

ONE DETROIT PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE:

ASSESSING NEEDS TO INFORM GOAL SELECTION



JANUARY 2024

**PREPARED BY:
JULIE M. KRUPA**

ONE DETROIT PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE: ASSESSING NEEDS TO INFORM GOAL SELECTION

January 2024

Julie M. Krupa, Ph.D.

Julie M. Krupa is an Assistant Professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. Her research focuses on program evaluation and juvenile justice, primarily disparities in health needs and processing of justice-involved youth and system responses to violence. Her work has appeared in *Criminal Justice & Behavior*, *Crime & Delinquency*, and *Justice Evaluation Journal*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Introduction
02	Scope of the Problem: Violent Crime
05	Current Study
06	Results
12	Mission Statement
13	Potential Goals
14	Conclusion
15	References

INTRODUCTION

Violence is a complex issue that affects thousands of individuals, and in turn, their families, schools, and communities. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 15-24 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020). To increase public safety and support revitalization, the City of Detroit has implemented numerous violence reduction initiatives. The One Detroit partnership is an effort to reinvigorate the Detroit One initiative to reduce violence that was launched in 2013. One Detroit is a “comprehensive violence reduction initiative that links evidence-based strategies with a coalition of stakeholders in the community, government, and law enforcement. The core of the initiative is partnership” (One Detroit Violence Reduction Partnership, n.d.). The One Detroit partnership operates based on principles of focus, balance, and fairness to reduce violence while fostering legitimacy through engagement, coordination, and action.

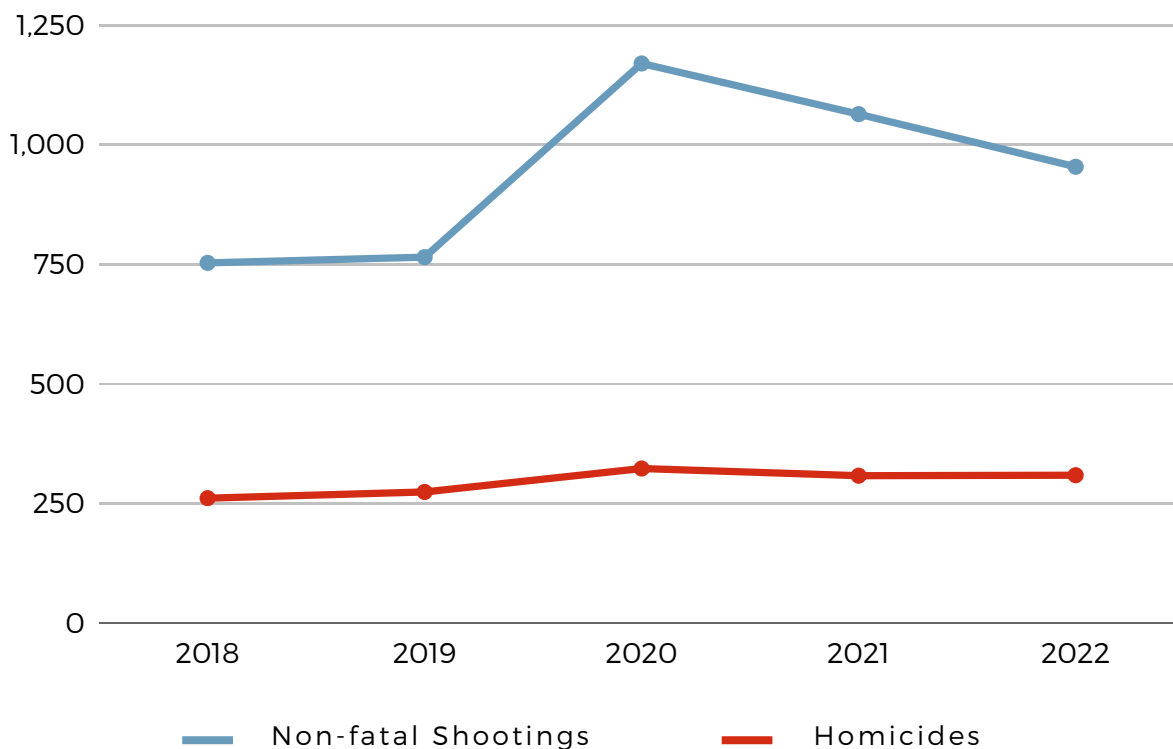
The One Detroit Prevention Subcommittee focuses on balancing investigation and prosecution efforts with outreach strategies designed to prevent crime from occurring. The Prevention Subcommittee includes members representing criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations, and policy makers.

