



Prevention Center

Concept Paper Presented by



FAMILY CRISIS CENTER
OF BALTIMORE COUNTY



Safe Futures Collaborative Overview

The Maryland Safe Futures Collaborative is a collective impact project focused on improving service coordination among state and local agencies and regional service providers and filling critical service gaps in support of those impacted by intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and/or sex trafficking (relational violence).

This is a cross-sector collaborative effort has been guided by nonprofit, public and private leaders including funders, advocates, service providers and people with lived experience as survivors.

Safe Futures Collaborative model for victim-centered collective impact brings together five agencies making up each knowledge center:

Backbone – YWCA of Annapolis & Anne Arundel County. State Futures Collaborative design team and guiding coalition.

Empowerment Center – Mid-shore Council on Family Violence. Support and empower survivors on their journey to improve self-sufficiency and break the cycle of violence in families.

Prevention Center – Family Crisis Center of Baltimore City. Stopping violence before it starts.

Response Center – Turn Around. Crisis response once violence has occurred.

Knowledge Center – House of Ruth Maryland. An easily accessible clearinghouse for curated content, tools and training.



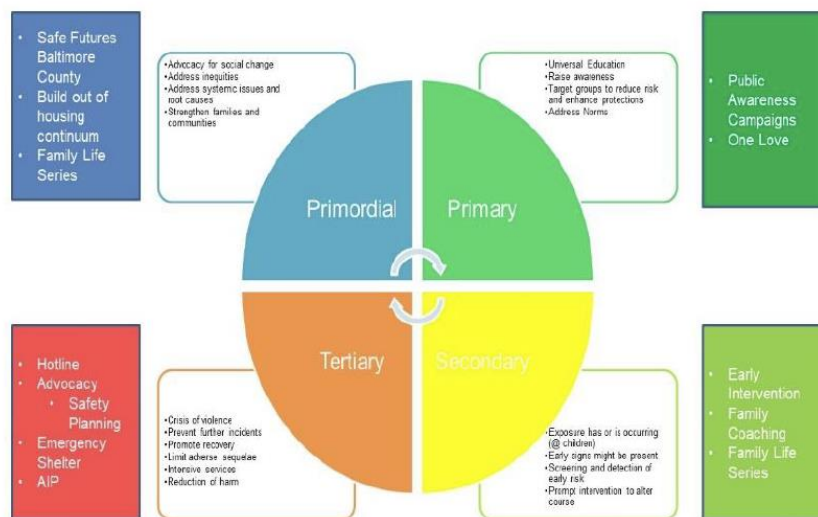


Prevention Center Overview

The Family Crisis Center of Baltimore County, Inc. has been working with families across the Baltimore region since 1978 to prevent and interrupt cycles of violence. Our founders recognized that children who are exposed to high levels of conflict and violence between their parents are more likely to experience challenges as they mature. Our initial efforts to engage the family system and work to mitigate the impacts of entrenched family patterns continue today. We believe that any reduction in violence behaviors is only possible when everyone has access to food, housing, healthcare, education and employment.

Our unique utilization of family systems theory provides a way of thinking about violence that embraces a victim-defined approach that seeks to reduce violence and create safer futures. Understanding the needs of individuals and families in a dynamic, contextual framework invites strategic engagement around root causes that contribute to patterns of conflict and violence between couples and within families. There is no tolerance for the act of violence toward another person while seeking to understand and respond to the complexities of reality that promote violent behavior. Core to our efforts are the beliefs that the individuals we assist are the best experts of their lives and their perspectives must direct our efforts.

The unique approach to the Center’s Focus is to broaden the points of access and engagement for individuals and families who are seeking a safer existence.



Aligning with Safe Futures Maryland

The Center for Prevention builds out the continuum of care by providing essential programming before and after the crisis. The Center for Prevention expands the range of offerings beyond the traditional models of tertiary level intervention and works to provide secondary level intervention. The very nature of working through a prevention lens allows for a system of care to expand its horizons and build out more robust offerings of engagement to promote essential crisis response as well as long term efforts to enhance safety.

Purpose: provide leadership, education and training in the utilization of a prevention lens that broadens the continuum of care and increases access points to services.

Goals:

- Address root causes and work to establish increased resources and easier access to foundational needs like housing, education, employment and healthcare. Train and educate on a prevention framework
- Form effective community partnerships to increase access points for engagement
- Broaden range of services beyond crisis

Our work occurs by address fundamental basic needs particularly around housing and across three key program areas:

- Early Intervention Program
- Aftercare/Ongoing Engagement Program
- New Behaviors Program

Key Learnings and Challenges

Since beginning this work, FCC has developed two key program areas that function as secondary prevention. These programs work to identify and engage individuals and families who are at risk for violence as is identifiable due to other functional patterns or previous exposure to family violence. In the Early Intervention program, key community partners are trained to notice risk factors that contribute to violence behavior and make appropriate referrals to FCC for work with a family coach. In aftercare, all individuals and families who have engaged with FCC advocates are invited to remain in contact for up to 2 years with FCC Family Coaches. A family coaching model combines the functional work of case management,



counseling and coaching support invites individuals and families to identify goals, connect to resources and have a safe space to move toward a life with decreased risk for violence.

