



September 2013

**MEDIA  
PLANET**

# VIOLENCE PREVENTION

## RISE ABOVE

As an advocate of fair play and generosity, and the kindness of kindness, legendary activist, poet, and memoirist Maya Angelou continues to carry on her great theme of **finding strength in one's self to rise above adversity.**

PHOTO: RICHARD DREW, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Featuring

### CALIFORNIA FIT ZONES

Bridging the gap between the police and communities

### PTSD

Understanding anger as an ugly by-product

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

It goes beyond physical abuse



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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the largest U.S. philanthropy dedicated to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need.

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Violence Education Tools Online

Violence is preventable.

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EMPOWERMENT, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI) is the oldest and largest organization in the United States supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) at-risk youth between the ages of 12 and 24. HMI was founded on the belief that all young people—regardless of sexual orientation or identity—deserve a safe and supportive environment that will allow them to reach their fullest potential.  
[www.hmi.org](http://www.hmi.org)



CHALLENGES

**Violence is preventable.** Science and experience have taught us why it happens and what to do about it. The massive burden violence imposes on the health of this nation makes this a public health crisis, although one that can be prevented.

# A public health crisis



**Linda Degutis**  
DRPH, MSN DIRECTOR,  
CDC INJURY CENTER

“Millions of people have a higher risk for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder because of violence.”

Violence affects us all. More people now die of suicide each year than from motor vehicle crashes. Every day 13 young people are killed in this country. One in four women and one in seven men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner. Nearly one in five women has been raped during her lifetime—that’s almost 22 million women in the United States. State and local agencies receive more than 3 million child abuse referrals each year—that’s about six referrals every minute. The cost of violence in lives and human tragedy is obvious and unacceptable. Seeing violence at any age affects both physical and mental health. Millions of people have a higher risk for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder because of violence. Science has proven that violence in early childhood harms brain development.

None of this needs to happen. Just as we have successfully approached major public health problems like smoking and automobile crash deaths, we can prevent violence as well.

**Prevention**

During the past two decades, we have learned much about violence and the strategies that prevent violence before it happens. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plays an important role that helps us learn even more about what works to prevent violence.

We now have many effective ways to reduce and prevent the different kinds of violence, and we continue to learn more. Violence at home and in communities can be reduced through efforts that support individuals, strengthen families, and improve the social and economic conditions of neighborhoods. Programs that change the way violence grows and spreads make our neighborhoods safer and healthier places to live, work, and play. Undoubtedly, there are things we can do as a nation that will reduce violence and prevent it from happening in our communities.

Collecting good information is also a key to preventing violence. Accurate and meaningful data help guide communities and policy makers in determining who is most vulnerable, what works and doesn’t work, and how to best direct resources and attention. The CDC’s Injury Center collects information through surveillance activities that give decision makers critical knowledge about violence trends, the characteristics of victims and perpetrators, the circumstances of violence, and the physical, social, and economic consequences of violence — all readily available to inform prevention efforts.

**Commitment**

Violence is not inevitable. We already know a lot that can be done, and our understanding of what more we can do is constantly growing. We can make a difference.

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EDITOR’S PICK



VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
1ST EDITION, SEPTEMBER 2013

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[editorial@mediaplanet.com](mailto:editorial@mediaplanet.com)  
**Distributed within:**  
USA Today, September 2013  
This section was created by Mediaplanet and did not involve USA Today or its Editorial Departments.



1 What is your industry doing to prevent violence from occurring?

**Peter Long**  
Ph.D., President and CEO, Blue Shield of California Foundation

**Historically**, philanthropy has played a key role in addressing many forms of violence. For us in particular, our support is focused on improving access to services for survivors of domestic abuse, and ensuring the right systems are in place to stop it from happening at all. This includes efforts to prevent violence in military families.

2 Do you believe that anyone can put a stop to violence?

**I believe that everyone** has a role to play, and yet none of us can do it alone. Putting a stop to violence will require a movement — one that changes our perceptions about violence and builds upon collaboration to drive lasting change.

3 What do you think is the most important problem we need to solve in the violence space?

**One critical piece** we need to get right is early prevention. Violence breeds more violence; once that that cycle has begun, we’re already too late. In order to make meaningful progress, we must act strategically and collectively to prevent violence before it starts.

**Robert K. Ross**  
President and CEO, California Endowment

**The root cause** of this tragedy is a national epidemic of young people who are disconnected, disengaged, or disempowered. Philanthropic foundations support efforts to create a better path for youth and prevent violence before it starts. For example, we invest in social enterprises (like Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles) that create jobs for young men captive to gangs.

**Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D.**  
President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Violence is an urgent** public health problem, and its prevention is essential to building a strong, vibrant culture of health across America. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation supports promising strategies that foster healthy relationships and communities, and pairs them with research that builds the evidence to successfully reduce violence.

**Torod Neptune**  
Vice President, Corporate Communications, Verizon Wireless

**For more than a decade**, Verizon has been committed to ending domestic violence. We have leveraged our resources like the Verizon Foundation and HopeLine from Verizon to provide critical resources to victims and survivors. Moreover, Verizon customers can dial #HOPE from their wireless phones to be immediately connected to the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

**We each possess the power** to “let violence prevention begin with me.” As Ghandi stated: “Be the change that you want to see in the world.” If mothers and fathers of murder victims can promote peace and reconciliation — as so many have across our nation — then practicing peace is possible for all of us.