Grounded in implementation science and action research, the current study sought to better understand barriers and facilitators associated with violence prevention and support the subcommittee in selecting a goal that will facilitate violence prevention in Detroit, MI. This was accomplished through a focus group among subcommittee members across three focal areas: defining committee objectives and purpose, defining the importance of violence prevention, and assessing existing system capacities of justice agencies and community partners to address violence. This report provides an overview of findings from the focus group. First, violent crime trends in the Midwest and Detroit are discussed, followed by an overview of the current study, results from the focus group, example mission statements, and potential goals. The report concludes with an overview of findings and recommendations for next steps.

SCOPE OF THE PROBELM: VIOLENT CRIME

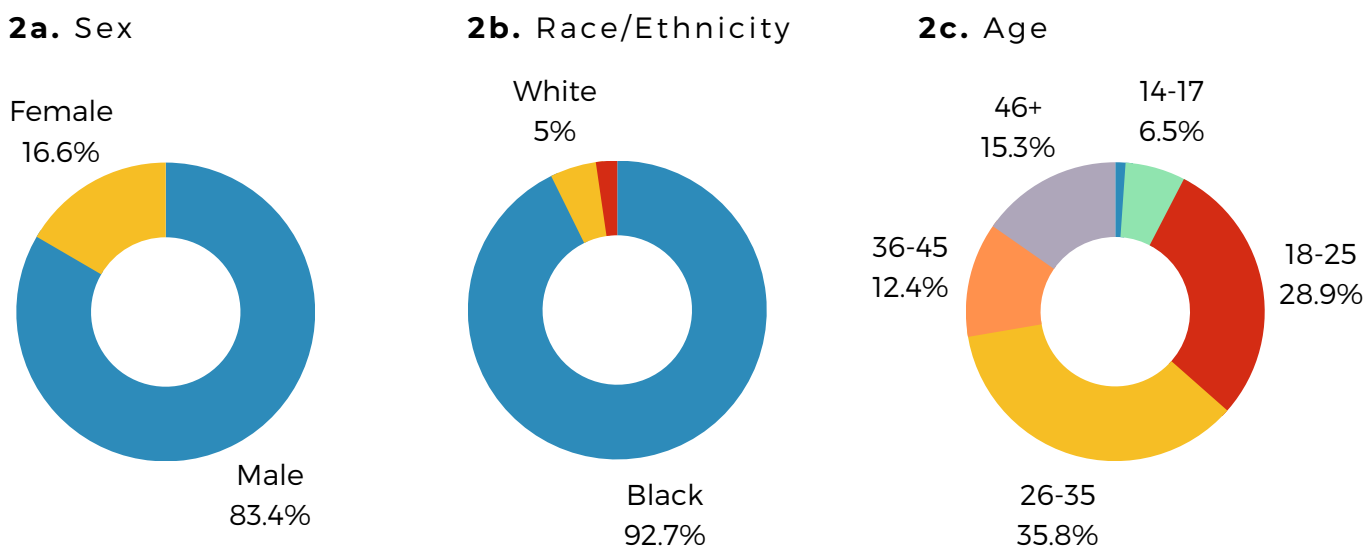
The scope of violent crime trends in the City of Detroit affects how the One Detroit Prevention Subcommittee will approach future prevention and intervention efforts. For the purposes of this subcommittee, violence is defined as homicides and non-fatal shootings. Information on homicide and non-fatal shootings was provided by the Detroit Police Department. As shown in figure 1, there was an increase in both homicides and non-fatal shootings from 2019-2020. From 2020 to 2022 there was an 18.4% decrease in non-fatal shootings and a 4.6% decrease in homicides. Non-fatal shootings have been decreasing since 2020 but are still elevated relative to 2018-2019 figures. Homicides decreased from 2020-2021 and had little change from 2021-2022. In the past decade, Detroit has taken important steps in reducing violent crime, victimization, and enhancing public safety. Elevated levels of violent victimization in 2020 and 2021 coincide with national-level increases in violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 2022, both homicides and non-fatal shootings are lower than in 2020, when the pandemic vastly altered social norms. These statistics highlight the ongoing importance of violence reduction efforts, such as One Detroit.

