

Part 5:

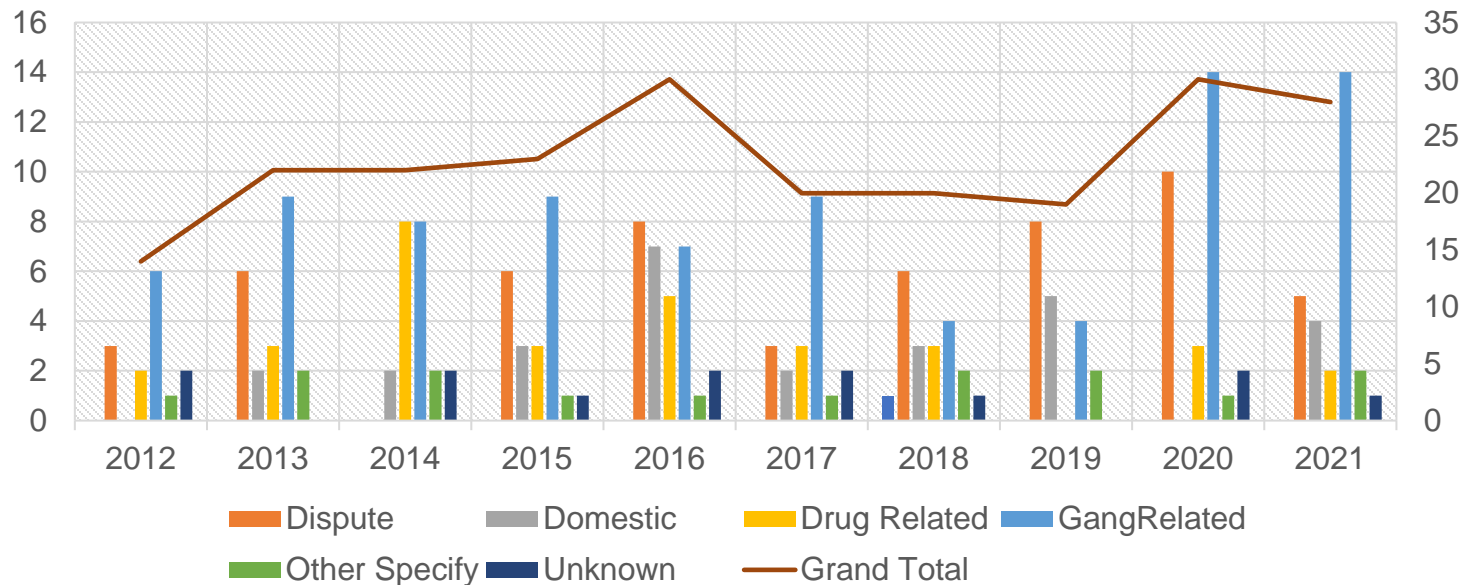
Causes

Gang and Associated  
Individual Conflict

Cause 2: Continuous conflicts between gang and associated individuals of young people that spiral into violence

# Conflicts between gang and associated individuals members drive violence in Syracuse

gang and associated individuals-related homicides were the number one category in six of the last ten years