**We know that violence** is a learned behavior that people can unlearn. Programs like Cure Violence interrupt cycles of neighborhood gun violence. Start Strong helps stop teen dating abuse before it starts. And Keeping Families Together provides vulnerable families with the stability to end abuse at home. We’re helping such efforts spread more widely.

**When children repeatedly experience** violence and neglect, their minds and bodies don’t develop in normal healthy ways. This causes them to be in a constant state of “fight or flight”—a top predictor of academic failure and misbehavior. Children are resilient and can transcend trauma, but only if we know what they’re going through and give them proper support.

**It’s hard for children** to grow up healthy if they live amidst violence. Toxic stress levels from repeated violence exposure can derail healthy brain development and have damaging, long-term effects on learning, behavior, and health. We must intervene earlier to help kids traumatized by violence and intensify efforts to prevent it from occurring at all.

**We all can make a difference.** Speaking up against domestic violence is critical and everyone’s responsibility in order to help end it. There are a number of resources available to help start the conversation. Verizon also invites the public to donate their old phones to HopeLine to help support domestic violence victims and survivors.

**Domestic violence touches so many people.** This critical social issue impacts nearly one in four women, one in seven men and more than 3 million children in the United States. We need to end the silence and break the cycle of violence. People should not have to live in fear.



# HOME SAFE HOME



© Matt Moyer

**Jose was homeless, out of work, and battling addiction when his daughter Destiny was born. Children and families facing such instability are among the most vulnerable to violence and abuse.**

Jose desperately wanted to give his daughter a better future. He found help from Keeping Families Together, a supportive housing program in New York City funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Keeping Families Together gave Jose and Destiny more than a roof over their head; it provided them with affordable housing paired with services like counseling, health care, and even parenting classes to help their family stay together and get stronger.

That was more than four years ago. Today, Jose and Destiny are doing great, as are the vast majority of parents and kids served by Keeping Families Together. It's just one of the many ways that communities can stop violence and create a strong, vibrant culture of health.

**Learn more at [rwjf.org/violenceprevention](https://rwjf.org/violenceprevention)**



Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation



NEWS

DID YOU KNOW?



Rachel Davis  
PREVENTION INSTITUTE

**Violence can be prevented — but it requires a comprehensive approach**

For the past eight years, Prevention Institute has been privileged to work with 20 U.S. cities and their health departments helping them develop strategies to prevent violence affecting youth. This effort, called the UNITY Initiative and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has taught us a lot. Here's one lesson: When people ask, as they often do, "What one program can we adopt to prevent violence in our community?" my answer is: "It's not just about one program; it's about a comprehensive approach."

This is not just a law enforcement issue, and it can't be solved solely by cops making arrests. Cities need a comprehensive plan with strategies that address the underlying reasons for violence. It takes determined leadership by the mayor and widespread participation by city agencies and the community. Cities with the most coordination between the mayor's office, police department, public health, schools and community groups have the lowest violence rates.

This is precisely the approach pursued by Minneapolis, a city once nicknamed Murderapolis because of its high homicide rate. Within a five-year period after implementing its Blueprint for Action, arrests of young people for violent crime dropped 61 percent and killings of people 24 and younger fell 76 percent. In Los Angeles, a comprehensive prevention approach reduced gang-related violence by 35 percent and gang-related homicides by 57 percent during summer months.

Violence is preventable. Young people need access to safe, quality schools, caring adults, and paying jobs and community programs that provide experience and hope. Cities need funding, training and technical assistance to be effective in preventing violence. Violence is a terrible burden on youth, families, neighborhoods and cities. Reducing violence can stimulate economic development and help communities thrive. It's time to make the investments that will pay off now and for generations to come.

RACHEL DAVIS  
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**TIPS**

**It can be difficult to predict that a partner is likely to become abusive, but there are some red flags that signal impending abuse.**

**Seek advice or help if your partner:**

- Embarrasses or puts you down.
- Controls who you see or where you go.
- Discourages you from seeing friends and family.
- Destroys your property or threatens your children or pets.
- Threatens to commit suicide for something you've done.
- Prevents you from working or attending school.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE  
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# Harm at home

