

Introduction

Welcome to the NCJA Podcast. Listen to lively discussions with a variety of guests about promising criminal justice practices and programs worth taking a closer look at. Your interesting ideas from around the country on a variety of important and timely topics and learn how you can adjust or adapt your Byrne-JAG Grant Program for improved success. Thanks for joining us. We hope you enjoy.

Demaxia Wray:

Hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode of the NCJA podcast. Today's episode will focus on community violence intervention. We'll discuss collaboration, the meaning of success in this work, the significance of shared language and the importance of designing and implementing community violence intervention programs that holistically respond to both violence as well as the systemic and social factors that impact and drive violence. Today we have a very special guest, NCJA Program Manager, Anica Steive. Anica and I will be drawing on the framework of our own community violence intervention work in the past. I worked in direct service, for example, which guides my approach to this topic. Anica, would you like to introduce yourself and briefly highlight your experience in this space?

Anica Steive:

Absolutely. Thank you so much. Happy to be here with you. I am Anica Steive, as Demaxia mentioned, and I am a program manager at NCJA. I was born and raised in Bellingham, Washington and I now reside in Seattle. In relation to violence intervention work, in 2013, I began working at a nonprofit organization that focused on system change in the juvenile justice and child welfare system in Washington through local and statewide initiatives. In my role there, I collaboratively developed and managed a regional violence intervention and prevention program for young people impacted by violence in the juvenile legal system. The program leveraged existing community efforts and focused on creating mechanisms through which to coordinate existing services for young people, while also engaging stakeholders and decision makers in an overall violence prevention strategy. After this work, I transitioned to local and state government with my most recent role being at the state of Washington in the office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention.

Demaxia Wray:

Anica, thank you for being here on the podcast. I'm excited about this discussion, especially because we both come to this work from two different but related perspectives, direct service and convening and facilitating a multidisciplinary team, one step removed from direct service, but still in the nonprofit space. Anica, before we dive into your experience, for the listeners who may be less familiar with what we call CVI, Community Violence Intervention, would you mind providing a broad overview?

Anica Steive:

Certainly. Happy to. Community Violence Intervention or CVI is not new. That's the first thing to note. This work has been happening in communities for decades. However, CVI has gained particular traction in the past years as more traditional government or law enforcement led approaches have not yielded significant impact. In the most basic sense, CVI work focuses on two central themes, relationships and collaboration. We all have a role to play in developing and implementing solutions, community members, service providers, law enforcement, funders, policymakers. Relationship building is critical in working together in a multidisciplinary way, which then brings us to the collaboration piece. Typically, those most impacted by an

issue such as community violence are closest to the solution. Creating CVI strategies that are collaborative, informed and led by those most impacted enables communities to build on existing wisdom, leverage funding, and maximize their impact in a community centered way.

CVI strategies typically utilize a public health approach to violence and encourage multi-strategy efforts that are adaptable evidence-informed and centered in community. If you're like me and you like specificity and details, you're probably thinking this sounds super broad and vague. But that is because CVI strategies are flexible and designed to adapt to comprehensively address community specific needs. But, Demaxia, I'm curious from your perspective, what would you add to that overview and what else do you see as defining CVI?

Demaxia Wray:

Thank you, Anica. I loved how you mentioned the public a health approach and really the comprehensive need to address CVI. It is crucial for the work that is being done in the community violence space to be comprehensive enough to deal with these root causes of violence such as addressing underlying traumas. Just as a jumping point for our discussion today, would you mind discussing the multidisciplinary team you facilitated, convened and led as part of King's County Washington's Comprehensive Youth Gang Violence Reduction Model. Now, you know, that was a mouthful, Anica. How did this team fit into the implementation of the model more broadly, and are there any lessons that you learned that you'd love to share? I'm curious.

Anica Steive:

Absolutely. In King County, we were implementing the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Comprehensive Gang Model, also a mouthful, across the region. This is an evidence-based CVI strategy, which included facilitation of a multidisciplinary intervention team that coordinated direct services for young people impacted by gang and group violence. This multidisciplinary team was one component of the model serving as a mechanism to coordinate services as well as inform a larger stakeholder and policymaker group about broader community needs related to community safety and violence. We did a lot of stakeholder and community engagement process evaluation and trainings as part of the full model implementation. Specifically related to the multidisciplinary team, this component was the real-time example of the relationships and collaboration necessary for what we thought of as successful CVI implementation. My role was to convene and facilitate this team, which included multidisciplinary representation from an array of folks who work with young people, case managers, school staff, probation counselors, employment and life skills coaches, law enforcement officers, street outreach workers and others.