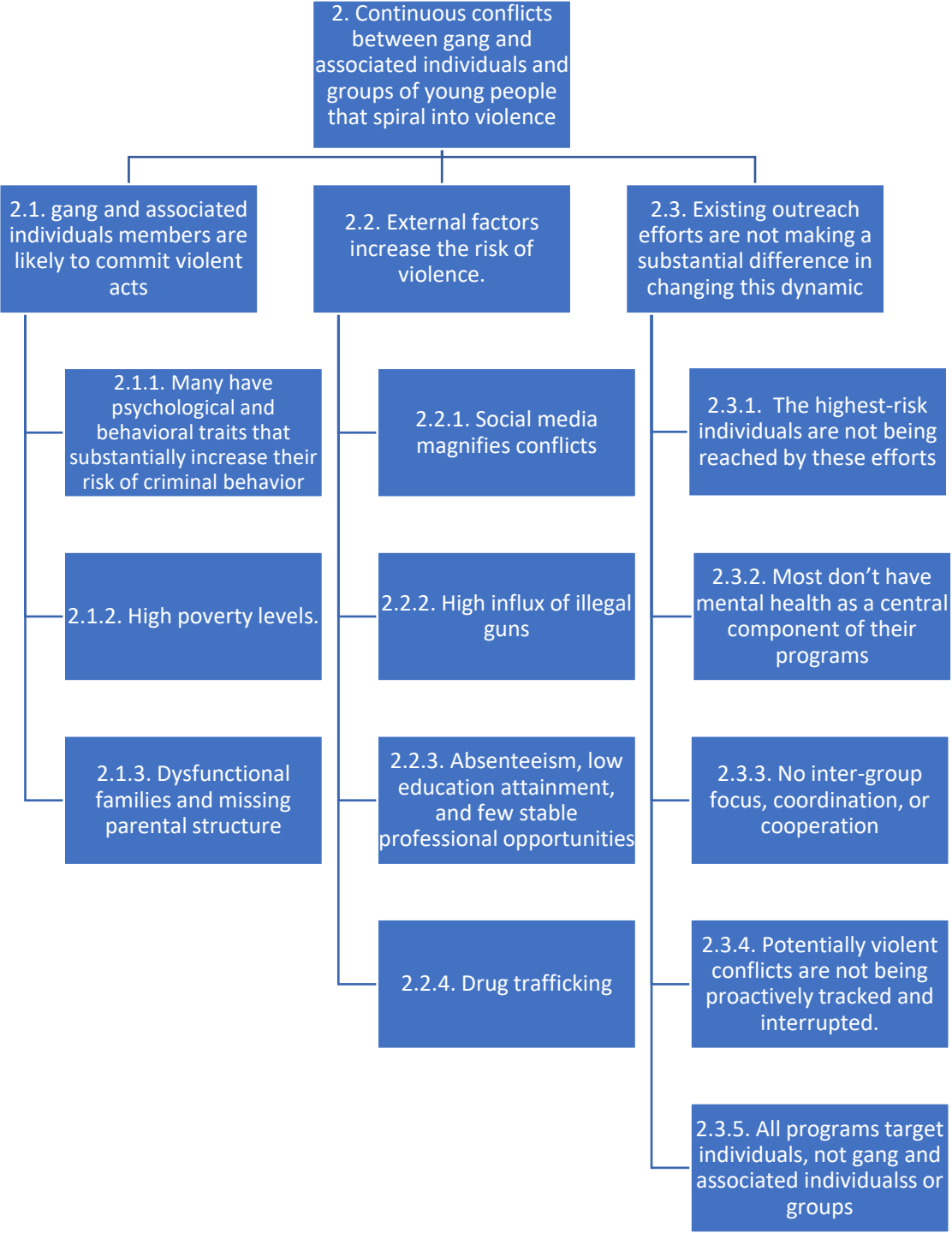
- There is consensus among stakeholders: the city's violence is driven by conflicts between gang and associated individuals members and groups of young men across the city.
- Data backs this: gang and associated individuals activity was the number one motivation for homicides in 6 of the last 10 years.
- The current spike in homicides is driven by gang and associated individuals activity.

# But these conflicts are not for money

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- The primary reason is not to fight over money or territories to sell drugs.
- Violence is mainly driven by personal conflicts and feuds among rival gang and associated individuals members.
- It is a social dynamic where the most violent is the most admired.
- Every minor incident becomes an excuse to find validation through violence.





# Sub-cause 2.1: Gang and associated individuals are prone to violence.

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2.1. Gang and associated individuals members are prone to violent behavior.

2.1.1. Many have psychological and behavioral afflictions that substantially increase their risk of criminal behavior

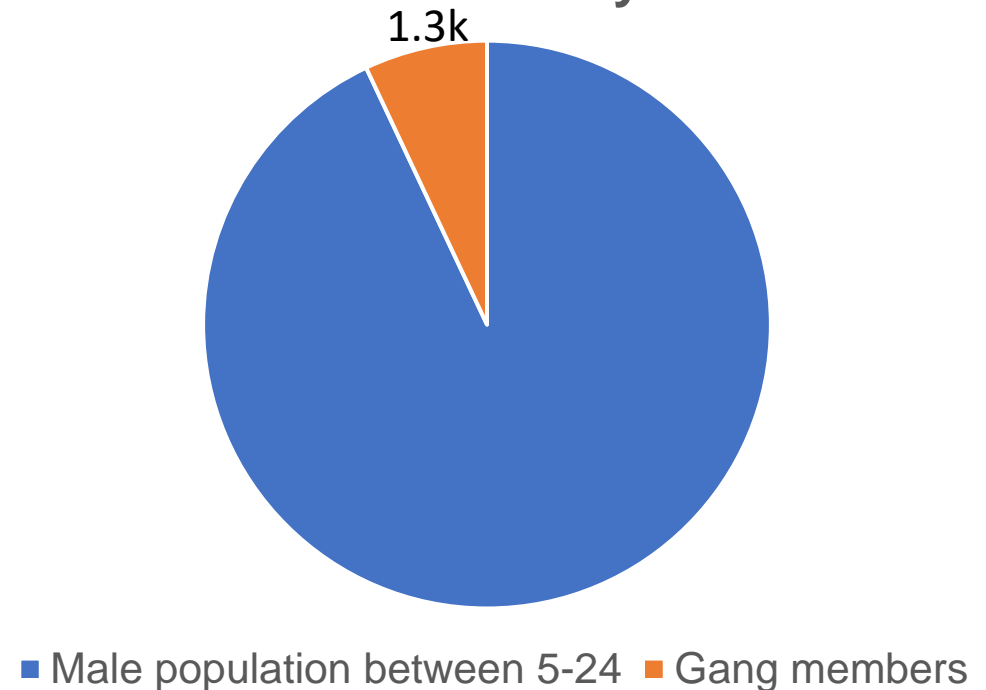
2.1.2. High poverty levels

2.1.3. Disjointed families and missing parental structure

# Sub-cause 2.1: gang and associated individuals members are like to commit violent acts.

- Violence is a central component of gang and associated individuals activity.
- gang and associated individuals individuals compose 58% of those arrested for gun crimes in 2019-2021.
- 32% of gun crime victims were gang and associated individuals associated.
- 79% of homicides by gun and 61% of shootings with injury are related to these groups.