**Question:** What is the pattern to domestic violence?  
**Answer:** There is not one.

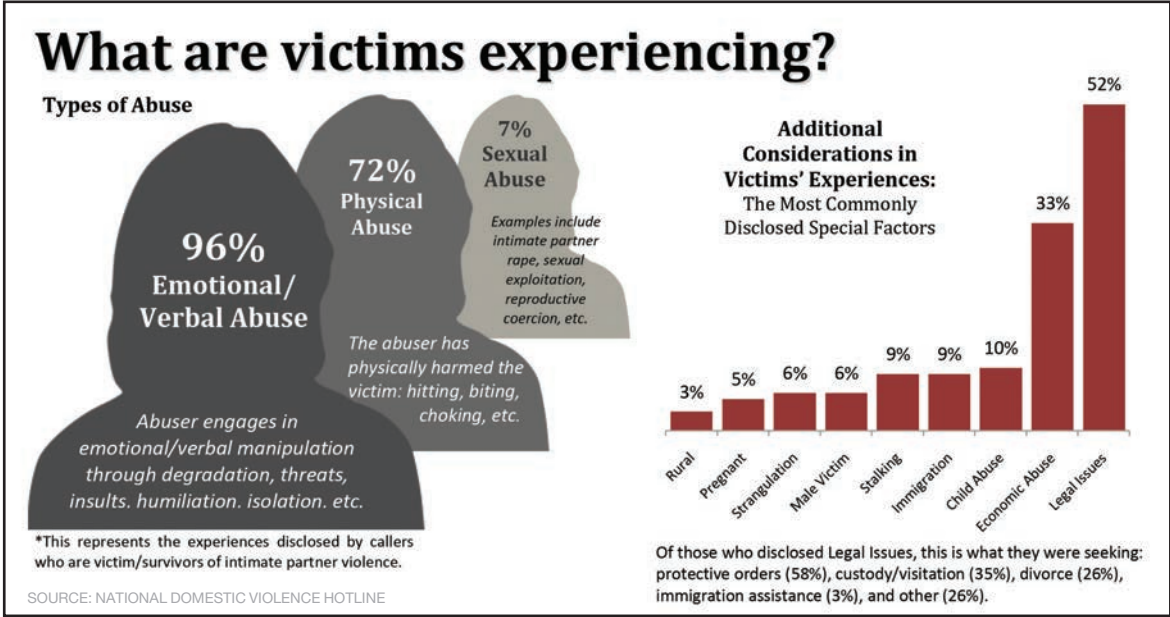
According to the CDC, more than one in three women and one in four men in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. Three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends each day.

And the suffering doesn't stop when the bruises heal. People who have experienced domestic abuse are more likely to have chronic pain, trouble sleeping, and mental illness. They are at higher risk for asthma, diabetes, obesity, and irritable bowel syndrome.

Nor is the problem confined to certain neighborhoods. According to Katie Ray-Jones, President of the National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH), "Domestic violence is an issue that impacts all walks of life. There is no typical victim."

**Not just beatings**

When we think of domestic violence we often think primarily of beatings, but violence is not limited to the physical. The NDVH defines domestic violence as "a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, eco-



nomie, or psychological actions or threats of actions." Abuse often takes the form of name-calling and excessive criticism; attempts to isolate the victim from family and friends; threats to harm the victim or children of the victim; trapping the victim in the home to keep her from leaving.

**Not acceptable**

Despite the alarming statistics, our nation has made it clear that domestic violence is unacceptable. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first passed in 1994, was reauthorized in 2013, extending its protections to immigrants, Native American women, mem-

bers of the LGBT community, and male victims of domestic violence. The VAWA provides funding for the investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against women, as well as funding and other support for shelters, prevention programs, and legal aid for survivors of domestic violence. "The reauthorization of the VAWA is huge for victims," says Ray-Jones.

**Not hopeless**

For the VAWA to help, abuse must be reported, but it is not easy for victims to extricate themselves from abusive relationships. "Abusers often control the finances in the relationship, making it difficult

for the victim to leave," explains Ray-Jones. "Abusers do a good job of isolating their victims. The victims are so often hopeless when they call. We will ask if it's safe to talk, and they'll whisper, 'I'm in the closet; he's in the next room.'"

Though it can seem hopeless, it is not. Organizations such as the NDVH provide not only hope, but help, providing callers with information about shelters, legal aid, and other practical needs. "We want the caller to make the decision about the best course of action," says Ray-Jones, "but we walk alongside the caller the whole way."

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The National Domestic Violence Hotline employees celebrate the passing of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA, first passed in 1994, was reauthorized in 2013, extending its protections to immigrants, Native American women, members of the LGBT community, and male victims of domestic violence. PHOTOS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

## Domestic violence poses extra challenges for minorities

After a beating from her husband on a Christmas Eve, "María" had simply had enough. Having experienced severe physical, sexual and emotional abuse for years, she called police and was referred to a domestic violence organization that helps Latinos. She had no job or support system, and was confused by legal forms that weren't available in Spanish. But with the right guidance, she was given the tools needed to help prosecute her husband and file for custody. She's now living on her own; however, too many others suffer in silence.

**Statistics tell the story**

"The problem is of epidemic proportions," says Amy Sanchez, CEO for External Relations — Casa de Esperanza, National Latin@Network for Healthy Families and Communities. "About one of every five Latinas will experience intimate partner violence during her lifetime, according to the National Institute of Justice."

Sanchez says Latina survivors who've been in the U.S. for longer periods of time are more aware of free services available, and are more inclined to use them.

"Latina survivors are also more likely to depend on family members and friends, rather than health care workers, clergy, and police."

