



# Learning from Lived Experiences to Identify Gun Violence Solutions

Gun violence is a pressing problem in the United States, disproportionately impacting urban Black communities. This brief highlights the importance of learning from community perspectives, particularly young Black men in urban areas, to address the gun violence crisis in urban environments that is currently overshadowed by media attention to mass and school shootings.

## BACKGROUND

Gun violence rates in the United States are alarmingly high, surpassing those of other developed nations. Disparities exist, with Black individuals experiencing disproportionately higher victimization rates. The economic and emotional costs of gun violence further emphasize the need for effective interventions.

## KEY FINDINGS

Through interviews with young Black men in impacted communities, key findings emerged regarding exposure to violence, factors contributing to violence, gun possession, and the impact of violence on mental well-being.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### › Address systemic inequities

Sustainable progress toward reducing gun violence in urban environments will require a whole-of-government approach to enact equitable policies in economic opportunity, housing, family, and education, among other areas.

### › Improve Police Training and Community-Police Relations

Improved police recruitment measures, such as validated psychometric assessments; innovative training strategies, such as gamification; and increased interactions with police in safe settings with the aim of increasing understanding and trust are a few of strategies to improve policing.

### › Increase Community Involvement in Gun Research

Regularly listening to and learning from those most closely situated to the problem to learn what interventions are most desired is an impactful form of scholarship that should be used more often. Additionally, research into gun violence more broadly should be expanded.

### › Enact Data Driven Gun Law Reforms

Comprehensive gun law reforms are needed but they must be situation specific, driven by data and the lived experience, and coupled with policies aimed at improving opportunities for those most impacted by gun violence.

### › Implement Behavioral Interventions

A holistic approach that prioritizes additional evidence-supported interventions, such as mental-health treatment, behavioral-threat assessment, and trauma-informed firearm intervention and prevention programs, should be applied in tandem with the aforementioned gun-specific policies.

### › Increase Political Will and Understanding

Garnering greater support for some aspects of these interventions at the federal, state, and local levels is necessary, though realistic interventions exist and should be implemented while we simultaneously work to achieve greater support.

## CONCLUSION

By incorporating community perspectives and evidence-based solutions, policymakers can effectively address the gun violence crisis. Urgent action is needed to implement comprehensive reforms that support the most impacted communities.

## GUN VIOLENCE IN THE U.S. IS

**25x HIGHER THAN OTHER DEVELOPED NATIONS**



## ONE PERSON DIES OF GUN VIOLENCE EVERY



**THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY HAD LOST A FAMILY MEMBER OR CLOSE FRIEND TO GUN VIOLENCE**

**ABOUT HALF REPORTED HAVING EXPOSURE TO A GUN BEFORE THEY WERE 10 YEARS OLD**

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