fact that Jamaica has been valiantly struggling to evolve into an independent nation since 1963.

Immediate vs. Delayed Gratification. It appeared that much of the everyday activities of the citizens of Montego Bay did not reflect a concern for the future development and security of their community, but was more self-centered and focused on short-term gains. In fact, the primary driving force from most levels of the community, including government, involved satisfying immediate needs with short-term solutions. This was in great part the result of being an extremely poor community where the increasing population had decreasing resources.

This phenomenon was most clearly evident by observing the Montego Bay community’s view of tourism. Jamaica has traditionally enjoyed approximately 30,000 new visitors a week to the island. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, Jamaica had a steadily increasing $1 billion a year travel industry. Tourism grew to be the third largest industry supporting the nation’s economy as reported by the Jamaican Tourist Board in 1994.

Within Montego Bay, it could be clearly observed that less and less energy was being focused on creating a friendly and safe environment for visitors. Eventually, the community became hostile toward tourists and developed an impulsive frenzy to take as much as they could from passing visitors. The concept of respecting a growing industry was over-shadowed by immediate need.

Beyond slogans on billboards, there was little organized community effort to protect tourism as a valuable economic entity. Many citizens of the community argued that there were fewer opportunities for them to survive and provide for their families, justifying whatever rude and intrusive behavior was
required to profit from the dwindling stock of visitors. There was little organized community effort to address the core issues involved in this process. Again, the community's response was to dispatch its already overwhelmed and demoralized police force to use outdated tactics toward crime. Near the end of the project, the JCF began to respond to the increasing tourist conflict by appointing an intellectually oriented leader (Assistant Superintendent L.B. Rose) from within its own ranks to develop solutions for the tourist/police/community interface. Assistant Superintendent Rose later trained a team of hand-picked community police officers for the entire island.

Driving from the airport in Montego Bay to most of the tourist hotels, it was abundantly clear that the larger private sector community was not concerned about the upsetting perceptions tourists may have developed while traveling through the downtown section. There was little effort to protect visitors from the hard realities of daily life of the citizenry of Montego Bay. Tourists became upset and scared when confronting poverty and violence directly after leaving the airport. In Montego Bay, it is common to see homeless and mentally ill people and cardboard shanty towns. There seemed to be a prevailing attitude within the tourism industry that it was sufficient to transport tourists to the nice beach areas, with little organized efforts being directed toward improving the quality of life in downtown Montego Bay. Simple fences, local art, and planting shrubs could have done much to protect tourists from the harsh visions of life on the downtown streets. All-inclusive Club Med-style hotels were built outside the cities with the idea that visitors could be protected from these realities and the daily struggles of the citizens of Montego Bay and others at various tourist locations in Jamaica. But, of course, tourists want to explore local color and are usually not at all happy being confined in American-style vacation complexes.

The unfortunate result of this lack of forethought was a decreasing number of visitors and an increasing perception in the U.S. travel industry that Jamaica was a violent place and should be avoided. This was simply no longer true. Most visitors were safer in Montego Bay than they were taking a downtown shopping trip in their home community in the U.S. Thus, a cycle of violence within the Montego Bay community was accelerated by a lack of forethought and preoccupation with immediate gratification and greed rather than strategic, nonviolent planning for an improved longer term stable future. The intervention team was able to help turn around this attitude by presenting workshops and meetings with the Chamber of Commerce, government officials, and private citizens in the area.

Lack of Stable Political and Family Systems. When a community becomes self-absorbed and feels impotent, there is often a perceived lack of respect for the leader. This was very obvious in Jamaica. The team members initially observed that the community was not cohesive; a lack of confidence in the national government was evident. There was a prevailing belief that politicians and police were corrupt, resulting in a lack of faith that the leadership could provide safety. Since the mid-1960s, there was a reported decrease in the integrity of the nuclear family within Jamaica, with a concomitant increase in single parent households with absent or marginally involved fathers, according to the team members' communications with citizens during community forums from 1992 to 1994. The male population within Jamaica was generally a highly mobile and unattached group, with many sub-family units. There was a movement away from the nuclear family, monogamy, and traditional Christian values, in spite of the many churches in St. James parish.

This observation parallels post-1960s development in the U.S. For example, in Springfield, MA, the percentage of children in the public school system who were on AFDC was nearly 80% as reflected in the 1994 Springfield Public School Records. This suggested that 8 out of 10 children were psychologically and economically fatherless within the Springfield
system. This was almost a replica of the Montego Bay Secondary School, which, according to the staff of the school, also had an estimated 80% fatherless student population, with most children living in households headed by single mothers with only intermittent contact with biological fathers. This highly mobile and unattached family system was mirrored by the JCF. The JCF was designed to be a centrally trained national security force in which all officers were expected to be ready to change station with little notice. There was little opportunity for any of the officers to develop stable family relationships within any one community because they were often transferred suddenly at unpredictable intervals.