**Attitude adjustment**

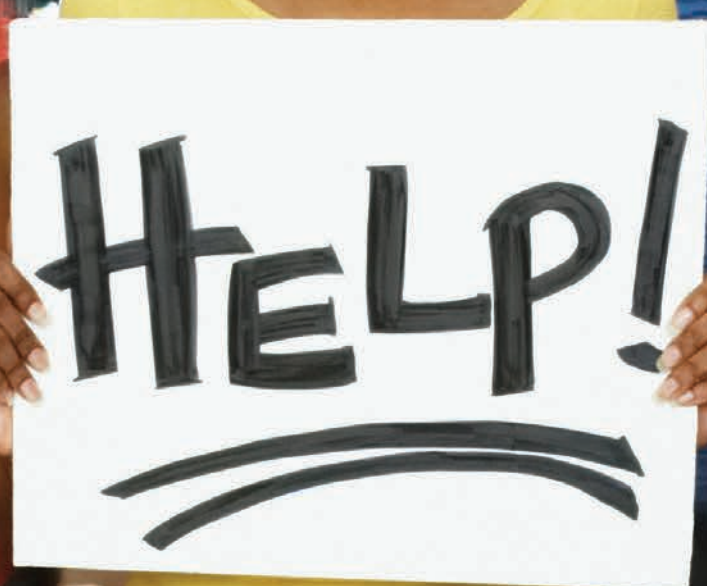
Dr. Oliver Williams, Executive Co-Director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, says perception is everything.

"Even though domestic violence organizations have saved lives, women in some communities still see them as white women's issues. Among some churches, they believe they break up families, rather than the abuse. It's important to target the African-American community, in order for them to own the problem and also the solutions."

African Americans have also had higher incidence and prevalence rates of domestic violence. Says Williams, "This may be due to the intersection of subculture, poverty, lack of resources to address the problem and more intense policing within their community — a 'one size fits all' approach, and less attention within those communities through trusted informal institutions and community resources."

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HopeLine® from Verizon puts the nation's largest and most reliable network to work in our communities. HopeLine accepts no-longer-used wireless phones and accessories from any service provider, refurbishes them and turns them into support for domestic violence victims and survivors. Donated phones that cannot be refurbished are recycled in an environmentally safe way.

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STATISTICS

Crime in California



1 in 5

Californians has been a victim of crime in the last five years. Half of these acknowledge being a victim of a violent crime.

2 in 3

victims have been victims of multiple crimes in the past five years. African Americans and Latinos are more likely to have been victims of three or more crimes in the past five years.

4 of 5

services available to crime victims tested – including assistance with accessing victims’ compensation and navigating the criminal justice process – were unknown to the majority of victims. Of those who had used the services, nearly half found them difficult to access.

When asked about California’s rates of incarceration, more victims say that we send **TOO MANY** people to prison than “too few.”

65%

of victims support Governor Brown’s Public Safety Realignment Law that, in 2011, shifted responsibility and funding for people convicted of non-violent, non-serious offenses from the state to counties.

2 in 3

crime victims report experiencing anxiety, stress, and difficulty with sleeping and relationships or work. Half of these felt that it takes more than six months to recover from these experiences.



CREATING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND SECURITY  
Residents and children of East Palo Alto meet at Cooley Landing to participate in neighborhood Fit Zones created by the East Palo Alto Police Department. PHOTO: CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO POLICE DEPARTMENT



# FIT ZONES REDUCE VIOLENCE WHILE LIFTING SPIRITS

For Police Chief Ronald Davis, making East Palo Alto’s streets safer while promoting healthy living and positive relationships between the community and local officers is more than just a lofty goal. A new California FIT Zones program has transformed his vision into reality. “This project reinforces the notion that the greatest deterrent to crime and violence is not a neighborhood saturated with cops,” Davis explains. “It’s a community alive with residents.” The idea for the Fitness Improvement Training (FIT) Zones program began in 2011 at a session hosted by the U.S. Department of Justice COPS Office, the Center for Court Innovation and the California Endowment. Participants explored how public health principles, practices and resources could support law enforcement. In February 2012, the East Palo

Alto Police Department received a \$200,000 grant from the Endowment to establish a model public health and anti-violence program. detection to pinpoint “hot spots” with the highest concentration of gunshots. The Department identified two FIT Zones within each hot spot. One is based in and around Jack Farrell Park, while the other is located in Martin Luther King Park. “The police officers and staff actually participate in the activities, including three-mile bike rides with children, Zumba dancing and other physical activities,” Davis explains. “This has increased the residents’ sense of security and safety. As a result, we are seeing the number of residents

steadily increase in each FIT Zone.”

**Making a difference**  
Through the program, the police and community were able to reduce shootings by 51 percent in both hot spots, without making a single arrest. “Equally promising is how the community is building relationships with the police and their neighbors. We intend to increase the number of FIT Zones over the next few months from two to four. We enhanced police legitimacy through increased public trust and confidence, and contributed to an increase in health outcomes for both residents and police officers.” Adds Davis, “Violence is a disease that requires a public health model to combat. We will not arrest our way out of crime.”

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“VIOLENCE IS A DISEASE THAT REQUIRES A PUBLIC HEALTH MODEL TO COMBAT. WE WILL NOT ARREST OUR WAY OUT OF CRIME.”