Gang and associated individuals members represent 7% of males between 10 and 24 years old



Therefore, gang and associated individual activity only attracts and retains a small part of the young male population in Syracuse that is willing to engage in these violent dynamics.

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**Sub-cause 2.1.1:** Psychological and behavioral afflictions that substantially increase their risk of criminal behavior

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## Three high-risk personality patterns:

- Risky pleasure-seeking.
- Lack of self-control.
- Restless aggressiveness

*“The faster you make money, the faster you spend it. It’s like crack - quick money is a quick high, and then – crash, no money. You need more, and you need it quick.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Sub-cause**  
**2.1.1:**  
psychological  
and behavioral  
afflictions that  
substantially  
increase their  
risk of criminal  
behavior

**Street Addiction:**

- In a 2013 study by Bergen-Cico et al.<sup>1</sup>, researchers interviewed several former members of Syracuse's gang and associated individuals
- They found that these men consistently revealed a solid attraction for the adrenaline and intense stimulation of street life and criminal activity.
- A form of behavioral addiction, like gambling.

*“When I hear gunshots, I run – run toward the sound of where they're coming from. I want in. . . I want to see what's going on. . . I want in. It's like someone tripped a switch in my brain.”*

<sup>1</sup>Bergen-Cico et al., “Street Addiction: A Proposed Theoretical Model for Understanding the Draw of Street Life and gang and associated individuals Activity

**Sub-cause  
2.1.1:  
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**Two forms of distorted  
cognition that strongly  
correlate with criminal  
behavior:**

1. Attitudes, values, beliefs, and rationalizations that support crime.
2. Cognitive-emotional states of anger, resentment, and defiance

Examples:

1. The 'hood' instead of the neighborhood. "So rather than feeling like you just stole your neighbors [sic] television, you would feel like you were just taking some resource of money from the hood..."<sup>1</sup>
2. *"I would be ruminating on thoughts of disrespect, even small conflicts. I was harboring feelings and waiting for a look, a word or action to justify getting angry and fighting."*<sup>1</sup>

**Sub-cause 2.1.1:** psychological and behavioral afflictions that substantially increase their risk of criminal behavior

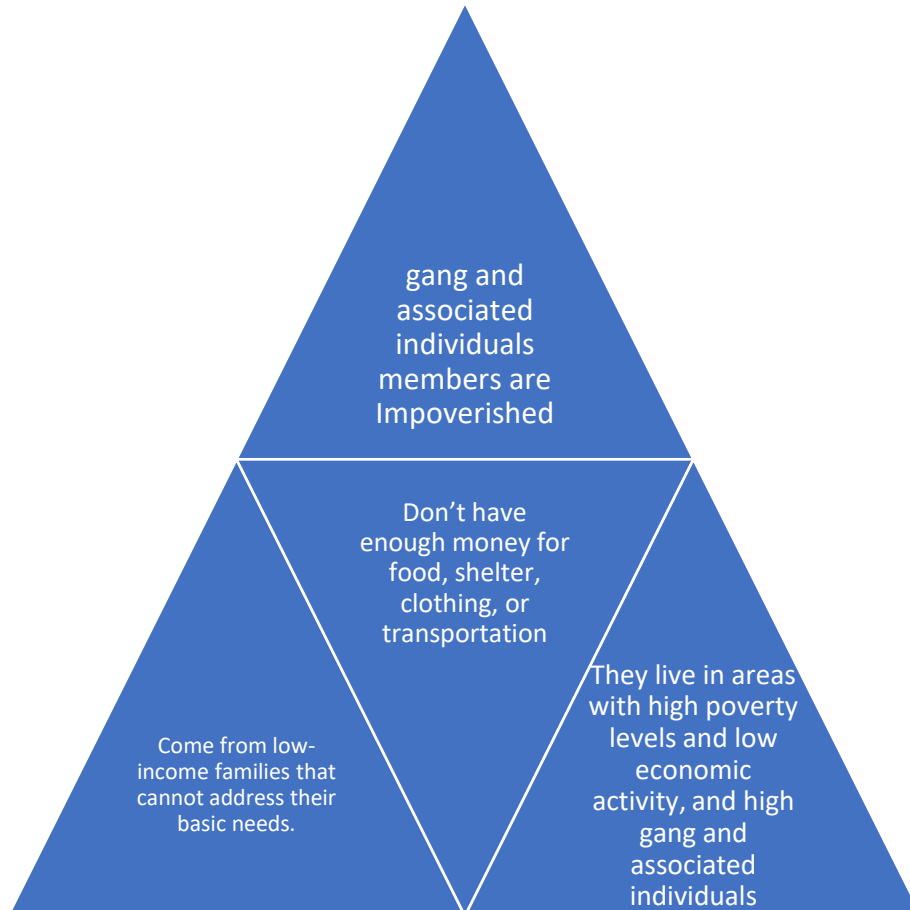
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**Substance abuse:**

