

Advance & Focused
Peace Deterrence

What are the
differences?

Advance Peace

Advance Peace (AP) is a non-profit organization that identifies the most lethal individuals at the center of gun violence in a community, provides them with seven-days-a-week mentoring and supportive relationships using street outreach workers and delivers services and supports to these individuals during an eighteen-month

program called the Peacemaker Fellowship. AP builds upon elements of successful focused deterrence and public-health programs, such as Ceasefire and Cure Violence but, as this document highlights, AP has significant differences from these programs that sets it apart and distinguishes its approach and measures of impact.

Background

Research since the 1980s has dispelled the myth that urban gun violence is a community-wide issue. There are few 'violent communities' but rather gun violence is extremely concentrated in very particular places and among very particular people. Yet, it is not the places themselves that are committing gun violence but a very small number of highly influential people in communities (Weisburd, 2015). For example, in Chicago, Papachristos et al (2015), found that 70 percent of all nonfatal gunshot victims were in social networks of co-offending people, which comprised less than 6 percent of the city's total population. [Lurie et al \(2018\)](#) found that in Minneapolis, 0.15% of the population was involved in 54% of the city's shootings. In Oak-

land, the [Giffords Law Center](#) found that just 400 people, or 0.1% of the city's population, were most at risk of and responsible for a majority of the city's homicides. Importantly, the offenders and victims of urban gun violence are young men of color living in communities with long histories of structural racism, divestment and alienation from state institutions, particularly law enforcement, but also social services, education and others. Systematic reviews such as those by Abt and Winship (2016), note that reducing urban gun violence needs to not only deter the small number of likely offenders, but also offer life alternatives for preventing conflict and healing from the trauma of violence using credible messengers. The National



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Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College found that after a study of over twenty cities, the most effective urban gun violence reduction efforts engage the “high-risk people,” acknowledge that they too are victims, and creates meaningful alternatives to violence for this same population. The implications are that sweeping programs focused on entire communities using aggressive law enforcement strategies – such as stop-and-frisk – not only do not stop gun violence but exacerbate trauma and mistrust of law enforcement in communities of color that can contribute to gun violence in the first place.

Public health approaches to reducing gun violence are increasingly recognized as an effective model for this more focused intervention. A public health approach recognizes gun violence as a disease that affects the structure and function of the brain, causes morbidity and mortality, and that prevention demands stopping the ‘transmission’ and spread through a combination of behavioral and structural interventions, meaning a focus on legal, policy and social norm

change. Focused deterrence strategies such as Ceasefire and Cure Violence, which attempt to stop the transmission of violence in a manner similar to that of public health interventions designed to curtail epidemics, have shown some success in reducing urban gun crime (Braga et al 2018; Corsaro & Engel 2015; Delgado et al 2017). These focused deterrence strategies typically involve community mobilization, street outreach, and partnerships among frontline staff in police, probation, corrections, and social services sectors. Focused deterrence includes a greater focus by law enforcement on those committing gun crime but an even greater emphasis on and resources for street-outreach workers to reach the target population and the social services and programs needed to provide them life alternatives. The evidence supporting the effectiveness of focused deterrence is mixed. Butts et al. (2015), in a review of multiple Cure Violence interventions, notes that interrupted time series and quasi-experimental studies were the analytic methods most often used, and that most sites did not find strong statistical associations with the programs and declines in shootings and gun homicides. Braga et al (2018) found that



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What sets Advance Peace Apart?

AP does not work alongside law enforcement to communicate its messages

focused deterrence strategies, were effective in reducing urban gun violence, but not in reaching the most high-risk and dangerous individuals in communities.

As noted, much research notes that focused deterrence strategies are not reaching the most high-risk and dangerous individuals in communities and additional tools to combat community violence would be valuable. Identifying other effective interventions to address firearm violence is a top priority for public health and public policy researchers and practitioners (Weinberger et al 2015).

not focus on gangs or changing group behaviors, but rather on individuals that are highly influential in local gun crime. These individuals might be affiliated with street organizations, but this is not a prerequisite for entering into the AP Peacemaker Fellowship. Third, AP focuses on building trusting and healing relationships with those at the center of urban gun hostilities, recognizing the traumas they have experienced are often contributing to their use of firearms. This is slightly but significantly different from focused deterrence, which includes messaging about and delivery of enhanced punitive law enforcement strategies. Focused deterrence also aims to improve the groups (i.e., gang) view of police legitimacy in the intervention community, while AP does not have this goal (Braga et al 2018). Fourth, AP tailors their street outreach to the individual's needs for change through what is called a LifeMAP (Management Action Plan), and rarely uses group, pro-social behavioral change techniques, or group 'call-ins' where offenders are put on formal notice that their next offense will bring extraordinary legal attention. Fifth, while AP works with and may partner with other community-based organizations (CBOs), they do not collaborate on instilling antiviolence norms throughout the community as is

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AP focuses on changing highly influential individuals

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AP focuses on building trust and healing by recognizing trauma