The team members considered this instability to be a causal factor in the high levels of police stress which contributed to the violence of the police. Some JCF officers reported that they often had four or five “families” in different towns because of this requirement to leave one community and live in another. The net result was that the police families became destabilized by a lack of consistent positive male role models because the strong male models were highly mobile and unattached to any one community. This destabilized the basic structure within the community and created a nonattached and highly narcissistic male population which believed that self-indulgence was their right. Responsibility and involvement within the community were subjugated by narcissism, sexual entitlement, and hedonism.

**Powerlessness, Despair, and Anomie.** Violent communities seem to lose a sense of purpose in the expression of their emotions and actions. As a community becomes more violent, there is an increased feeling of powerlessness and a perceived lack of purpose, with a clear lack of motivation to be harmonious and peaceful. Individuals do not feel connected to others or do not share common goals. Groups become dispersed individuals propelled by self-interest.

In Jamaica, there was a high incidence of volatile domestic disputes, including conjugal rape, with random acts of violence stemming from senseless jealousy, envy, and petty rivalries. This was immediately observable while walking around communities, where it was not uncommon to see amputated body parts due to the preference for machetes for self-defense. This absence of skill and compassion in practical problem-solving seemed to stem from a lack of perceived alternative response options, motivated by a sense of despair, fear, and powerlessness.

**Escapism as a Response to Helplessness.** It is no surprise that a violent community would want to create as many quick escapes as possible. The increase in alcohol and drug addiction within any one community is inversely proportional to the amount of hope and stability of a community. The more helpless and powerless individuals in a community feel, the greater the temptation to seize readily available escapes, such as chemicals.

The intervention team quickly observed that alcoholism within the police force was rampant. Within the community, alcohol was an accepted part of the overall culture, with rudimentary drinking laws and no minimum drinking age. Police stations had bars attached to them, and driving under the influence of alcohol was not expressly prohibited in Jamaica.

There was a clear increase in the use of “crack” cocaine by males, with a noticeable difference between the sexes with regard to drug abuse in Jamaica. Within the U.S., crack cocaine has seen a widely expanded use by females, especially among single-parent heads of household. This has resulted in staggering increases in addicted babies. This phenomenon was rarely observed or reported in Jamaica, where crack addiction appeared to be primarily a male phenomenon. Although less true with alcohol, there appeared to be a strong preference by males rather than females to use escapism as a primary way of coping with helplessness.

Montego Bay had very few escapes and sublimations available to its citizenry. The local government did not sponsor camps or many recreational activities.
Although the JCF, local churches, and other groups made struggling efforts to develop athletic programs, these leagues were woefully underfunded, under-equipped, overpopulated, and struggled with a lack of facilities, transportation, and basic equipment.

Thus, the dwindling resources and growing anomie blended tragically with a lack of healthy sublimatory outlets, resulting in an increase of pathological escapism at all socio-economic levels of the community. These psychological factors provide the dynamic forces driving dysfunctional community behaviors by individual community members. The intervention team members hypothesized that change would stem from impacting these psychological variables within the community. Education and community program development were the techniques employed.

The Bully/Victim/Bystander Relationship and Its Destructive Effects. According to Edmond Burke, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” In a violent community, one sure way to assess the level of violence is to measure the frequency of bullying, sexual harassment, and weapon violence in schools. Middle and high schools are especially prone to eruptions of violence based on a pervading community sense of disconnection and anomie. A Montego Bay Secondary School was observed closely over a 2-year period (Sacco and Twemlow, 1997). There was noticeable violence at this school of approximately 2400 students. Reports of five to six serious physical attacks per day, with at least three sexual assaults per week, were not unusual; countless incidents of sexual harassment were reported by young females. Everyone at the school, including the administration, teachers, and especially the students, became acculturated to the high level of violence. They were numb to its impact on them as individuals.