- Alcohol and certain addictive substances affect cognitive functioning, reduce self-control, and increase the aggressiveness of an intoxicated person.
- These substances place gang and associated individuals in a dangerous state where they are primed to react violently.



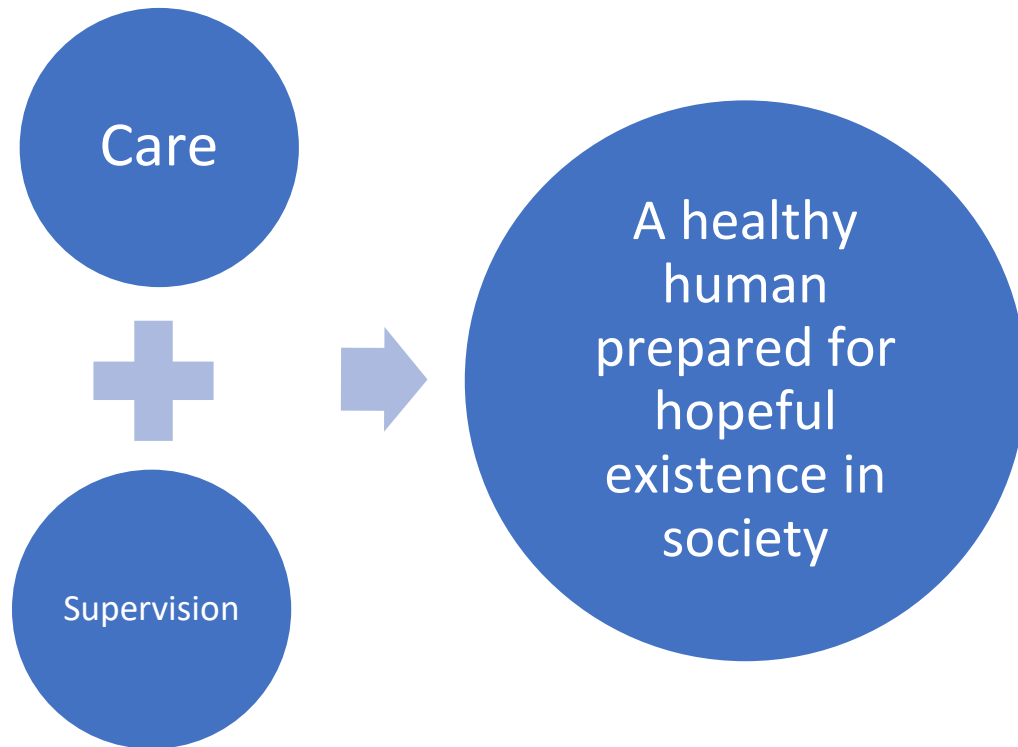
# Sub-cause 2.1.2: High poverty levels.



- A hard choice: suffer extreme poverty or engage in criminal activity.
- The vast majority of low-income young men, women, and kids do not take the second road, some do, and their poverty creates a big motivation for them to do so

## Sub-cause 2.1.3: Disjointed families and/or missing parenting structures.

Every kid needs from their parents:



Many gang and associated individuals:

- Come from families unable to address their basic needs.
- Experienced abuse or neglect.
- Inconsistent discipline or guidance involving social norms or skills.
- *Result:* kids and adolescents full of trauma, negative emotions, and no prosocial norms seek to find the base social constructs necessary for healthy growth in the streets of their neighborhoods

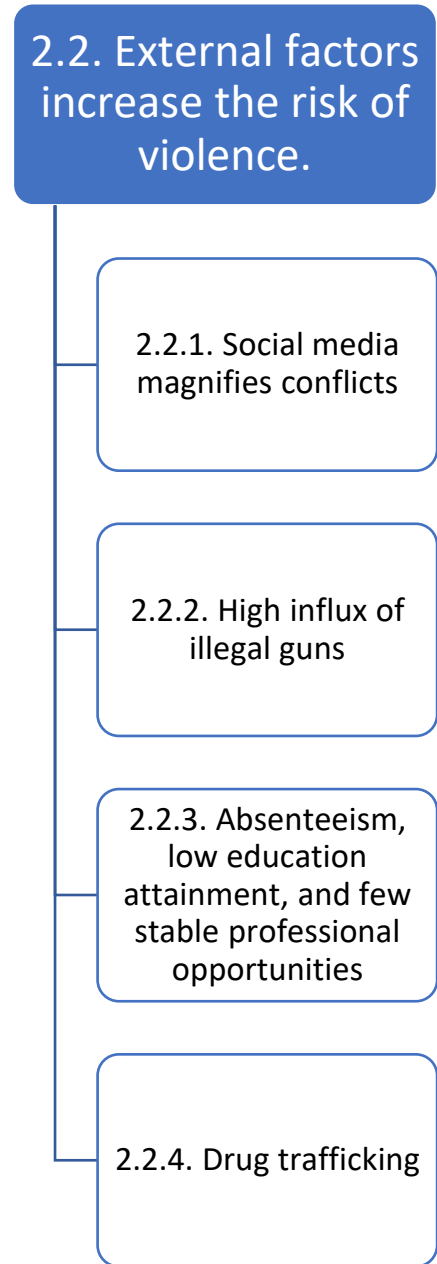
# Sub-cause 2.2: External factors that increase the risk of violence.