**Reclaiming a community**  
The purpose was to reduce crime in a city overwhelmed by inordinate levels of gun violence, while improving the overall health of residents. The Police Department formed a team that included the San Mateo County Health System, Ravenswood Family Health Center, the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law and the Ravenswood School District. The team used ShotSpotter

## Futures at risk: Preventing children’s exposure to violence

**Picture yourself walking through a forest. Now, imagine that you come face to face with a large bear. Instantly, your emergency response system kicks into gear, flooding your body with stress hormones.**

Your pupils dilate, your heart starts beating fast, and your skin becomes cold and clammy. The executive, cognitive portion of your brain shuts off so you can focus only on two options—fight or flight.

But, what happens if that big bear is waiting for you when you get home every day? Or threatens you in the schoolyard? In the face of such extreme and repeated danger, your emergency response can go from saving your life to damaging your health and well-being.

Around the country, this scenario is similar to the reality faced by millions of children who experience violence and trauma at home, in their schools, and in their communities. Approximately two out of every three children in the U.S. are affected by and exposed to violence and trauma.

**We all suffer**  
A major study by the Center for Disease Control found that childhood exposure to abuse and other traumatic stressors, termed Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), led to a multitude of health and social problems. Research has shown that children with four or more categories of ACEs are 32 times more likely to have learning or behavioral problems in school than those who had none. Violence can happen in any

community and can take on many forms, from sexual and physical abuse to violence in homes or neighborhoods, including violence against friends, family members, trusted adults, or bystanders. As many as one in ten children may experience multiple layers of violence at the same time. These children in particular are at high risk of never developing the basic capacities they need to function normally and lead productive, healthy, and successful lives as adults.

When the futures of millions of children are jeopardized, we all suffer. If we don’t intervene, it’s clear that we all pay the price when children are not successful in school, enter the juvenile justice system, experience physical or mental health problems, or grow up to become perpetrators of

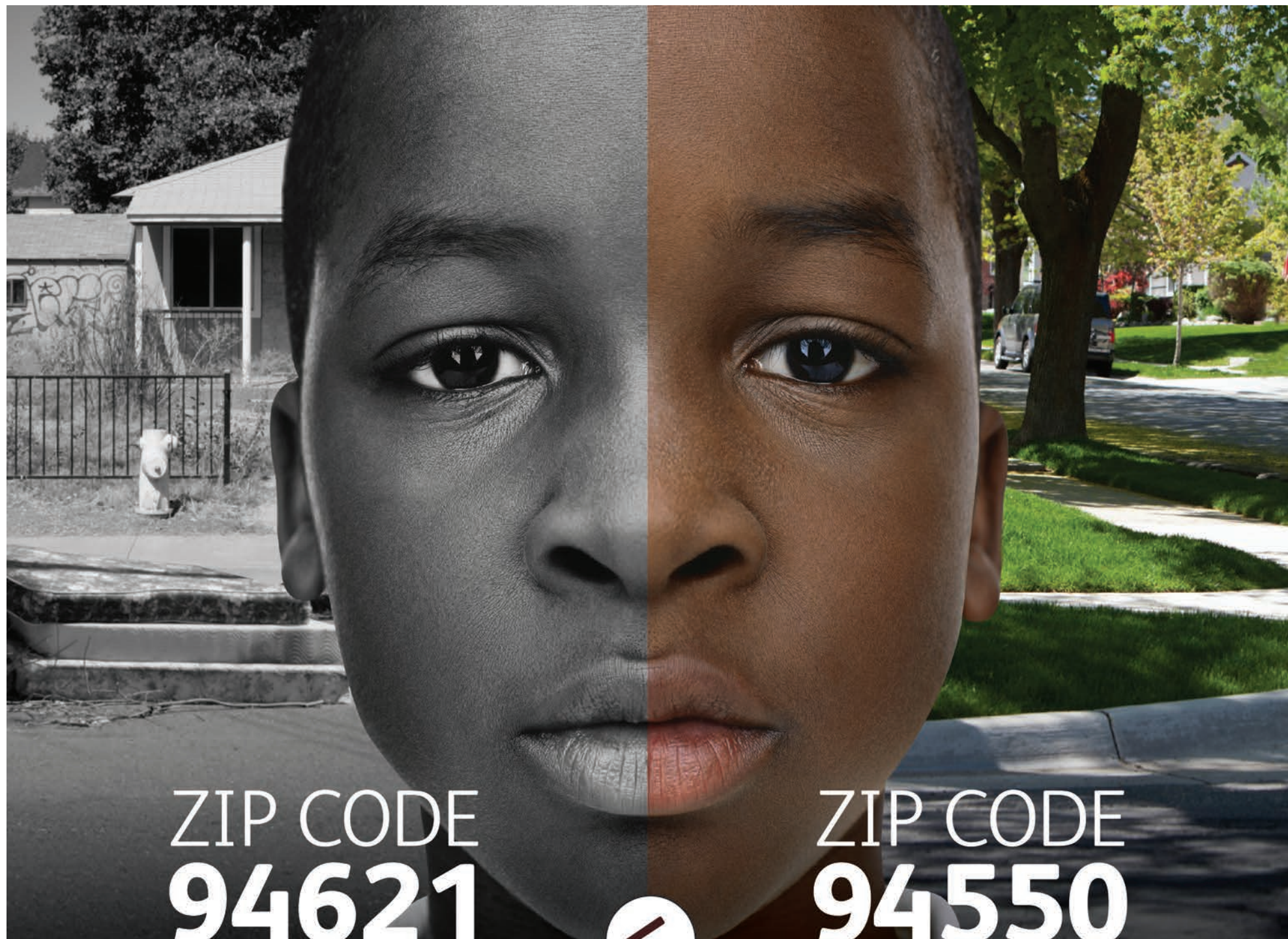
violence themselves. Our health care, social services, law enforcement, education, and other public systems bear the brunt of our failure to prevent this epidemic; and the costs are astronomical.