Although the schoolyard bully is the stereotypical model for bullying, the authors have found that similar complex coercive power struggles occur between adults, between adults and children, and vice versa between children and adults in communities whose cohesiveness is collapsing. A harassing bully/victim/bystander interaction is frequently seen in workplace harassment, not only sexual but also other combinations of coercive power struggles that involve a stronger bully and a weaker victim with a facilitating bystanding audience (Twemlow 1998). Most of us met our first bullies at school, and most research into bullying has been done in school settings (Twemlow et al., 1996a). In violent communities, the complex interaction of the structural and psychological factors described in this chapter creates a context favoring bullying coercive power relationships. The authors define community harassment in a way very similar to how bullying in schools is described. It is the exposure of an individual over and over again to negative interactions on the part of one or more dominate persons or community groups, who gain in some way from the discomfort of the victim. These negative actions are intentional infictions of injury or discomfort and may involve physical contact, words, or insulting gestures, forms, or sexual bribery and coercion, including quid pro quo manipulation. Essential to this definition is that there is an imbalance of power — an asymmetrical power relationship — and that the victims have problems defending themselves.

Although the main actors in this drama are the bullies and victims, a great deal of pain comes from the passive and facilitating role of the bystanders. This bystanding audience gives the supportive context or foundation for the bully/victim interaction. There are two types of bystanders. The bully bystander typically enjoys seeing the victimization but does not want to participate directly. Essentially, these individuals function as the bullies’ helpers and are vicariously involved in the bullying. The bystander victim is often a frozen and frightened individual who is too afraid to deviate from the social norm and from the strong charismatic leadership of the bully and the bully bystander. Frequently, in communities, there
may be lack of support for activists for social change, especially if it involves a dangerous confrontation with arbitrary and punishing authority represented by the leadership. Those who might be quite supportive in private, including friends and families, may be too afraid of job loss or other retribution and may unconsciously socially isolate the complaining victim. In the authors’ experience, it is quite common for the victims of community harassment to find that they do not have the support of friends which they previously had or thought they had under these conditions. Unsupportive friends and family may even apologize to the harassed individual for being so lacking in courage. The important point here is that this interactionist perspective defines the bully/victim/bystander relationship dialectically.

The relationship between the victim and the victimizer has been defined as a classical dialectic (Twemlow, 1995a,b). It is role-dependent relationships, with each having no meaning without the existence of the other. From this practical point of view, a dialectic coercive power relationship in the community usually involves everyone in that community who become involved in some way, usually in a bystander role based on gossip and rumor, creating a complete milieu of pathological interpersonal relationships dominated by coercive power struggles. These conditions can result in violent and damaging consequences, for example, outbreaks of homicide or gang violence.

The Denial of Violence. The single most powerful ingredient in contributing to a violent community is community-wide denial of violence. To close one’s eyes to violence is a very easy and natural thing to do for most people. When an entire community closes its eyes to how violent it has become, real solutions become difficult to identify and almost impossible to accomplish through creative action plans. This was quite noticeable in Montego Bay and is also very evident in the U.S. When a public meeting is held about violence, usually few people attend. On the other hand, if there is a meeting about how much money a school should spend, the meeting is usually overwhelmed with parents who want their children to have a little bit more in school. The idea of violence is related to death, and people have a universal aversion to thinking about death.

The government and community of Montego Bay were aware of the impact that the perception of violence would have on the tourism industry. During the period of the intervention, the external perception of violence was so high that it was highlighted in the travel literature. At one point, when a large German tour boat docked in Montego Bay, not one of the 700 passengers disembarked. Travel companies issued warnings to avoid Jamaica because of the violence. Foreign visitors avoided Montego Bay. It was experiences like these that shocked the community into facing the economic disaster that would likely result from a drop in tourist revenues.

There are four fundamental varieties of community denial of violence:

1. Direct denial. The effect of this model is to encourage typical citizens to say to themselves that they are not, in fact, criminals, nor are they part of the problem, although it is known that, under certain circumstances (for example, the extreme stress of warfare), the ordinary law-abiding citizen is quite capable of violent responses (Bradshaw et al., 1991, 1993). Denial allows an individual to distance himself or herself from any responsibility for the problem.

2. Over-simplification. As we have already observed, a common over-simplification in this model is to reduce the solution to the problem of violence to the elimination of violent individuals using severe legal penalties. For example, it is commonly accepted that the death penalty does not deter violent crime. Jamaica had severe automatic penalties for crimes involving weapons. Paradoxically, according to JCF personnel, a crime involving a gun usually led to a shootout with a fatality because the felon did not want mandatory life imprisonment. Such shootouts were common in Jamaica, even for minor crimes.

3. Over-generalization. Sometimes, the successful use of force to quell a riot in one circumstance is
generalized to the complicated problems of the community. In the U.S., this has led to extraordinary situations in which small towns have spent enormous amounts of money on sophisticated weaponry without saving enough of the town’s budget to train personnel in the use of this weaponry. If one can arm oneself with weaponry surpassing or equal to that of the sophisticated aggressor, then one feels safe.