Figure 1. Detroit Homicide and Non-Fatal Shootings, 2018-2022



Victim characteristics illustrate who may be at higher risk for violent victimization in Detroit. Figures 2a-2c illustrate characteristics of homicide and non-fatal shooting victims in 2022. In 2022, most homicide and non-fatal shooting victims were male (83%), Black (93%), and between the ages of 18-35 (65%). Please note, homicide and non-fatal shooting victim characteristics are substantively similar from 2018-2022.

Figure 2. Homicide and Non-Fatal Shooting Victim Characteristics



Further contextualizing violence in Detroit, table 1 illustrates the most recent homicide rates for select, large Midwestern cities. Among these cities, Detroit's homicide rates rank among the highest. Similar to trends of all selected Midwest cities, Detroit experienced a 17.3% increase in homicides from 2019 to 2020 (Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI], 2023). Positive trends in homicide during this period were seen nationally with a 30% increase in the rate of homicide (i.e., from 6 to 7.8 per 100,000) in the United States (CDC, 2021). Studies have found that the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with increased rates of firearm-related incidents and deaths in the U.S. Worsening economic conditions, psychological strain, and trauma associated with the pandemic, combined with an increase in firearm sales, could have potentially increased the risk of firearm violence in association with the pandemic (Donnelly et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2022).

While all selected Midwest cities experienced an increase in homicides in 2020, Detroit experienced the lowest rate increase and is below the national rate increase. From 2020-2021, Detroit had a 7.8% reduction in the rate of homicides. Although this reduction cannot be directly attributed to violence reduction strategies in Detroit, it suggests that existing efforts are worth a more critical examination to better understand recent reductions in violent crime.

Table 1. Homicide Rates for Select Midwestern Cities, 2018-2021

	Detroit	Cincinnati	Cleveland	Indianapolis	Milwaukee	St. Louis
2018	42.1	18.7	23.8	18.4	17.5	65.2
2019	45.1	21.6	27.6	16.5	17.2	67.6
2020	52.9	29.7	44.2	24.5	33.9	91.8
2021	48.8	29.1	45.6	27.1	34.6	65.9
% Change 2019 -2020	+17.3%	+37.5%	+60.1%	+48.4%	+97.1%	+35.8%
% Change 2020-2021	-7.8%	-2.0%	+3.2%	+10.6%	+2.1%	-28.2%

Note: Homicide frequencies were compiled from the FBI (2023) Data Explorer. Rates are calculated for every 100,000 persons based on 2022 U.S. Census population estimates.

CURRENT STUDY

A focus group was conducted with One Detroit Prevention Subcommittee members ($n = 12$). A facilitator guided group discussion through open-ended questions that focused on three key topics: defining committee objectives and purpose, defining the importance of violence prevention, and assessing existing system capacities of justice agencies and community partners to address violence. A focus group approach was necessary to explore the issues of importance to subcommittee members, in their own vocabulary, generating priorities areas/goals for the subcommittee. A key priority of the study was to “empower” subcommittee members to become an active participant in the goal selection process for the Prevention Subcommittee. The focus group was held at Second Ebenezer Church, refreshments were provided, and participants were sitting in a semi-circle formation.

A strength of the study is the representation of stakeholders from a wide range of institutions which have the ability to impact crime and violence. This includes participation from criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations, and policy makers. Specifically, participants represented the United States Attorney’s Office, Detroit Police Department, Michigan Department of Corrections, City of Detroit Mayor’s Office, Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, Black Family Development, Inc. (i.e., a community-based service provider), Ceasefire Outreach, and the faith-based community. The focus group was conducted in September 2023. Participation was voluntary. The facilitator used an informal discussion method using a semi-structured interview protocol. The session lasted approximately 120 minutes. Prior to engaging the group in discussion, the session began with an overview of violent crime trends, victim characteristics, and an overview of the goal selection process. The facilitator took notes throughout the session. Descriptive thematic analysis was utilized to summarize and identify themes in the data (Clarke et al., 2015).

RESULTS

First, participants were asked to define the purpose of the committee, discuss how the committee would accomplish its goals, and the reasons for wanting to prevent violence. The intent of this exercise was to get participants thinking about a mission statement for the Prevention Subcommittee. Regarding the purpose of the committee, four major themes emerged:

- 01 **Prevent Violence**
- 02 **Provide Resources to Community Residents**
- 03 **Seek Solutions Collaboratively**
- 04 **Address the Culture of Violence**

There were multiple mechanisms through which the committee would seek to accomplished the aforementioned priorities. These largely fell into five categories illustrated in figure 3.