The team included representation from both nonprofit community-based organizations and government and social service agencies. This team would receive referrals for young people who needed services from community and system partners, and then the group met weekly to coordinate services for these young people who were largely group or gang involved and at risk of or being impacted by serious violence. As I mentioned before, the team created a mechanism through which to coordinate existing community programs that serve shared clients. We know that young people and families are often touched by multiple service providers, so working together created a way to better coordinate those efforts and share information to avoid duplication as well as identify the best individualized services for young people and their family.

Lessons learned. There were many, but a main one is that collaboration and relationships are hard, especially among people and stakeholders and partners who don't typically sit at the same table. Having street outreach workers and youth mentors sitting on a team with law enforcement was a challenge. Building trust took time and consistency. Through continued discussions and showing up every week, we were able to identify shared goals and areas of commonality, which ultimately led to cohesive teamwork, but it was definitely a process. I'd love to know, Demaxia from you about your experience doing direct service work in the CVI space. What are some key takeaways that you discovered in the role that you had in that work?

Demaxia Wray:

Yes. My CVI experience goes way back to my undergrad years. I took a course with one of my favorite professors, Dr. Leon, Dr. Janelle Leon, in case you guys want to look her up. She has amazing research. But she had a domestic violence course, and when I took that course I was mouth on the floor compelled by not just domestic violence and how complex it is, but really how much it intersected with sexual violence and maybe substance abuse and maybe firearm violence that I was like, "Oh wait, I think we're onto something here." Because in college you're exploring so many different fields and areas, topic areas, you're like, "Wait, I'll figure it out when I graduate." But from there, that's really what led me. And so I have to credit her if she's ever listening to this, I feel so honored.

But she taught this wonderful course and I mean from the textbook, the literature, the book that she had us read, I was so compelled and so I took a per diem position at a shelter out in a rural area, so this was for the Columbia and Greene counties. So those areas were both so rural that one agency provided domestic violence service to both.

I remember driving out there, and mind you, I am from metropolitan New York City. Okay, the most I see is a raccoon here and there maybe a beaver, if not a beaver. What do you call those things? I don't even know. We don't have much wildlife and I remember driving in my undergraduate years like an hour away to this shelter literally in the middle of nowhere and first of all, being terrified like, "Is that a deer on the side of the road?" But really just the services that we provided were so comprehensive. I mean social services liaison, we had police liaison, we had everything and everything just really tied together. So that's how it got started. From there, when I graduated, I did a fellowship with OPDV, which is the New York State Office of Prevention of Domestic Violence. And that was a two-year fellowship that allowed me to work directly with youth, 12 to 24 years of age and their parents if I had to.

So now we're really getting into the comprehensive generational trauma of domestic violence. I went into schools, I did a lot of programming in schools, our local boys and girls club. I worked a lot with New York State SNUG, which at the time was Troy and Albany. So they were a gun violence prevention program, which are also credible messengers. And so that role really doing direct services going into the homes of my participants or clients, we use them interchangeably, and really helping them, I mean, that role had me assist sitting down in the hospital with my clients while they're getting rape kits. I mean, it really didn't get as intricate and detailed as that. And then from there I actually wrote a grant for gun violence because I realized that it was a really big issue in the city I was in at the time, which was Troy, New York, Upstate New York. And I wrote a grant and we ended up getting awarded for that.

I applied for the job because just because you write the grant doesn't mean you're going to get the position, but I applied and so I did get the job. And so that position had to do with the intersection of domestic violence and firearms. And that role really catapulted my direct service work because though I was

supposed to be removed and do a lot of facilitation with law enforcement, local sexual assault providers, sheriffs, and just so many different service providers, I couldn't remove myself. Domestic violence and firearm violence was rampant. This was right before the COVID into COVID where I had this position. So we had to really shift our way of doing outreach. We did panels, we did virtual sessions, we did a lot of drives for not just pandemic needs and COVID needs, but really just the needs of the community. And so from there I came back to Metropolitan New York where I also did direct service work with a lot of at-risk youth, which this age group was different.