4. Stereotyped response patterns. In the martial arts, there is a truism that admonishes the fighter never to underestimate the enemy. Military training often emphasizes the skill and strength of the individual and the incompetence and ineptness of the enemy, and has often led to an underestimation of the enemy. Continuing the use of force when it does not work often results in the failure to observe how stereotyped response patterns are not useful, sometimes due to an underlying contempt of the enemy. In Jamaica, there was also the possible artifact of the racial bias of the colonial lawmakers.

Basic Structures of the Violent Community

A violent community will have a number of a priori structural deficits that can be observed and influenced in larger scale community interventions. Because Jamaica offered the intervention team an opportunity to observe the inner workings of a community unencumbered by complex bureaucracies and tangled social helping networks, the team’s observations of these elements of a violent community were greatly enhanced. Violent communities, in the team’s view, consist of the following basic structural elements:

Disconnection of the Police. It was dramatically clear that the JCF was viewed by the community as a corrupt, untrustworthy, violent group, often called “animals” by the populace. The police maintained that the community was ignorant, selfish, and unresponsive. Both the community and the police shared a lack of understanding for one another’s perceptions, and each group struggled with gross misperceptions and a lack of accurate information about what the other thought or did.

The perception of the police as uninvolved, roving, somewhat mad watch dogs was readily observable by simply reading the daily newspaper. Any one of the three national newspapers ran several articles each day detailing how violent and out-of-control or corrupt the JCF was. There was an unlimited community appetite for information through all of the media outlets concerning the lack of discipline or corrupt and violent nature of the police. Little rapprochement was attempted between the police and the community.

Several of the community forums, outlined and described in more detail by the authors (Twemlow and Sacco, 1996) revealed that the JCF often had few vehicles, no radios, and no method by which to respond to reported crimes. The community participants were alarmed to discover that most police officers were required to take local taxis to the scene of crimes, seldom with a buddy back-up system for police work. There was virtually no understanding of the altruistic work performed by the police, such as picking up orphans and coping with the homeless and mentally ill. These forums introduced awareness and mutual understanding and concern for each other, which are fundamental to peaceful communities.

Population Increase and Redistribution. There was a dramatic increase in the St. James parish population over the 20 years prior to the study. Jamaica had evolved from an agricultural nation to one with a more expanded base of manufacturing, mining, and eventually, tourism. This drew people into communities such as Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Kingston. The increased pressure from the population explosion was easily observable in Jamaica through what is known as the “captured land” phenomenon. People with no housing began to migrate into areas where there was secondary access to resources generated from tourism and manufacturing. Without housing, these refugees were forced into “capturing” land. During the team’s intervention period, team members were made aware of several “rebellions” in which...
the police were forced to break up unplanned communities made up of poor squatters who had seized open land for personal housing.

Lack of Social Welfare Programs. There were no nationally subsidized social welfare programs in Jamaica. Many conservative politicians involved in the U.S. welfare reform have turned to the idea that entitlement in the U.S. is the primary reason for the growth of poverty and single-parent families. Although very limited welfare programs existed in Jamaica, the same phenomenon of increased single-parent families existed there.

Overwhelmed Schools Dominated by Bullies. Violent communities have violent schools. As populations shift, inner-city schools become increasingly populated with children from dysfunctional homes. One clear signal of a violent community is a school run by bullies, often with extensive protection rackets. Montego Bay Secondary School was the targeted school in the team’s intervention. When the team first began to make observations at the school, there was a startling amount of physical, emotional, and sexual bullying occurring on a daily basis (Sacco and Twemlow, 1997).

Beginning in elementary school, aggression becomes a primary tool of expression of dominance to counter feelings of worthlessness. Children become bullies, teachers become bullies, and the school becomes dominated by aggression and intimidation. Teachers soon become demoralized; children become distant, unmotivated participants in the educational process, with a high degree of absenteeism; and poor relationships develop between students and teachers, teachers and teachers, and students and students. Dysfunctional and aggressive adults are at home writing the scripts for angry children who later become bullies and disrupt schools at an ever-increasing rate.

