

Presentation title:

Focused deterrence frameworks: Evidence base, what it is, and what it is not

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Focused deterrence has emerged as an important theoretical framework for addressing violence prevention and crime reduction; has produced a set of proven, evidence-based approaches to homicide, gun violence, open-air drug markets, intimate partner violence, and provides a guide to thinking about and acting on new, substantive problems. Over the past decades, the National Network for Safe Communities' (NNSC) focused deterrence violence prevention approach has been evaluated in dozens of cities around the world, and has been found to have a major impact on their levels of serious violence. Systematic reviews by the United States National Academies of Sciences and Agency for International Development state that GVI – NNSC's Group Violence Intervention – is the most effective strategy available for reducing community violence. GVI has recently been named an evidence-based intervention by the Biden administration.

There is a quickly emerging and rapidly evolving field of violence prevention within the United States. In the past few years there have been major shifts in the understanding of how violence reduction is best achieved, from the conventional centering of the criminal legal system to the modern co-creation of public safety between law enforcement and community organizations. Accordingly, NNSC is rethinking how to adapt the focused deterrence approach to address the needs and concerns of both law enforcement and community organizations working to prevent violence. This presentation will review NNSC's latest thinking on maintaining the fundamentals of focused deterrence – local partnerships of law enforcement, service providers, outreach workers, and community figures to engage directly with the relatively small number of people attributable for greatest amount of harm; stating the desire that they are safe, not hurt or be hurt by anyone, and not incarcerated; addressing their immediate risks and material needs; notifying them that new legal responses will be used to respond to violence; limiting the use of arrest and incarceration; and strengthening communities' capacity to set public safety standards – while refreshing the model to meet current challenges and demands.