- “They live in an environment that pushes them into violence.”  
- Timothy ‘Noble’ Jennings Bey.



# Sub-cause 2.2: External factors that increase the risk of violence.

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# Sub-cause 2.2.1: Social media magnifies conflicts

## “Internet-Banging”



## How it magnifies conflicts:

Rival group members can find and humiliate each other without costs or risks.

An audience of thousands, making the humiliation greater and peer pressure stronger.

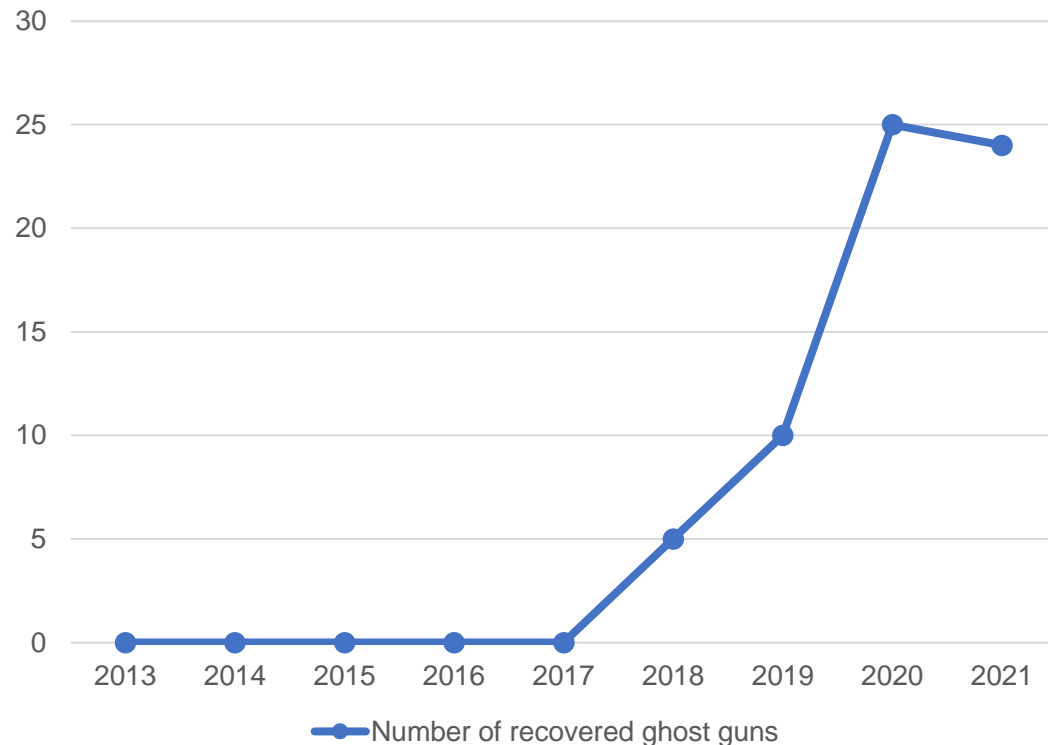
Social media enhances negative emotions and risk-taking behaviors, according to research.

Engagement-maximizing algorithms amplify their insults and fights.

These exchanges are relived constantly, through screenshots or reposts, stretching the humiliation over time.