Evolution of Criminal Enterprises. Violent communities often become more violent because of the presence of structured and semi-structured criminal enterprises or gangs. In Jamaica, the posse controlled vice and drug activity. In the U.S., a wide spectrum of gangs control street-level crime. The lower level gangs within both countries typically consist of young men under the direction of an older generation. These criminal enterprises vary in the sophistication of organization, rules, and methods of operation, but they often provide money, status, protection, and a sense of purpose to the destitute and lonely. Both Jamaica and the U.S. have a significant proportion of young men becoming randomly violent. In more sophisticated criminal operations, violence is a tool to enforce the rules of the criminal enterprise, whether it is drugs, gambling, or prostitution. Violence is not tolerated unless there is a “business” purpose; also, each act of violence must be allowed or ordered by a clearly defined criminal boss or leader. Young street gangs or posses do not have this “code” and thus, are more likely to experience random, nonstrategic acts of lethal violence.

Often, criminal organizations form the backbone of the violent community. The community’s fear slowly begins to increase and hope for anything positive decreases because of the presence of these groups. Police are often asked to track down and invade these groups. The net result of these pure vigilante activities has been observed, in both the U.S. and Jamaica, to be, at best, a short-term solution. Gang members are driven underground by such tactics, only to spring up as soon as the intensity of the crack-down diminishes.

Abuse and Rejection of the Vulnerable. Violent communities usually do not take the time to care for the old and the young or those who are disabled or hurt. The more violent a community, the less tolerance there is for the underprivileged, neglected, mentally ill, homeless, aged, and abandoned children. In Jamaica, there were a number of examples of how children were warehoused in woefully understaffed and minimally supported orphanages, such as Blossom Garden. These programs housed 50 to 75 abandoned
children who were often picked up off the street by the police and placed in these orphanages. Many of these children suffered from severe medical and psychological disorders resulting directly from neglect.

In the U.S., violent communities ignore the vulnerable despite the presence of government and private resources. Responsibility for the weak is subcontracted, and the citizens brush off daily concern for the vulnerable, believing that it is someone else’s job. Injustice to the weak is rationalized away because someone else is supposed to do something to help. This is the modern, evolved community’s way of turning its back on the needy. Helping the weak strengthens, and not helping weakens, the moral fabric of individuals within the community. In a previous work (Twemlow and Sacco, 1996), the authors outlined ways of appealing to altruistic traits, especially to angry and demoralized people, which can evoke a remarkable turn around in individual and community attitudes and self-esteem.

**Gender Myths and Their Impact on Violence**

The violent community can be seen from a perspective where cultural myth dictates attitude, with individuals within the community acting in accordance with their understanding of the dominant cultural myth. One such myth that the authors considered as fueling domestic and community violence was that Jamaican men often believe it is important, and in fact, necessary to “thump” (physically abuse) “their” women. This myth allows for a wide spectrum of highly dysfunctional male behavior that cumulatively weakens the very fabric of the community. If violence toward women is acceptable, then the very essence of good mothering and nurturance of the community’s young is at risk. The cycle of violence is thus fueled.

Similar attitudes were observed concerning sexual entitlement of males. The JCF officers reported that marital rape was not an issue in Jamaica. This belief involved the idea that marriage and rape could not co-exist: If you are married, then rape is not possible. This attitude flowed from a general lack of respect for women and the acceptance of male dominance and violence.

Table 19.2 summarizes the results of an opinion survey concerning sexual attitudes administered to 33 male and 19 female members of the JCF participating in the seminar in 1992. No attempt was made to attach statistical significance in this small survey, but examination of opinion trends suggested that male police officers saw rapists as choosing victims on the basis of physical attractiveness and that female police officers suggested a need for women to be submissive as the motive. Paradoxically, female officers recommended submission to a rapist and felt unable to control the likelihood of rape when compared to male police officers. When asked if a husband has the right to engage in sexual intercourse regardless of his wife’s consent, 11% of female police officers and 39% of male officers answered in the affirmative. These results suggested a strict dominance submission attitude based on gender roles even in the police force which administered the domestic law.

**Intervention in Violent Communities**

There are few alternatives to trying to rebuild a violent community using any systematic approach which can be applied with minimal resources yet gain maximal impact. In Jamaica, there were very sparse resources and expertise with which to initiate and maintain a sophisticated intervention to reduce violence. In the U.S., there are often so many resources that competing interests over-complicate potentially simple solutions.