**Protect and heal**  
We have learned a great deal about how to prevent violence, and how to help children exposed to violence and trauma heal and thrive. The next step is to launch a national agenda to make homes, schools, and communities safer, more supportive, and healthier places for all of our nation’s children.

Too often in this country, the youngest victims go unseen and unheard. It is up to all of us—from teachers to clergy, to coaches, to doctors, to parents—to take the steps needed to effectively protect and heal children exposed to trauma giving them the web of support they need to grow up healthy, happy, and secure.

DR. NADINE BURKE HARRIS  
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Life Expectancy

**74**

ZIP CODE  
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Life Expectancy

**85**



**Your zip code shouldn't predict how long you'll live – but it does.** Yet for millions of our sons and brothers of color in California their surroundings do affect how long – and how well – they live.

- In California 35% of black youth and 25% of Latino youth do not graduate, compared to only 12% of their white counterparts
- Young black men are 10 times more likely than young white men to be killed by guns
- Black male youth are over 5 times more likely to be imprisoned in their lifetime than white male youth

Health happens when all boys are healthy and safe, when all boys succeed in school, and when all boys have the opportunity to become leaders.

To learn more visit  
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INSPIRATION

DON'T MISS

Understanding prevention theory

While all phases of prevention are essential to effectiveness, the time has come to prioritize the advancement of primary prevention research, practice, and implementation. Levels of prevention theory recognizes three phases of prevention: primary, secondary and tertiary.

- ➔ **Primary prevention**  
Approaches that take place before risk or injury has occurred to prevent initial injury or harm.
- ➔ **Secondary prevention**  
Immediate responses after risk or injury has occurred to deal with the short-term consequences of the injury or harm.
- ➔ **Tertiary prevention**  
Long-term responses after risk or injury has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of the injury or harm.

For violence prevention, our aim should be to raise awareness, educate, and empower bystanders to reduce the incidence of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. It is imperative that we invest our resources of time, money, and support where the greatest impact can be achieved. We can prevent sexual violence from occurring if we are strategic in our planning, approach, and goal-setting. It is possible to create a cultural shift in attitudes and behaviors about this epidemic, a very real public health crisis. Together, we can effect lasting change by turning our focus to primary prevention efforts.

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Q & A

Empowering our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) youth

- 1. What are the most troubling issues facing LGBTQ youth today?**  
LGBT youth face disparaging and disproportionate challenges across the wide spectrum of adolescent development — education (school drop-out rates are two to three times greater for LGBT youth), physical health (HIV rates are higher in LGBT youth), mental health (LGBT youth showing greater signs of depression and anxiety than their peers); youth homelessness is disproportionately higher amongst LGBTQ youth.
- 2. How can we ensure a safer environment in schools to prevent bullying and victimization for LGBTQ youth?**  
Education is key. Dissolving the ignorance that exists around the issues; creating safe spaces for young people while giving adults safe spaces to have their questions answered and become educated on the subject matter. We must remain vigilant as adults to ensure safe spaces exist and where they do not, work towards bringing them into being.
- 3. How can each person individually develop positive youth development?**  
Positive Youth Development is about how a person understands young people. At HMI, every day we witness many brave and heroic young people travelling great distances to be with us and who will not tolerate the “status quo,” settle for mediocrity, or be denied services. Instead, they travel to a place where the people waiting for them love and celebrate them as the heroes they are.

THOMAS KREVER  
CEO, HETRICK-MARTIN INSTITUTE  
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PHOTO: DWIGHT CARTER

The autobiography of her youth, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), depicts Maya Angelou’s coming-of-age amidst racism and segregation in Arkansas, and rape at the age of eight. Angelou’s great theme is finding the strength in one’s self to overcome. She worked with Malcolm X and Martin Luther King during the Civil Rights Movement. This “Phenomenal Woman” shares her wisdom.

**Jen Dorr** **Is there a solution to violence?**  
**Maya Angelou** Have peace in your heart before you go out in the street. Peace begins at home. All virtues and vices begin at home, inside yourself. If you cling to (peace), it will not be easy to bring you to violence. If someone is violent toward you, do your best to get out of the way... Go to some protector. Get some help. And don’t let yourself become violent.

**JD** **What are the dangers of remaining silent about**

“I stand up for any human being, anywhere: male, female, White, Black, Asian, Spanish-speaking, Gay or Straight. I’m an advocate of fair play and generosity, the kindness of kindness.”

**abuse?**  
**MA** I don’t think you should be silent about anything that is detrimental to the human being. Speak up. If someone is holding a gun on you, you don’t want to start shouting at him or her. If you can, find your way out of that situation, and then, speak out against violence.