Another key area of prevention is the work with people who have been violent toward others. In addition to the core functions of an abuser intervention program model, FCC has worked to develop a comprehensive approach that is squarely situated on promoting a reduction in violent behaviors. Our research based approach works to hold individuals accountable for their actions and engage individuals in developing increased capacity to function in safer, more effective ways in all of their relationships.

Prevention work allows individuals and families to:

- Increase safety and security
- Increase personal effectiveness in relationships, coping, and other areas of life
- Increase resilience and well-being of your family, including parenting, co-parenting, managing stress, and other areas of family life
- Improve and sustain positive connections, to social supports, family, and community

Our willingness to engage people before and after a crisis of violence provides a significant expansion of services to otherwise overwhelmed crisis response partners. Most significantly, the Baltimore County Department of Social Services Child Protection Services has found the Early Intervention Program to be an important referral source for families who have been identified with concerns of child welfare but no findings of merit. CPS workers have been

At a 6-week checkup for newborn, Ms. L expressed her worry about keeping it all together to a local pediatrician. The doctor knew about FCC's early intervention program and worked with Ms. L to seek assistance.

Ms. L arrived for her first appointment with newborn in arms and said, "When we had little baby J, all I could think about was creating a better home than the one I grew up in. Now, I can barely keep it together, my partner and I are fighting all the time because of money and I don't want my little guy to grow up the same way."

FCC family coach worked with Ms. L to identify goals and map out resources needed to reach the goals. By establishing a trusting partnership, Ms. L and her coach were able to identify a need to connect with housing assistance and ongoing workforce training for both parents.

Ms. L and her coach have stayed in touch throughout 2020 and the weekly contact has provided ongoing resource connection and safe space to think through how to manage self. It is exciting to report that the family is safer today and baby is thriving!



consistent in expressing their relief that there is a better way to respond than 'hoping things don't get too bad next time.'

Prevention is effective changes the nature of the problems that are presenting but it takes time and resources. A prevailing challenge is effectively communicating how a prevention framework is beneficial to systems of care and to individuals and families at risk for violence. Real prevention work can only be successful if basic human needs are met for all.

Knowledge + Resource Sharing

Best Practice #1 Building and sustaining community partnerships:

Engaging partners in cross-sector screening, towards early detection of low to moderate severity violence, identification of risk factors, and development of clear pathways to services

Donovan, C., Griffiths, S., Grove, N., Johnson, H., & Douglass, J. (2010). Evaluation of early intervention models for change in domestic violence: Northern Rock Foundation Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 2004-2009. Northern Rock Foundation. Available online at: <http://www.nr-foundation.org.uk/downloads/DAI-full-evaluation-report.pdf>

Best Practice #2 Providing access to early intervention programs and services:

Engaging families in which there is a risk of harm to children due to domestic violence in the home, to prevent childhood adversity and to strengthen individuals and families who are vulnerable.

Early Intervention in Domestic Violence Full Report, Early Intervention Foundation, www.eif.org.uk

Evidence Based Practices for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, Federal Database, U.S. Dept of Justice and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Complete Matrix Booklet 11FEB02.pdf (futureswithoutviolence.org)



Best Practice #3 Strengthening families through building protective factors:

Promote family coping, resilience, and well-being through promoting social connections, building parenting capacity, and facilitating access to concrete support in times of increased stress and challenge. Publications & Resources | Center for the Study of Social Policy (cssp.org).

Look Ahead

- Develop and disseminate the prevention framework.
- Develop and disseminate training content/videos for professionals. To include: Prevention framework, Connecting the Dots in Violence Prevention, Collective Impact, Early Intervention for child welfare workers, Early intervention for health care providers, Parent Hope Project.
- Develop and disseminate video series: “Family Life” - brief video (5-10 minutes) that work to assist families in developing habits that promote resiliency for all members

About Family Crisis Center

The Family Crisis Center of Baltimore County provides comprehensive services to families through a variety of programs including emergency safe shelter for victims fleeing domestic violence, intensive individualized case management services, family psychotherapy, victim advocacy services, educational and skills groups, parenting groups, perpetrator intervention groups and a crisis hotline. These programs help promote safety for all members of the family and assist families in developing the capacity to move forward in lives less prone to conflict and violence. The Family Crisis Center of Baltimore County believes that every family wants to live in a way that supports and sustains the growth and development of all of its members. As the family begins to interrupt patterns in their relationship system and develop and enhance their capacity to respond flexibly to the challenges they face they will be able to move forward in lives in ways that are free from violence. If any one person in the family unit can begin this work, the whole family system will begin to function differently. Our work is about stopping the violence AND helping families grow capacity. For more information visit www.familycrisiscenter.net.