The Montego Bay project provided an interesting opportunity to demonstrate how minimal resources directed toward key structures within a community could catalyze an improved quality of life. Although this 2-year project was not studied using a rigorous
TABLE 19.2
JAMAICAN CONSTABULARY FORCE SEXUAL ATTITUDE SURVEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (% of females)</td>
<td>Yes (% of males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Men choose their rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>victims because:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Women are physically attractive</td>
<td>10 (53%)</td>
<td>26 (79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. They threaten the men</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. They are abusive</td>
<td>6 (32%)</td>
<td>4 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. They appear self-confident</td>
<td>3 (16%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Should a woman submit to a potentially violent rapist?</td>
<td>12 (63%)</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Can a woman control the likelihood of being raped?</td>
<td>14 (74%)</td>
<td>5 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there a likelihood of rape being preventable?</td>
<td>16 (84%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does a husband have the right to have sex regardless of the wife’s consent?</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>17 (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If a man with a knife or gun orders you into a car, should you go, hoping you will be released or get a chance to break away later?</td>
<td>10 (53%)</td>
<td>8 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does submission to a rapist increase or decrease the likelihood of the rapist continuing with the act?</td>
<td>Increase (9, 47%)</td>
<td>Decrease (7, 31%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 52 (33 males/19 females).

hypothesical-deductive model, it showed clearly observable results and the team was able to demonstrate how to develop projects that could target interventions to create peaceful communities (Twemlow and Sacco, 1996).

The key to rebuilding a violent community is to identify peacemakers/peacekeepers (Table 19.1). These special individuals are active citizen leaders willing to stand tall against violence. These people work in the police force, schools, health and community agencies, churches, and the health professions. They represent a special kind of person with strength, honor, and a dedication to peaceful solutions to community problems. Peacemakers have to be identified and then trained. It is not possible to create them from scratch, as the team found that certain personality and behavioral characteristics need to be present first. The peacemaker functions to defuse crises and deal with emergency situations necessary to prevent the physical sequelae of violence. These individuals then become peacekeepers, whose role is to create the conditions necessary for a lasting nonviolent and creative community atmosphere. These peacemakers/peacekeepers were selected from groups that the team defined as critical to peacefulness and the quality of life in the communities. Rather than treating the symptoms of community disorganization, such as disease, child abuse, etc., the team attempted to get to the fundamental cause of the disorganization. This had to do, in the team members’ minds, with the failure to provide an effective mechanism for preserving community cohesion and to develop a feeling
of safety within the community and a communal concern for economic growth from tourism.

Team members felt that the stability of a community is largely dependent on four major community systems — law and order, education, health, and spirituality domains. These four community roles embody the heart and soul of a functioning community. When any of these four domains become “infected” with violence, there is a weakening of the overall community’s ability to decrease impulsivity and increase positive community action.

Law and order are maintained through the traditional social control element of the police and military. In most successful nonviolent communities, the police and military serve only as a last resort measure to control crime and violence in the community.

The internal control of the community is enhanced through the spiritual rootedness of the members of the community in various altruistic organizations, such as the church. In choosing peacekeepers, it was clear that there was a strong relationship between the JCF and the ministry, with a need for the police and the various community organizations to work collaboratively on altruistic projects. This began to occur when JCF officers developed projects that were purely altruistic. The most notable of these was the evolution of the role of JCF officers as outreach street workers assisting the homeless and mentally ill.

Education is the lifeblood of any community. When violence begins to reduce a community’s fundamental structures to anarchy, the most dramatic signs can often be seen in the schools. In Montego Bay, violence was a daily occurrence at the test school — Montego Bay Secondary School — and other schools. This shroud of violence created a sense of despair and a lack of interest in or opportunity for effective learning and teaching. Teachers and students felt unsafe and bullies ran the school. It was imperative for the JCF to work collaboratively with the intervention team and for school teachers and local community sponsors to develop programs that would reduce the violence at the school. When the schools are violent, the community is fed more and more bullies, and the overall long-term evolution of the community is directed toward increased violence.

The last element of a nonviolent community is proper health and nutrition of its citizens. With few exceptions, the Jamaican citizenry relied mostly on private medical care. The social welfare system was essentially developed and implemented informally by the JCF officers who were solely responsible for picking up abandoned children. Entitlement programs were virtually nonexistent. The Family Court was responsible for most probate decisions relating to child abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Unfortunately, public health and recreation also are primary targets for reduction when financial resources become slim. This reduction in the focus on health further adds fuel to the violent community evolution.

The team selected the JCF as the first target for training because JCF officers were under the greatest pressure to change. Ministers were already participating in the daily work of police officers as their spiritual guides and counselors. Later, school teachers and students participated, and finally, the medical community became involved through the team’s workers in child care and mental health programs. To achieve these objectives, clearly a comprehensive leadership training program was needed.