So this was now 18 to 24. And so now I'm working with a lot more younger parents. People that are coming home back into the community, maybe they just got out, they're looking for a job, they're looking for services, they're looking for vocational programs. It was a lot. It's not easy, like you said, facilitating different, a team of so many different service providers. It's a lot of relationship building. Being in the CVI space, it takes, so. If you're not a social butterfly or you can't be a social butterfly, it might not be the space for you because it really takes your character and a lot of personality to really blend with different people. How you may present yourself with law enforcement, maybe different from how you present yourself with your local mom and pop grassroots organizations. You never want to be too intimidating and you always just either way just want to show your human side. Because that's who we're serving at the end of the day, humans.

Doing direct service work is impactful because you can see the change in the progression from positive relationship building and when appropriate service providers are able to come together, it really improves the service delivery. Instead of sending one person to three different organizations, especially maybe transportation is a barrier.

It's so much better when we're able to work together as service providers and have it be a one-stop shop for somebody that is going through it or maybe they're under the poverty line or they don't have the resources that they need, maybe they're just coming out and now they're reentering the community, whatever the situation may be, they're a victim of crime. It's very important to make the service delivery easy for the individual. When it's not, that's when you really lose them. So you mentioned shared goals and I feel like when you talk about having the police and law enforcement, all of these different programs and service providers and researchers at the table when your team is comprehensive, and that's not easy and we don't talk about that and the work that we're trying to do behind the scenes and try to get everybody at the same table.

The one thing that's important is compromise and making sure that everybody's voices are heard. Believe it or not, the community is watching this, so when their favorite service provider that they go to for maybe substance use, they're seeing them interact positively with somebody that they also go to maybe at the local food drive that makes them more comfortable.

Anica Steive:

I love what you said about communication and that young people and families are watching you and it translates. We found that in our work. And service providers coming together, that was really the purpose of the multidisciplinary team. You just explained it so well. For our listeners, I think just to flesh out some details, so for context Demaxia, suppose you're working with a young person as a case manager and you and your agency are part of the multidisciplinary team. You would do your work with the young person, building relationship, learning about their goals and needs, doing that street outreach piece. Then say on Tuesdays you attend the multidisciplinary team meeting. The team staffs that young person and you bring

their voice to the table with your guidance the team creates a service plan based on the young person's goals as well as what they need.

Suppose this young person is also on probation. The probation counselor is at the meeting and discusses any needs related to court. One of those is substance use counseling. So we look around the table and set up a referral to the Spanish-speaking agency that would be the best fit. Just like you said, we don't want to send people to three different places. So if you'd made a referral to maybe the agency you always call because you're super busy or the probation counselor then also makes a referral to another agency, we can avoid that by just staffing this as a team and creating a plan that we're all on board with. So you also bring up at our meeting that the young person's little sister needs a new bed and the substance use provider has funding to fulfill basic needs, so they'll follow up on that when the young person meets with them. The young person told you that one of their teachers kicks them out of class frequently, so they decided to stop going.

Thankfully, the school counselor is also at our meeting, and so we discuss a plan to address maybe the teacher's strategies so that school counselor will go talk with them and then follow up with you and maybe you can talk with the young person, maybe have a school meeting and get some next steps in place for trying to mitigate that situation. And then as we were finishing the plan, law enforcement mentions that while they haven't seen this young person doing anything wrong, they did notice them at a local area several nights in a row really late into the night. So just as an FYI for you, and so on.

The critical piece here, as you mentioned so well, is the role of the convener. This is something that so often gets missed, but it's so pivotal. In the day-to-day grind of service provision and work with young people and dealing with trauma service providers are busy, resources are limited and there isn't time to make six phone calls to find the best fit service or call or meet with or use Zoom or show up to talk with each person you may or may not know is working with the young person to coordinate plans and avoid duplication. Facilitating a team like this helps to build collaboration while allowing everyone to stay in their roles and then leverage other services and resources to create the best plan for the young person and family.

Demaxia Wray:

Thank you for sharing that, Anica. One thing that really jumped out to me is your mention of translation services. You and I have talked in the past about this, just the importance of language, miscommunication or disconnections when it comes to language or even terms that are not trauma-centered or person-centered, and how they can cause challenges when implementing a program. Could you speak to how this may have come up in your CVI work?

Anica Steive:

Yes. It was big and words matter. Our listeners may have picked up on this, but I use the term group involved or group violence rather than gang, in most instances. In our experience in King County and my experience in facilitating this program, reference to gang violence or gang-involved young people created distrust, confusion, fear, skepticism and minimization of the program of the people working with it, everything we were doing around this issue. Some folks thought we had a terrible gang problem, others felt we didn't because the violence issue did not present in a way that aligned with common and historically perceived notions of gang violence. So enter the term group violence. There's a growing body of research on trends in group violence that indicates that it's more impactful to focus on groups of young people and their social networks in order to intervene and prevent community violence.

