

## Attachment 7: Summary of Consultations on Future Research to Examine the Impacts of Community Violence

At its March 6, 2018 meeting, the Board of Health (BOH) requested that Toronto Public Health (TPH) scope out a research project to examine the extent of exposure to community violence and its physical and mental health impacts in Toronto. TPH staff conducted consultations with six staff from the City's Social Development, Finance and Administration division and with a small number of researchers with expertise in the area of community violence who have carried out Toronto-based research. The two main goals of these consultations were to identify:

- existing research, or research underway, that explores the impact of being exposed to community violence in Toronto; and
- the types of impacts that should be measured by future research on the effects of community violence exposure.

The consultations identified a small number of recent Toronto-based studies that have examined the impact of exposure to community violence and some studies currently underway. These studies were included in TPH's review of local research (See Appendix 2).

The following were identified as current gaps in our understanding of the impacts of community violence in the Toronto population:

- impacts on school attendance and retention;
- short and long term impacts on family, education, employment, mental health (e.g., PTSD), substance use, and addiction;
- long-term impacts of trauma such as illness, suicide, community violence;
- potential iatrogenic effects of programs that serve highly traumatized populations, including the impacts of staff/organizations that may be inadequately trained to work with these populations;
- impacts of policing approaches to community violence on perceptions of safety and well-being;
- impact of the fear of crime on quality of life;
- the use of community spaces (e.g., program attendance; disruption of program/service);
- costs of community violence (e.g., hospital visits, emergency department visits; economic vibrancy of communities; criminal justice costs);
- impacts on women and how women participate and are affected by 'gang' violence; and
- impacts of neighbourhood 'revitalization' on patterns of community violence.

These gaps were consistent with what had been identified as relevant to the Board of Health by Former TDSB Trustee and BOH member, Chris Glover, based on a review of the literature and local community engagement. Some additional specific areas of interest to the BOH include the following:

- impact on feelings of safety in the community (e.g., walking to school, playing outside);
- physical health impacts stemming from not having a safe place to play;
- level of fear and vigilance due to community violence; and
- impact on self-efficacy beliefs, survival expectations, and support networks.

A few of those who were consulted also identified key considerations in undertaking research in this area, including the following:

- Research design should allow for presenting disaggregated results – e.g., race-based data.
- Research should engage affected community members in all steps of the process, from study design to interpreting and acting on the results, and should build in reciprocity and include youth.
- Research should include a qualitative component to delve into lived experiences.
- Regular collection of data to enable assessing changes and trends over time.

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### List of Researchers

1. Annette Bailey, Associate Professor, Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, Ryerson University
2. Luca Berardi, Assistant Professor, Social Psychology Program & Department of Sociology
3. Adam Ellis, PhD(c), Vanier Scholar, University of Toronto, Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies
4. Alyssa Ferns, Professor, Criminal Justice, Humber College (now at Algonquin College, Ottawa)
5. Jooyoung Lee, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto
6. Sarah Richmond, Public Health Ontario
7. Heather Rollwagen, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Ryerson University
8. Julian Tanner, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto
9. Sara K. Thompson, Associate Professor, Department of Criminology, Ryerson University
10. Doug Thomson, Professor, School of Social & Community Services