In Jamaica, the intervention team members were nonpartisan and nonpolitical, and acted as advocates for all of the agencies in the community. From a distance, the intervention team was able to provide the necessary information, intervention, and back-up to allow the natural healing forces within the community to gel and be guided from a point outside of the community, with these peacemakers/peacekeepers taking most of the credit and criticism for any changes in the community atmosphere. Thus, no one element of the community worked alone, and the goals of the peaceful community could be set and monitored as long as necessary by a more objective, professional team with a clear, nonviolent philosophical orientation.
TABLE 19.3
THE PEACEKEEPER/PEACEMAKER CODE OF CONDUCTa

The peacekeeper/peacemaker:
1. "Enforces" peace nonviolently with courage and self-confidence, and if force is necessary, uses the least injurious strategy possible.
2. Values relationships with others and is more altruistic than self-centered.
3. Is committed to peace, kindness, and protecting others from harm.
4. Shows humility, accepts difference in others, and is not judgmental.
5. Is a leader and role model who takes the initiative to better the community.
6. Is mentally alert and mindful, and acts swiftly and effectively when appropriate.
7. Is physically and mentally healthy and flexible.
8. Is able to overcome fear by self-awareness and self-control.
10. Has a commitment to seek new knowledge, and to maintain the knowledge necessary to keep this code.

a This code epitomizes the GOALS of the leadership training.

toward raising consciousness and improving the quality of life. The team followed up on the interventions with frequent telephone reports and site visits.

Successful interventions in the violent community demand both the identification and organization of peacemakers and their direction by a professional entity outside of the community. It is important for the professional force to represent a cross-section of disciplines and races sufficient to be able to develop individualized creative responses to the emerging problems that a community may have. The professional team should be able to respond to the wide spectrum of community needs including in the medical, recreational, educational, spiritual, and law enforcement domains.

In Jamaica, the team identified several peacemakers. One such individual worked in the Montego Bay Secondary School. Team members worked cooperatively for 2 years with a JCF police officer who was single-handedly able to turn around a violent school of 2400 children (Sacco and Twemlow, 1997). It was clear that this intervention at the Montego Bay Secondary School was due mainly to the efforts and characteristics of this one individual peacemaker who provided the intervention. The team also identified other JCF officers who began to take on altruistic roles within their law enforcement duties by responding to the needs of the homeless, mentally ill, and orphaned children (Twemlow and Sacco, 1996).

It is essential to be able to choose peacemakers who have the necessary attitude and personality characteristics, as it is very easy for peacemakers to become caught up in their own importance. Without the proper leadership, they can stray from the stated goals. Although these individuals must be highly motivated, they require clear boundaries and very firm guidance. A code of conduct for Peacemakers was provided to each JCF trainee (Table 19.3).

The qualities that were identified as being essential for peacemakers include the following:

1. More altruistic than egoistic
2. Aware of and takes responsibility for community problems
3. Willing to take risks for peace, not easily frightened
4. Relationship-oriented and humanistic
5. Self-motivated and motivator of others
6. Alert, strong, and positive
7. Self-rewarding with low need for praise
8. Personally well-organized
9. Advocate for the vulnerable and disempowered
10. Optimist who sees the best in people
11. Low in sadism
12. Highly enthusiastic advocate of the project with a personal understanding and commitment to it

These key characteristics need to be identified in peacemakers, and, once identified, the selected leaders should be strategically located in key organizations within the community. The outside professional agency needs to more objectively supervise and fully apply limited resources to motivate change within the various organizations. Teams of peacemakers could be developed; police can work in schools, teachers can work with police, churches can work with child protective agencies and police, etc. All peacemakers/peacekeepers should keep in touch with each other with the cooperation of the primary agency with which they are affiliated.

The observable fruits of this intervention were discussed in more detail by the authors in an earlier work (Twemlow and Sacco, 1996). In summary, the project was credited with promoting a significant increase in tourism (which continues) and a reduction in violent crime. Although complex factors make the crime-reduction figures suspect, there was no doubt about the enthusiasm of the community for what was seen by all as a highly successful collaborative venture.

Lasting and successful projects established by the team included:

1. Rape and domestic crime prevention liaison services
2. School violence prevention services
3. Program for the homeless mentally ill
4. Rape prevention teacher training
5. Community youth rap and recreation groups
6. Shifts in the training of police to a community policing model with significant improvements in salaries and conditions of employment for police officers

The authors believe that this type of intervention worked because of its focus on treating causes of violence (community attitudes and demoralization) rather than treating symptoms (increased building of prisons, tougher sentences, etc.). Training those who have an assigned leadership role in the community was also felt to be of major import for the widespread change seen, in spite of relatively minimal expenditure of resources.