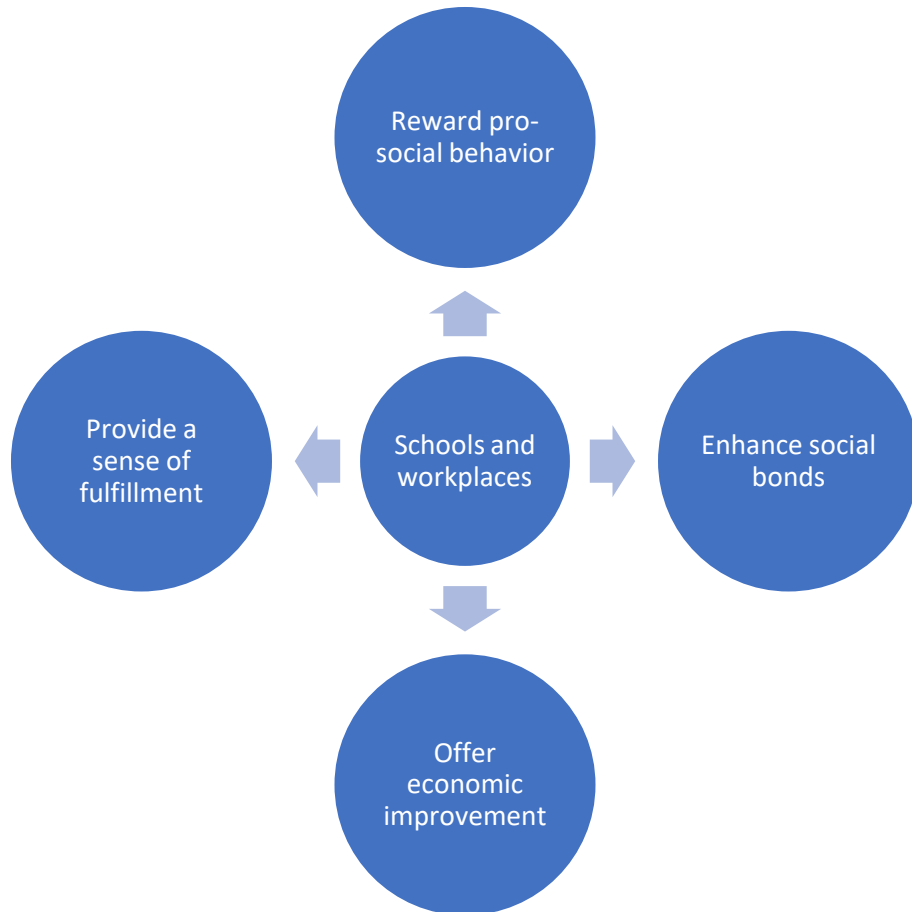
# Sub-cause 2.2.2: High influx of illegal guns

The number of recovered guns has increased substantially in the last years



- There is a robust market of illegal guns in Syracuse.
- Even after disbanding the Proactive Policing Unit, the SPD continues to recover hundreds of illegal guns yearly.
- Recovered ghost guns have increased substantially in the last five years, which shows increased use of these firearms
- A bigger illicit market means more opportunities for gang and associated individuals to buy guns.

## Sub-cause 2.2.3: Absenteeism, low education attainment, and few stable professional opportunities



Gang and associated individuals members:

1. Live in the areas with the highest levels of concentrated poverty.
2. Their schools have 50% lower standardized test scores for ELA (English-Languages-Arts) and math.
3. Many are entirely outside of the school system.

# Sub-cause 2.2.4: Drug Trafficking



## Subcause 2.3: Existing outreach efforts are not making a substantial difference in changing this dynamic

- **One of Syracuse's most valuable assets is its network of Community Violence Intervention Programs.**
- They make an enormous effort to tackle violent crime using different outreach approaches and limited resources.
- Their efforts are laudable and full of conviction.
- Syracuse must invest in this effort

# Their approaches

## Good Life Foundation

- Art, hip hop culture, entrepreneurship, advocacy, and coaching to take youth away from crime.

## Street Addiction Institute

- Specially-designed interventions to address trauma and street life addiction in at-risk youth.

## The Salvation Army

- Case management and mentorship to control possible criminal behavior and refer at-risk youth to different social and legal services