Key differences

Advance Peace builds upon the successful elements of focused deterrence and the public health and community-driven programs noted by Abt and Winship (2016). However, AP differs significantly from focused deterrence (sometimes called Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) or Ceasefire), and the public health, Cure Violence, approach (Braga et al., 2018; Butts et al., 2015). First, AP does not work alongside law enforcement to communicate its messages against gun violence, as is the case with Ceasefire. Second, AP does

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AP tailors street outreach to individuals through a LifeMAP (Management Action Plan)

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AP does not focus on instilling antiviolen- ce norms throughout the community

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AP violence interrupters also perform outreach and service referrals

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AP street outreach and Peacemaker Fellowship are organized around positive mental health and emotional regulation supports

the case in many GVRs. Sixth, AP violence interrupters, what they call Neighborhood Change Agents (NCAs), also perform the outreach and service referrals, while in Cure Violence there are separate violence interrupters, outreach staff, and group ‘call-in’ facilitators. Seventh, AP street outreach work and the Peacemaker Fellowship are organized around positive mental health and emotional regulation supports that aim to heal the traumas experience by urban youth and to support healthy human development. AP is focused on healing those at the center of gun violence that have experienced traumas and recognizes that unac- knowledged and unaddressed traumas are often behind vio- lent behaviors, especially those of young people whose brains and other systems are not fully developed.

A common challenge Advance Peace and focused deterrence programs face is implementa- tion and sustainability. These programs typically need the support of a number of govern- mental and non-governmental organizations in order to op- erate in a city, from the police chief, mayor and city manager, to social service agencies, faith-based groups, community organizations to community

members themselves. Gain- ing all this ‘buy-in’ can take time and limit implementation success. These programs also rely on trusting relationships between out-reach staff and community members, which takes time to cultivate, and doesn’t fit neatly into typical city budgetary or foundation grant cycle timelines. Another major barrier to sustainability and success is white racism and apathy toward the human- ity of black and brown bodies. White dominant institutions continue to devalue the lives of black and brown citizens, often claiming they are ‘unworthy’ of social investment and resour- ces, all the while ignoring the structural racism, including but not limited to Jim Crow laws, economic redlining, and school segregation, that helped create today’s gun violence epidemic in our urban communities.

A summary of the similarities and differences between AP and other focused deterrence programs appears in Table 1.

Focused Deterrence

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Advance Peace

Table 1

Change the violent behavior of gangs by implementing a blended strategy of law enforcement, community mobilization, and social service actions all with the underlying threat of increased enforcement risks to offenders.

Individuals in gangs or street groups

Groups (gangs) and/or neighborhood 'hot-spot' change; gang norm change

Increase certainty, swiftness & severity of sanctions associated with gun violence; new knowledge & peer pressure will change behaviors

Individuals receive violence interrupters (conflict mediation) and separate outreach workers (service navigators); groups are engaged by law enforcement, which uses increased presence & threats of punishment; CBOs make services contingent on 'rules of engagement.'

Theory of change

Clients

Goals

Deterrence theory

Engagement

End cyclical & retaliatory urban gun violence by investing in the development, health, and healing of highly influential individuals at the center of urban gun violence.

Highly influential individuals at the center of gun violence, who become fellows

Healthy human development and healing from unaddressed traumas that contribute to violence for the individuals in the Peacemaker Fellowship.

Everyday engagement, mentoring and love can support traumatized, high risk people to heal and be more healthy functioning people and this supports alternatives to gun violence

Through the Peacemaker Fellowships, which includes daily, one-on-one engagements by credible messengers to client for 18-months; conflict mediation & service navigation; strategy is developed with, not for, client and codified in an individualized LifeMAP, a life management action plan. Positive incentives include travel and milestone allowance. Life skill classes are held with groups of fellows communicate positive alternatives.

Focused Deterrence

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Table 1 cont'd.

Partnership with police, parole and other law enforcement; includes increasing police presence around groups/neighborhoods

Police Participation

Separate from & not affiliated with police

General social services, job training, education, substance abuse treatment, housing assistance, and others.

Alternatives

Specifically tailored to each individual and formalized in LifeMAP, but often includes many of the same as focused deterrence.

Programs average 2-4 years, only a few have long-term presence in city/community; rarely institutionalized into local government; short-term grant funding, high staff turnover/burnout.

Sustainability

Over 12 year presence in Richmond; combines city budget allocation with private funds; institutionalized in Richmond as local gov't dept.; most staff become city employees

Measures: gun homicide & assaults, as well as other violent crimes; changes in gang/group violence norms; community norm change; clients access to employment & education; community & client perceptions of policing.

Impact Evaluation

Measures: community & city-wide gun homicide and assaults; client progress on LifeMap; are clients alive, not incarcerated, not injured by firearm, reduced client involvement in firearm conflict; ethnographic accounts of impacts on outreach workers, fellows and community members.

Much of Advance's Peace's work cannot fit into one category and staff have described the work of AP as creating an ecosystem of love, healing, affirmation, and harm reduction that invests time, attention, care and services, tailored to the needs, experiences

and realities of fellows, which result in new life opportunities, personal and leadership development and healing for those too often ignored or marginalized in communities of color. The product of this work is a reduction in gun violence.

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