Creating a Peaceful School Learning Environment (C.A.P.S.L.E. Program)

The principles for a successful intervention within the primary school grades can be drawn from an active program, currently working in two elementary schools in the midwestern U.S. (Twemlow et al., 1996b). This program has several components — it uses an outside martial arts school as a resource for special classes targeting kindergarten through the fifth grades as a whole. These classes, known as the “Gentle Warrior” programs, develop a psycho-educational approach to bullying. The roles of bully, bystander, and victim are clearly explained and enacted through role playing. The specially trained martial artists provide alternative defensive physical and psychological response patterns for all the children in a fun and active program. The classes are conducted during regular school time as part of the physical education and health curriculum.

The schools provide additional internal motivations by creating a variety of “zero tolerance for bullying” programs such as the “peace flag programs”. Each classroom has a peace flag flying outside when there was no conflict; but if a student causes a disruption, that student is responsible for taking the flag down for the day.
The schools also adopted a poster campaign reinforcing the message, "Bullying is not tolerated here." The school walls are covered with posters defining the terms bully, victim, and bystander and illustrating ways to recognize them and to recognize anger and how to respond to it, including personal relaxation techniques and positive, empathic, and courteous communications. Additional aspects of the intervention include involvement of peer mentors from a nearby high school to assist the children in conflict resolution, and adult mentors (often senior citizens) to provide role models for children and to assist them in developing manners and other social skills.

This program has been operational since 1992 and has seen out-of-school suspensions cut in half within the first year, with subsequent significant continued reductions. Additional beneficial effects of the program compared to a control school included a decrease in referrals of problem students for special treatment, an increase in standardized academic achievement test scores, and a decrease in disciplinary referrals to the principal. The feeling of being able to play safely and learn without interruption in the classroom improved dramatically, together with significant improvement in classroom behaviors characteristic of the bully/victim/bystander interaction. Projective tests revealed that bullies changed in the direction of being able to inhibit aggressive behaviors and that victims increased their assertiveness. Details of these findings were reported by Twemlow et al. (1996b).

In the model schools, there was a common language concerning the bully/victim/bystander relationship. It was not uncommon to hear teachers communicating with students and students communicating with students using the learned vocabulary of bully, victim, and bystander. The saying for the day often invoked that theme. The message was kept simple, reinforcing the idea that everyone communicated better in the absence of power struggles. After the initial dramatic effect on school climate in the 1996–1997 year, only one parent in the entire school withheld consent for his or her child to participate in the program.

Comparison of the Standardized Academic Achievement tests (Metropolitan Achievement test) math percentile ranks revealed that the lowest ranking was for victims at 30.5%, with bully-bystanders at 33.8%, bullies at 42%, victim-bystanders at 48.0%, and children with no problems at 56.9% (Twemlow et al., 1996b). It was such findings that highlight the very low academic achievement of victims, whose qui- etness compared to bullies often leads to less attention from teachers. Programs that over-focus on bullies run the risk of inadvertently promoting similar errors.

Conclusion and Summary

This chapter develops a psychodynamic approach to violent communities as functioning entities interdependent with the individual dynamics of its members. Two successful, inexpensive interventions are described which focus on the development of leadership skills of altruism, fearlessness, and strength with compassion and diplomatic skills in the case of the Jamaica Project and a focus on the importance of group solutions identifying power struggles and sharing responsibility for the working of the group as a whole as in the case of the C.A.P.S.L.E. project. The effectiveness of interventions of these types depends on the urgency of the need as perceived by private citizens and their willingness to get involved, together with an accurate diagnosis of the characteristics of a "violent community", the expertise of its leadership, and the cohesiveness of all member components to meet a common goal.

References


Children’s Safety Network National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health (1994) *Building Safe Communities: State and Local Strategies for Preventing Injury and Violence*.


About the Authors

Stuart W. Twemlow, M.D., is in private practice of psychiatry and psychoanalysis in Topeka, KS. He is also a faculty member of the Topeka Institute for Psychoanalysis at the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, KS, and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Wichita, KS. He is an advanced black belt and master teacher in Kempo Karate and Kobudo. Frank C. Sacco, Ph.D., is a Clinical Psychologist; President of Community Services Institute in Agawam, MA; and a member of the adjunct faculty at the American International College, Springfield, MA.

Acknowledgments

A large team of people helped with this project — too numerous to name individuals; however, Ms. Vanessa and Mr. Kirky Taylor were the heart of the project in Montego Bay. It was their initiative.
Greenberg, M. and Schneider, D. (1994) Violence in American cities: young black males is the answer, but what was the question? Social Science and Medicine, 39, 179–187.