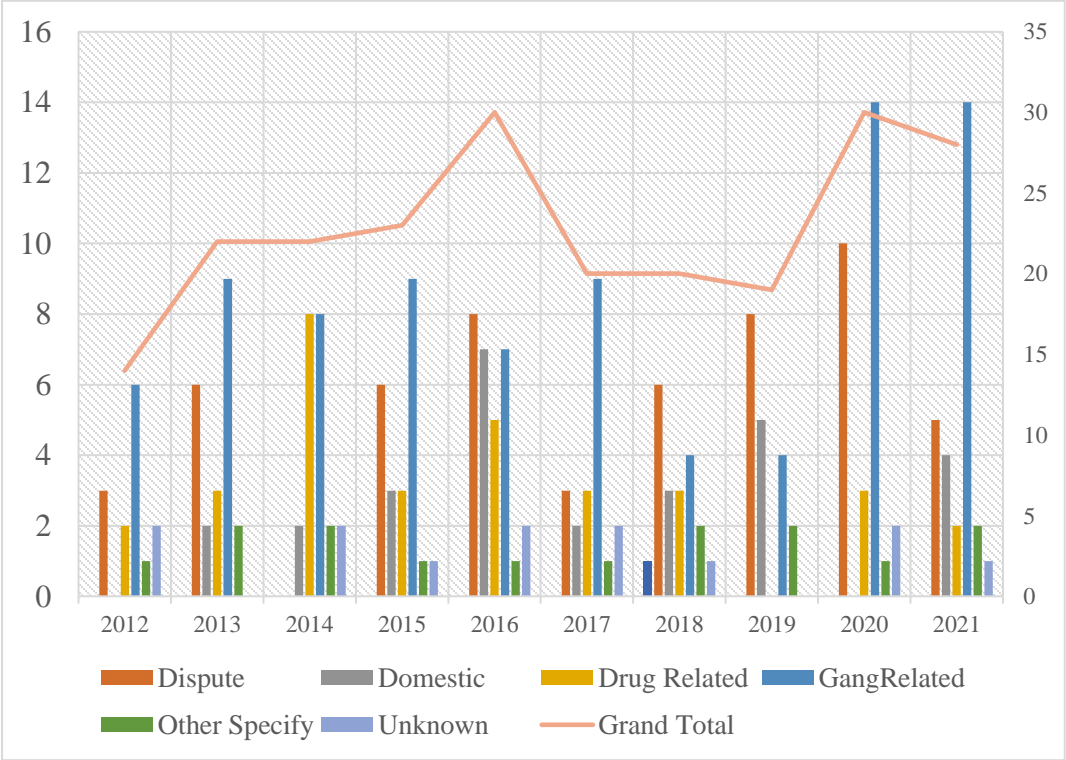
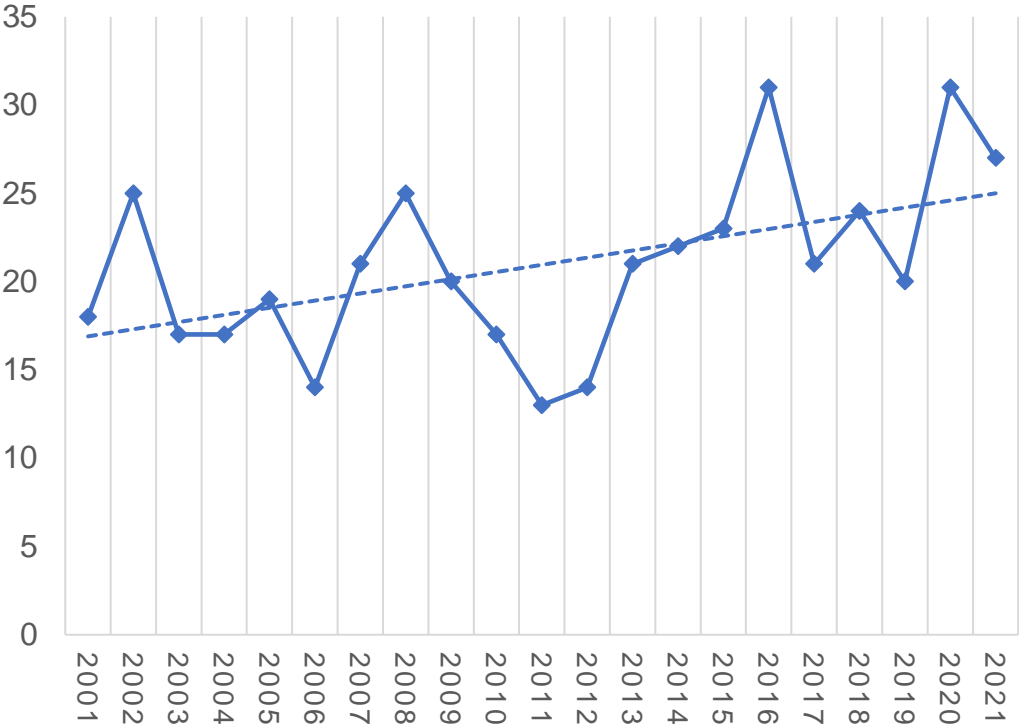
## OG's Against Violence

- Violence interruption in the streets.

## SNUG

- Follows the Cure Violence model.

# However, homicides went up and gang and associated individuals activity continues to drive violence...



## Sub-cause 2.3: Existing outreach efforts are not making a substantial difference in changing this dynamic

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2.3. Existing outreach efforts are not making a substantial difference in changing this dynamic