The National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College is a leading source of information on group violence. The National Network explains that focusing on whether a particular group is a gang, whether a city has gangs, whether a young person is a gang member or might be, kind of, we're not sure, is actually just an unnecessary distraction. Data shows us that small groups of individuals disproportionately contribute to or are at the highest risk of serious violence, which makes all of us less safe in our communities. So in King County, we implemented this language shift to discuss group violence and group-involved young people, which really helped us avoid the distraction of whether or not something was or wasn't a gang or if a young person was in a gang or if we were stigmatizing them or if we weren't, and just focus on the main goal, which was to collaboratively reduce community violence.

Demaxia Wray:

As many of us know, there's certainly a tension between community-based organizations that are doing the direct service work and system partners, researchers and funders. Part of that tension is around funding, but also around deeming a program successful. How did you think about success in your work? What does success really mean or what should it mean?

Anica Steive:

This question is so difficult and so necessary, and we have to spend adequate time wrestling with it. Measuring outcomes and defining what success means is something that we all struggle with across many programs, whether you work in technology or social services or law enforcement. CVI and other violence and community safety related efforts are particularly difficult. One reason is because it's impossible to measure what doesn't happen, and much of the impact of CVI work lies within what doesn't happen. Also, we can't ignore the legacy of underfunded programs for violence intervention as well as research on those efforts. Rigorous program evaluation can be intimidating and expensive, and when resources are scarce, people dedicate resources to direct service provision, which makes sense. But then we're also left with questions about success and lack of data because we haven't had funding to dedicate to program evaluation or outcome development collaboratively.

I think the main takeaway here is that we have to measure multiple things. How the program is implemented? Was it implemented as designed? How much service has been delivered? What are the tangible pieces of work that are happening as a direct result of the effort? Are young people achieving their goal related to high school completion? Are there new community partnerships formed that increase access to culturally responsive services? These are typically long-term interventions and progress is not linear. Someone once told me no data without stories and no stories without data. That stuck with me. And for CVI and other programs, we have to have both. Numbers are compelling for many, myself included, but in the face of an issue as dynamic and diverse as violence impacted by so many factors, cookie cutter approaches with precise metrics don't work. We have to communicate impact through both data and story.

While crime trends and violence statistics are an important data point, they are impacted by a myriad of factors and while they should certainly be tracked and assessed, they may not be the best indicator of whether a program is successful during its first or second or fourth year of implementation. In addition, I would say that we also need expand what we define as successful and be willing to engage with programs to determine how they define success and measure the impact of their work from their perspective. Metrics should be collaboratively designed by those doing the work and not prescribed by funders.

One additional thing to note is collective outcomes and shifting the funder narrative to incentivize collaboration and collective outcomes. When we were working as a team, we discovered that some partners were reluctant to make referrals because there was this perception that if the team achieved an outcome, say helped a young person complete a job interview, the specific provider and agency wouldn't be able to report that as an outcome in their agency grant reporting.

We worked to shift that to acknowledging that collective outcomes of the team could and should be reported by all agencies at the table, like you were mentioning earlier about working collectively and the service provision is then higher quality. If the young person achieved something because of the services provided and the work we were doing together as a team, that is a shared outcome and should be reported by everyone as applicable. This also requires what I mentioned at the very beginning, which is relationships and collaboration. Relationships among providers are important because as you build trust, we found that people were more willing to work towards a shared goal. It's also critical that funders and system partners support and encourage this multidisciplinary collaborative approach so that we can work toward reducing competitiveness and resource scarcity.

A previous colleague of ours said, relationship is the intervention, consistency is the key. And I think this is applicable to both direct service provision to young people as well as what it takes to facilitate, convene, and work collaboratively with providers and system level partners to achieve shared outcomes. I'm curious from your perspective, Demaxia, how did you perceive success during your direct service work and what is your reaction to relationship as the intervention consistency as the key?

Demaxia Wray:

Anica, you're asking all the juicy questions today, so great question. Success to me is like beauty. I feel that it's really in the eye of the beholder. For some graduating from high school is not a success, but they see it rather as a requirement. Like, "Oh, you're a teenager, you're supposed to go to school." But they're not taking into consideration, not every youth is coming from a silver spoon, so their experiences may look a little different. So for some of the youth I worked with, graduating and even living to the age of 18 was a blessing. Perhaps they were first-generation graduates. So to me that is a success, even if they're not going to school and they didn't graduate from high school with a diploma, but maybe they come to my program and I'm getting them hooked up with a local GED service provider or maybe ESL, right?