Tim Gunn speaks frankly about domestic violence

**With his kind heart and gentle humor, fashion consultant Tim Gunn has won the hearts of Americans. A passionate advocate for ending domestic violence, Gunn pulls no punches when it comes to this issue.**



PHOTO: TIM GUNN

**Mediaplanet** **Why do you think so many victims remain silent about domestic violence?**  
**Tim Gunn** So often the victim feels embarrassed, feels a sense of shame. Often the victim is made to feel that he or she contributed to the circumstances. When one has that sense of culpability, one can be very disinclined to reach out for help.

**MP** **What message would you have for someone who is the victim of domestic violence?**  
**TG** Get yourself out of the situation to seek help. I don’t want to sound cynical about all of this, but by staying you enable the abuser. You can’t think ‘I’m going to fix him or fix her.’ When we don’t

speak up and say “I’m not going to take this any longer, or you can’t behave this way any longer,” we just let it proliferate.

**MP** **You say “him or her.” Most people think of abusers as male.**

“To say that only men abuse or only women are victims is being blind to other issues.”

**TG** That may speak to the issue in broad strokes, but there are many iterations of this and many ways that it manifests itself. It could be men and men or women and women. To say that only men abuse or only women are victims is being blind to other issues.

**MP** **Do you think there’s a solution to domestic violence?**  
**TG** I would like to think so. I’m not a psychiatrist—I’m a fashion guy for god’s sake—but from my experience, abusers are like addicts. They need a fix. For them the fix is either going to be physical violence or verbal violence. That individual needs help, needs psychiatric care.

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RISE ABOVE VIOLENCE WITH KINDNESS

Poet, memoirist, and activist Maya Angelou has forged a life of extraordinary courage. Today, her message remains as true and timeless as ever.

If we taught that to children, they would grow up not to accept [violence]. I think corporal punishment, whupping a child, is terrible. Then the child grows up and continues the violence.

**JD** **How did you find the strength to rise above the violence you experienced?**  
**MA** My grandmother loved me, and my brother loved me, and my mother, later, loved me. I was surrounded by love, a great protection.

**JD** **How has your experiences with violence inspired your work?**  
**MA** I write against it. I speak against it. I stand up for any human being, anywhere: male, female, White, Black, Asian, Spanish-speaking, Gay or Straight. I’m an advocate of fair play and generosity, the kindness of kindness.

**JD** **What advice do you have for those are struggling with the emotional effects**

**of violence?**  
**MA** Learn forgiveness. That doesn’t mean condoning a violent act. But understand what a person has come through to do something violent. I take the word ‘forgiveness’; I turn it around and give it form. I find a child or family who needs something, and see that the person gets it. I don’t let them know I am giving but I say in my prayers “I am giving this for [the person] who has hurt [me]. I release the person and his or her deed by giving something to somebody else whom neither of us knows. I release kindness into the atmosphere.

**JD** **What message do you have for someone who has victimized others?**  
**MA** Stop it. You are giving birth to an action that will come back to harm you. It already has harmed you. Just because you have the ability to do it, it doesn’t mean you have the right to.

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Supportive LGBT programs expand in New York City

**In the 1980s, gay men in the Chelsea section of Manhattan were being roughed up. The high number of violent incidents led to the creation of what is now the nonprofit Anti-Violence Project.**

Today AVP offers a 24-hour hotline, counseling services and a support network to the entire lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community in New York. Over time its definition of violence expanded as well to encompass intimate partner violence and institutional violence — discrimination and disrespect by employers or even government institutions — along with the street or “hate” violence. “We started developing different strategies to deal with different types of violence,” explained Sharon Stapel, executive director of AVP.

Thirty-three years later efforts to keep New York’s LGBT community safe are still emerging.

Coming to the aid of the city’s young adults, the True Colors Residence in Harlem was opened in 2011. Believed to be the first of its kind, the 30-unit apartment house is for ages 18 to 24 with qualified incomes. It provides community space, social services and a nurturing environment. Most residents have had a harsh transition to adulthood, seeking shelter because they have been thrown out by family, according to Colleen K. Jackson, executive director of West End Residences, which manages True Colors.

The brainchild of musician Cyndi Lauper and her business manager, True Colors has been supported through government subsidies and corporate financing.

Citi Community Capital, a division of Citigroup, which lends and invests in affordable housing projects across the country, provided a construction loan of \$2.5 million, along with equity financing of \$3.4 million. “We seek to finance projects that are innovative, that are doing something a little different and responding to a community need,” said Bill Yates, director of the program. “That is where True Colors shines. There was clearly a need for this and for a long time was overlooked.” A second True Colors is now underway in The Bronx.

“We’re just starting to scratch the surface in terms of what’s possible.”

And many Citi staffers have become personally involved in these efforts. Yates is a trained volunteer on AVP’s 24-hour violence hotline. While Bob Annibale, global director of Citi Community Development and Microfinance, said members of the company’s Citi Pride Network have painted AVP offices and marched shoulder-to-shoulder in New York’s Pride parade donning t-shirts bearing Citi’s logo and AVP’s logo.

*John Henry Watson, vice president, operations & technology and NYC co-chair of the Citi Pride Network, added, “We support events and programs with a common mission of anti-violence.”*

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# Understanding the depth of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

**Anger is one of many ugly by-products of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and maybe the most dangerous.**

When unmitigated, this hostility can erupt into domestic violence. Research is beginning to identify the depth of the problem among military families and support programs are developing that intercede. Still experts agree — more needs to be done.