Figure 3. Thematic Areas of How the Committee will Accomplish it's Goals

Implement a New Intervention	Interagency Collaboration	Leverage Existing Resources/Programs	Identify Causes of Violence	Investment
• Education intervention • Credible messengers • Family support network • Community clean-ups • Mental health program	• Organized, systematic communication among partners • Community engagement • A coordinated approach • Create formal connections between various stakeholders/organizations	• Create a comprehensive guide of current resources and communicate that information to the community • Complement other strategies focused on violence • Additional training/resources for existing programs	• Mentality towards violence • Subculture of violence • Why youth join gangs • Role of social media • A generational challenge • Survival mechanism	• Buy-in from stakeholders • Reallocate resources to important efforts • Refunneling resources to help invest in the community • Media engagement • Support from Detroit Pistons

As seen in figure 3, the five overarching themes that emerged were: 1) implementing a new intervention or program; 2) interagency collaboration; 3) leverage an existing resource or program; 4) identify causes of violence and; 5) investment strategies. A sample of specific items that were mentioned during the focus group are provided for each theme. For example, participants mentioned various programming that might serve the community such as education and mental health programming. Multiple participants highlighted existing programs and resources, such as Detroit Ceasefire and services offered by Black Family Development, Inc. Related to this theme of leveraging existing programs was discussion about providing additional training or resources for existing programs to more effectively address violence.

There was a considerable amount of discussion about “credible messengers” as a mechanism to prevent violence and interrupt cycles of violence. This particular example can be seen as falling into multiple themes illustrated in figure 3. For example, the Ceasefire Outreach Team provides street outreach and works to de-escalate situations and prevent them from becoming violent and can be viewed as credible messengers (i.e., leveraging an existing program). The Outreach Team often collaborates with multiple agencies (i.e., interagency collaboration) and could potentially benefit from an investment in resources (i.e., investment). Several considerations emerged when discussing credible messengers as a mechanism to prevent violence:

- 01 **Defining who is a credible messenger**
 - 02 **Influence of credible messengers is multi-dimensional**
 - 03 **How to incentivize credible messengers to keep assisting with violence prevention**
 - 04 **Burnout among credible messengers**
 - 05 **Professionalism of work (e.g., training, defining roles and responsibilities)**
 - 06 **Supporting credible messengers (e.g., physical work space)**
-

Participants were asked what were their reasons for wanting to prevent violence in Detroit, MI. Responses fell into four overarching categories or themes:



Increase Health and Safety in the Short- and Long-term



Build Safer Communities



Promote Economic Development and Social Mobility



Promote Generational Stability

Following the discussion about the subcommittee's mission, a preliminary assessment of needs was conducted. The purpose of this phase of the focus group was to describe and explain existing capacities of the justice system, government, and community to prevent violence. This includes identifying who is currently involved in the initiative, who needs to be involved, strengths, weaknesses, and priority areas for improving violence prevention.

Current partners in One Detroit Prevention include: the U.S. Attorney's Office, City of Detroit Mayor's Office, Detroit Police Department, Black Family Development, Inc., Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, Michigan State University, faith-based organizations, and Detroit Ceasefire Outreach Team.