I had a lot of clients or participants, whatever word you want to use, I know sometimes we use them interchangeably depending on what field we're in, but I had a lot of participants that would come to me and they were just migrating to America. So maybe they were only here for a year or two. So how can I send that youth to finish their GED when English is not their first language? Let's hook them up with ESL, then let's hook them up with GED once they grasp the language and they're able to understand, or if possible, can we put them in a GED class that also helps them learn English. Can we do a one-stop shop? So to me, I really count all the small wins over here. Success in any CVI space or milestone is really just any steps that are made or any effort even that are taken to just move ahead for the individual. getting a job, keeping a job.

And so what barriers are there for maybe one of my participants not keeping that job. Oh, you need transportation. All right, so let's hook you up with a metro card, but not just any metro card, let's hook you up with a service provider that could provide you with monthly metro cards. Now you're able to get to your vocational program. Now you're able to get to school. Now you're able to stay in school and stay in your program, successfully complete it. Now you graduate. Okay, now you're making good money. So I still keep in contact with some of my participants and they're like, "Oh, Ms. Wray, I'm an electrician now." I'm like,

"Yeah, so you know what? Now I can retire. Now you can come take care of me." To me, that's success. But I also think it's important as CVI providers, we lean a lot on evidence-based research, but most success stories from my experience are formed through just that expertise and just that hands-on.

So improvising, thinking quick on your feet is so essential. There's been many times where it's like, "Wait, you got the job interview, but why can't you go?" Oh, my god, you can't go to your job interview with your hair looking like that. So now I have to call around, okay, I found a beauty school. The beauty school could do your hair. Do you need clothing? No, I don't have any clothing. Okay, now we could hook you up with just for success. It's so important to have a service provider that could really provide your youth with clothing, haircuts, anything, hygiene, sanitary. Because when you look at violent trends, a lot of it comes from resources and lack of resources. But listen, Anica, we could go on this all day. It's so interesting to me that we both have experience doing CVI in rural and suburban areas. Oftentimes, especially with CVI, the focus is always on inner cities, urban areas, but with a reluctance to think about suburban and rural groups and community violence. Do you think this attitude is changing?

Anica Steive:

I love this question because it's very intimately tied to when I first got into this work. So per historical trends, many, many resources were focused on the City of Seattle, and at that time the city of Seattle's population was about 750,000 people. Violence intervention work was focused on historically violent neighborhoods in the City of Seattle. And the work that I managed had been started in an effort to specifically focus on the suburban communities in King County. And so King County is the largest county in Washington, and it's the county that encompasses Seattle and the surrounding areas. And at the time, King County was home to about 2 million people. The suburban communities were struggling to find solutions to a violence problem that they were having without coordination or resources. And resources were continuing to go into the inner city of Seattle, even when job location and other factors had forced people into the suburban areas of King County.

I think this also is embroiled within racial coding and what we think of when we talk about urban and inner cities and what we think of when we think of violence and who the victims are. And suburban communities are typically coded as white or affluent. And so we're not quite there in a place to acknowledge that no, actually this is happening there. And so what the suburban communities of King County we're finding were incredible resource deserts, complete areas of disproportionate poverty and violence impacts and youth and young people being affected by violence and group violence. So language also played a big role here, again, because where we perceive or assume that gang violence will occur, and that's in inner city areas. And so we really capitalized on our shift to group violence because that's what the suburban communities were seeing, and that's what the data was actually telling us, which was that violence is actually very mobile and it was highly concentrated in many areas across King County.

So that was in 2013 to 2017, and ultimately it became clear that we needed to work across the region and coordinate efforts, which we eventually did. And that was when we saw the most success in implementing a collaborative effort. But I hope that that narrative continues to change because I think we need to look at what the problem is in our communities and address it as such rather than take notions of what it should look like or we think it should look like or what we've seen it look like in other cities, because that's not actually what's happening in front of us. So the problem presents very, very differently whether you're in Los Angeles County or in New York, where you did most of your CVI work, or in King County, Washington. Do you have thoughts about that and your work and how that looked from your experience?