Casey Taft, Ph.D, director of Strength at Home, a counseling program centered at the Providence VA in Rhode Island, has been working to expand the concept to VA centers nationwide. With sessions for military men already identified as exhibiting aggressive behavior towards partners, and a track for couples, the goal is conflict prevention.

“One thing we have found in our research is when military veterans have PTSD and experience trauma it can cause them to misinterpret situations as threaten-

ing,” explained Taft. It is behavior learned in war where turning all emotions into anger “helps them stay alive.” Still, that doesn’t excuse abusive acts, he stressed. “They own their behavior.”

### Train the trainer

A military culture of pride and strength has kept many away from helpful services. Outspoken advocates like Medal of Honor recipient Ty Carter who opened up to David Letterman about the benefits of PTSD treatment may start to lift perceived stigma. Experts estimate 11 percent to 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans experience PTSD, with some suggesting as many as 30 percent.

“Talking about the trauma is really the best way to treat PTSD,” said Taft. “One of the things we do is help them come up with realistic views of other people and their intentions. Retrain them in how to approach situations.”

The community needs to become engaged too, espoused Anne L.

Demers, associate professor of health science at San Jose State University and a creator of the Welcoming Warriors Home course that helps veterans reintegrate and find jobs. ‘Train the trainer’ events have already been held for California colleges, noted Demers. “Ultimately, we would like to see a similar program go national.”

### Intersecting behaviors

In a study commissioned by Blue Shield of California Foundation, Demers found that anger, verbal abuse and physical aggression were more likely to occur when there were low levels of social support. In June the Aspen Institute took a major first step sponsoring a conference on veteran issues that brought together social service, academic and military factions.

Another problem is the extremely low penetration of military families — only 1 percent. “Ninety-nine percent of the population has (little knowledge) about the military,” said Demers, whose son did three tours

“Experts estimate **11 percent to 20 percent** of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans experience PTSD, with some suggesting as **many as 30 percent.**”

of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Not to forget the smallest of the impacted, Eliza Daniely-Woolfolk, CEO of Alternatives to Domestic Violence which serves Riverside County, Calif., home to the March Air Reserve base, embraces children along with women in its Military Families Initiative program. “If there are children they don’t go unscathed,” commented Daniely-Woolfolk.

Children encountering violent behavior can suffer from night-

mares, low-self esteem, depression, eating disorders and engage in cutting. “These children are resilient, but are very private reflecting the military culture. You have to work with them to develop trust in an outside system,” she said.

“Our goal as an agency is to intersect and address those issues so that they don’t exhibit the same behaviors.”

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## Curbing gun violence through behavior control

Right now in 15 U.S. cities, health departments and community groups are working together to treat gun violence as one would a contagious disease. Trained neighborhood watchdogs called violence interrupters are on the street searching for the infected, providing treatment and taking actions to prevent spread..

### Eradicating gun violence

“Behavior is contagious,” said Dr. Gary Slutkin, founder and executive director of Cure Violence, the group promulgating this social psychology method. A professor of Epidemiology and International Health at the University of Illinois, Slutkin first conceived the idea after returning to Chicago after treating infectious diseases in Africa. “It is about behavior change, just like other health

issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and obesity.”

In eradicating gun violence, suggested Slutkin, “The punishment approach is kind of overrated. I saw an opening for a behavior change strategy.”

For instance on a recent night at a New Orleans emergency room, interrupters visited with shooting victims and family to curtail retaliatory thoughts. In a profound success story, the novel approach reduced shootings in the violence-plagued West Garfield Park area of Chicago by 67 percent its first year.

Curing violence by counseling

requires subtlety, and only those with credibility in their neighborhoods — typically reformed violent offenders — will be successfully persuasive, according to Slutkin, who estimates nearly 40 U.S. cities could be benefiting.

### Overcoming skepticism

In a vote of confidence, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has provided grants totaling \$15 million . Funding was renewed for another three years to help spread the model to new cities, roll out efforts that empower people in the community to influence their

peers to reject violence, and support further evaluation.

“Early on, we didn’t know whether the model could truly change norms and behaviors in violent neighborhoods,” admitted Kristin Schubert, senior program officer at the RWJF, who is now convinced. A few years back she stepped out with a late night mission in Chicago. “It was one of the most powerful site visits I’ve attended. They’re demonstrating that violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned.”

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Just because they're home doesn't mean they're here.

Concern for our soldiers shouldn’t end when they leave the battlefield. Veterans returning from war could still be facing an enemy—an enemy only they can see. Many suffer from serious mental health conditions that lead to increased relationship stress, marital strain, and even family violence. In fact, male veterans with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) are two to three times more likely to engage in intimate partner abuse, compared to those without PTS—up to six times higher than the general civilian population.

But there's hope. Through collective efforts and new partnerships, we can help prevent violence in military families, and give returning soldiers the chance to live after they've made it home alive.

Blue Shield of California Foundation is committed to serving those who have served. Learn more about our work to end domestic violence at [www.blueshieldcafoundation.org](http://www.blueshieldcafoundation.org).

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