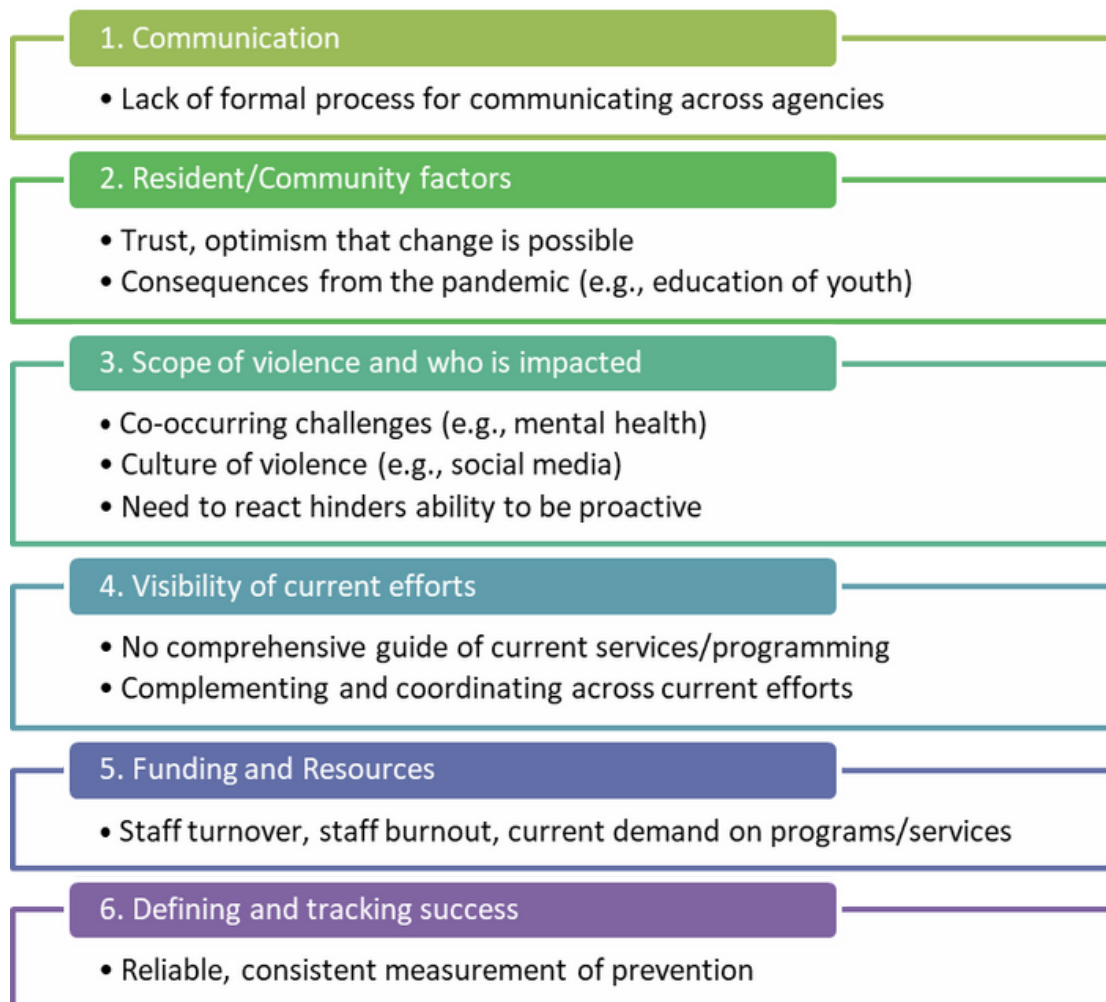


Participants identified additional organizations/agencies that could help strengthen the One Detroit Prevention Subcommittee through their involvement:

- Wayne County Health Department
- Community Relations Council
- Detroit Public Schools
- Local Charter Schools
- Community Violence Intervention Teams (i.e., ShotStoppers)

Participants were then asked to discuss the current challenges associated with preventing violence in Detroit, MI. Figure 4 illustrates the six themes that emerged from the focus group discussion accompanied by examples.

Figure 4. Challenges Associated with Violence Prevention



Participants identified several challenges. For example, participants noted that communication across agencies was a challenge since there was no formal process in place for sharing information across the agencies and organizations that engage in violence prevention. During the focus group, it was noted that the Detroit Police Department had developed a good system for communicating across Detroit Ceasefire partners and this might serve as an example for the One Detroit Prevention Subcommittee. The lack of visibility or comprehensive knowledge of existing efforts was also identified as an obstacle. Participants noted that there is no comprehensive guide of current services or programming to be utilized by organizations or community residents. Funding and resources needed to prevent violence was a documented challenge. This included mentions of staff turnover, burnout among staff due to the demanding nature of certain positions or a shortage of staff ultimately increasing the duties of remaining workers. This also included demand on current programs and services that do not have adequate resources to service all those who are in need.

Next, participants were asked to discuss current strengths in preventing violence. Results are captured in figure 5.

Figure 5. Current Strengths in Violence Prevention

Collaboration	Motivation and Experience	Current Programming	Crime Tracking
• Across agencies • Across resources • Open communication	• Shared mindset • Realistic expectations (e.g., more information is needed) • Buy-in from leadership	• Ceasefire (custom notifications) • Youth diversion • Curfews • Black Family Development services	• Detroit Police Department crime incident tracking • Gunshot detection software • Crime Gun Intelligence Center

Four themes emerged during the discussion of current strengths. This included collaboration, motivation and experience, current programming, and crime tracking. Participants noted there was a strong motivation to address violence, that leadership from a range of organizations were actively engaged in this effort, and that subcommittee members had realistic expectations for how to proceed. For example, participants acknowledged that more information was likely needed in identifying mechanisms to prevent violence.