Demaxia Wray:

Anica, you know I always have thoughts. Community violence impacts the community, but due to a larger, I think, disparate rates of violence in urban communities, the emphasis is always going to be more, and the focus is always going to be more on urban communities rather than suburban and rural communities. However, that does not mean that those communities do not experience community violence in some way, shape or form. I feel like it may look slightly different from an urban setting, but the approach for violence prevention should be tailored to the community's needs. An approach that might be effective in an urban setting may not be effective in a rural or a suburban setting and vice versa. For example, gun violence statistically may look different in each setting and demographically speaking, because you mentioned race as well. Firearm perpetrated suicide rates in rural areas are 28% higher than urban areas.

And in urban areas, community and gun violence perpetrated by youth under 21 is a way larger issue now in suburban areas. We are now seeing a big influx of mass shootings. All of these are different types of community violence, gang violence, firearm violence with suicide and even mass shootings. We're seeing a big influx of that. Those are all different types of community violence. They could all happen in each area, but where are we seeing it the most? And so I feel like when it comes to that CVI approach, the needs of each community are different. It doesn't take away from the fact that violence is present. And the resources and prevention should be tailored to meet the needs of those communities.

Before we end, Anica, I just want to say community violence is connected to community and really just ultimately systemic factors that can and must be addressed to help individuals holistically. So when we talk about systemic racism, poverty, generational trauma, these are all of the things that have to be addressed in order to see just efficiency. I cannot stress the importance of employing credible messengers or staff with lived experience to do CVI work. If you want efficiency, lived experience is going to be the way. No one else is going to be tied to the community and have a stake like someone that lives there, is from there or grew up there. And going back to my own personal experience, I lived in both of the cities or towns, whatever you want to call them, that I served. When I served the youth the first time I lived there. So I understood. Yes, I heard the shooting that happened last night. Yes, it impacts me as well. Same with my second direct service work. So the impact a credible individual has versus an outsider or assistant partner is tremendous in reducing violence.

And the data shows it. It has reduced violence. CVI work has reduced violence in cities nationwide by 30%. In addition to improving the relationship dynamic of the communities that they serve, when someone is employed there that has a lived experience and that they're credible. In addition, when it's implemented and planned comprehensively, the relationship between the community and law enforcement can also be improved. Their roles serve as a liaison in a sense, but extends beyond just community violence interruption or reduction. For me, I feel like that job fair, that food drive, that community barbecue or that community Thanksgiving dinner or any event or distribution of resources that is helping the community holistically beyond just the violence, you're providing a warm meal to somebody that maybe didn't know where their next one was coming from.

And most importantly, just in my experience, when the community sees that the people at the table or a part of these groups or initiatives are modeling great behavior and they're working together, not only is it a great feeling for us as service providers, but it's a great feeling for them because they're paying attention to this. Like we said earlier, they're definitely, they see it and it makes giving them the services so much easier when they see that, "Oh wow, law enforcement is talking to the local CVI program? Yes, it doesn't always have to be that tension. Now I'll go say hi to Officer Mike.

And believe it or not, though recruitment and retention is a big issue nationwide with law enforcement officers, one thing that I noticed when I was working and doing direct service was most of the law enforcement, especially the younger ones that are coming on the force, they might be the same age as your CVI workers, they might have went to the same high school together. And that's really what community is. They all went to the same school in the same city that they're serving. So that relationship building looks a little bit different. Anica, what is that quote that you said about relationship building? Please let the listeners hear this one.

Anica Steive:

Relationship is the intervention and consistency is the key.

Demaxia Wray:

That's the razzle-dazzle for me, that's the key to CVI. It's a public health issue. So when it's addressed like that, the same way we approach the pandemic and the same way we approach any other health crisis, that's the way to it. Treatment, prevention, cure.

Anica Steive:

Absolutely. I love what you said about credible messengers and leveraging people's relationships in community and that it takes everyone. And I also really think you highlighted something that's so true in my experience and in the work as a whole, which is when people see service providers and folks modeling good behavior, it does translate, it does carry forward, and it does help them feel more of a sense of support and as though there's a team working together who is invested in their success and wellbeing, and I think that's really impactful.

Demaxia Wray:

Anica, I don't know. You and I might need a whole CVI series or something, because we are so passionate about this topic. We could literally go on and on and on. But I just want to thank you, before we go, being on this podcast episode. This has been a great discussion and it's really interesting to share our unique experiences both with each other and with our podcast listeners.

Anica Steive:

Thank you so much for having me. This has been excellent, and I look forward to more conversations.