The ability to identify violence through existing crime tracking was another strength discussed by the participants. This included mentions of Detroit Police Department crime incident tracking, as well as complementary strategies such as gunshot detection software which has been implemented in portions of the city and the Crime Gun Intelligence Center which tracks firearms and related evidence. Current programming was another documented strength. Figure 5 is not an exhaustive list of current programs aimed at preventing violence. Other programs mentioned were the Brotherhood and Sisterhood mentoring program, Police Community Summits, Detroit Police Athletic League, PeaceKeepers, Pure Heart, Say Play, Better Together, the Explorers, ShotStoppers, among others.

Next, based on findings from the focus group, example mission statements and potential goals are provided for consideration.

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is meant to define the committee's purpose, state how the committee accomplishes its goals, and identify why its efforts matter. Two potential mission statements were developed during the focus group. These are below.

“Save lives immediately through the prevention of violence, while working to effect the culture of violence”

“Intervening on violence today, changing culture to prevent violence tomorrow”

POTENTIAL GOALS

This report is meant to provide meaningful context on next steps for the One Detroit Prevention Subcommittee, including goal selection. Not all goals are the same, some will lead to action and provide opportunities for success. Others are too abstract or beyond current capacities or conflict with other agency initiatives. Ultimately, goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (S-M-A-R-T) (Bogue, 2013). Subcommittee members should identify possible goals, determine goal feasibility, identify steps to reach the goal, determine the feasibility of associated steps, clarify the goal(s) and develop an action plan. An ideal goal can be broken down into smaller action steps, each of which can be expressed in terms of the S-M-A-R-T model.

A list of potential goals is below. These goals were identified through the focus groups process, either directly by participants or informed by the discussion of existing system capacities, strengths, challenges, and priority areas for violence prevention. The list of potential goals is followed by additional the considerations for the subcommittee. This is not an exhaustive list of potential goals. Potential goals include:

01

Create a formal system of communication between agencies and organizations

02

Create a guide or resource map of all services/programs available to the community

03

Define roles and responsibilities of subcommittee members

04

Identify credible messengers

05

Further assess scope of violence to inform allocation of resources

CONCLUSION

The current study sought to better understand barriers and facilitators associated with violence prevention and support the One Detroit Prevention Subcommittee in selecting a goal that will facilitate violence prevention in Detroit, MI. This was accomplished by conducting a semi-structured focus group interview with subcommittee members. The discussion focused on three topical areas: defining committee objectives and purpose, documenting the importance of violence prevention, and assessing existing system capacities of justice agencies and community partners to address violence.

The list of potential goals included in this report is not exhaustive and the subcommittee should convene to discuss additional goals that might be of interest. Once a goal is identified, it is recommended that the subcommittee work through the feasibility of that goal and its associated steps using the S-M-A-R-T model. Ideally, the progress toward each step/goal will be tracked over time and adjustments are made based on data driven decision making.

REFERENCES

Bogue, R. (2013). Use S.M.A.R.T. goals to launch management by objectives plan. TechRepublic.
<http://www.techrepublic.com/article/use-smart-goals-to-launch-management-by-objectives-plan/>

Centers for Disease Control. (2020). Leading causes of death visualization tool. Retrieved from <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/data/lcd/home>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021, October 6). New CDC/NCHS Data Confirm Largest One-Year Increase in U.S. Homicide Rate in 2020.
https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2021/202110.htm

Clarke, V., Braun, V., & Hayfield, N. (2015). Thematic analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 222-248). Sage.

Donnelly, M. R., Grigorian, A., Swentek, L., Arora, J., Kuza, C. M., Inaba, K., ... & Nahmias, J. (2022). Firearm violence against children in the United States: trends in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. *The journal of trauma and acute care surgery*, 92(1), 65-68.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2023). Crime Data Explorer.
<https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>

One Detroit Violence Reduction Partnership. (n.d.). Overview of One Detroit Violence Reduction Partnership.

Sun, S., Cao, W., Ge, Y., Siegel, M., & Wellenius, G. A. (2022). Analysis of firearm violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in the US. *JAMA network open*, 5(4), e229393-e229393. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.9393