2.3.1 The highest-risk individuals are not being reached by these efforts

2.3.2. Most don't have mental health as a central component of their programs

2.3.3. No inter-group focus, coordination, or cooperation

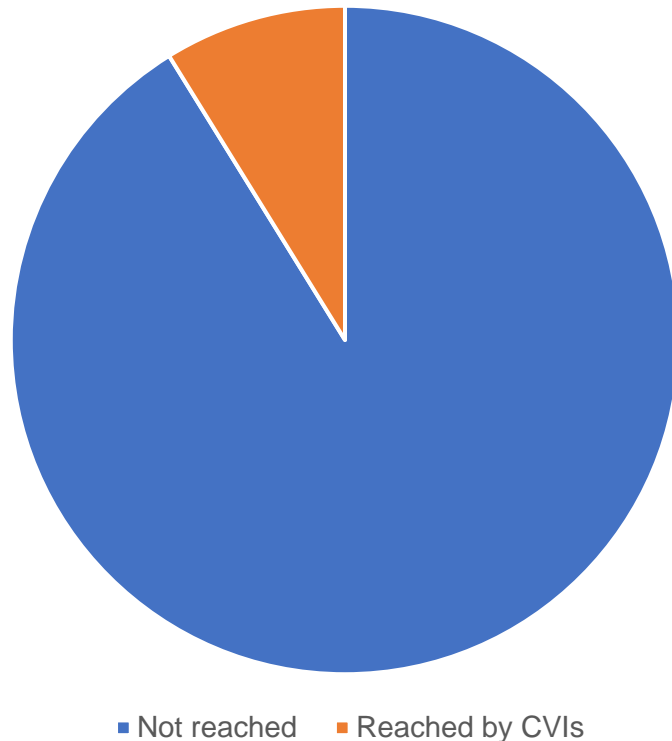
2.3.4. Potentially violent conflicts are not being proactively tracked and interrupted.

2.3.5. All programs target individuals, not gang and associated individuals or groups



## Sub-cause 2.3.1: These efforts are not reaching the highest-risk individuals

Only 10% of CORE list members are being reached by CVIs



- Only a tiny fraction of the population is responsible for most of the crime in every city.
- The CNY Crime Analysis Center already lists Syracuse's most prolific violent offenders; they call this list CORE.
- Crime prevention efforts that focus their work on these top offenders are the most effective.
- In Syracuse's case, the outreach network is not doing this.

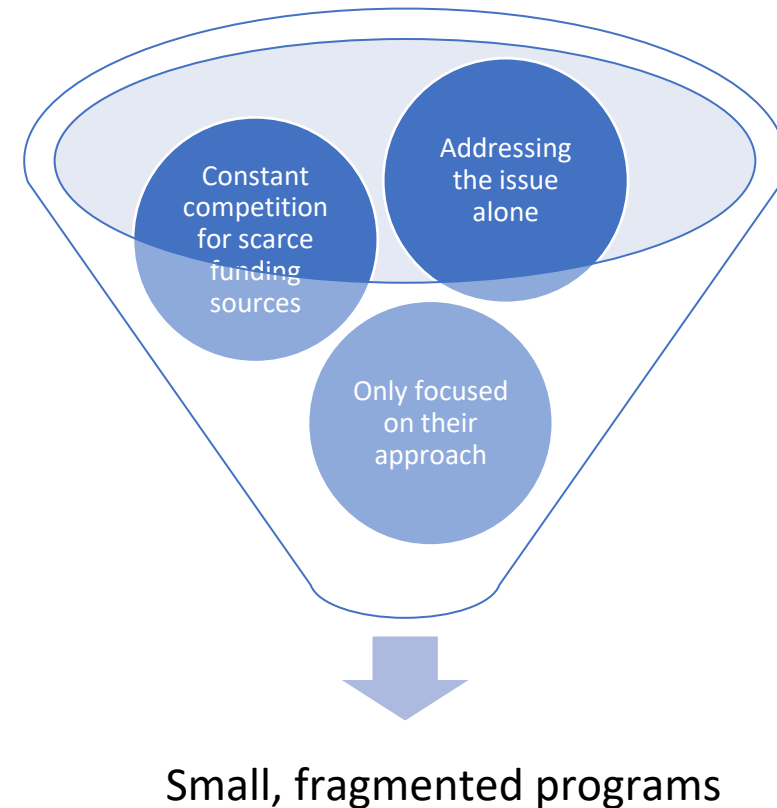
## **Sub-cause 2.3.2: Most don't have mental health as a central component of their programs.**

- Many gang and associated individuals members have psychological and behavioral afflictions that increase their risk of violent behavior.
- They will continue to act violently if these factors are not proactively addressed.
- Policies that use proven mental health therapies, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, are highly effective in reducing violent crime.
- However, most outreach organizations do not have mental health as a central component of their programs.

*This gap in the city's outreach efforts is severely limiting the effectiveness of their intervention.*

## Sub-cause 2.3.3: No inter-group focus, coordination, or cooperation

- Most outreach officials agree: lack of coordination among CVIs is the main challenge in addressing violent crime.
- They have no shared goals, plans, indicators, or information.
- Each works independently, trying to help its clients with their resources and capabilities.



## Sub-cause 2.3.3: No inter-group focus, coordination, or cooperation

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- Since they don't share information or indicators, individuals go from one organization to another, receiving services without progress tracking.
- Instead of holistic services, they address a particular issue without addressing others.



**Sub-cause 2.3.3:** This problem is not only related to these organizations' attitudes and practices...

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- It is also a consequence of the little funding available for violence prevention in Syracuse.
- Aside from funding for law enforcement, there are limited resources dedicated to community driven efforts to prevent gun violence in Syracuse.
- Therefore, no violence prevention program which sets city-wide goals, plans, and indicators to organize the CVI's work in a coordinated fashion

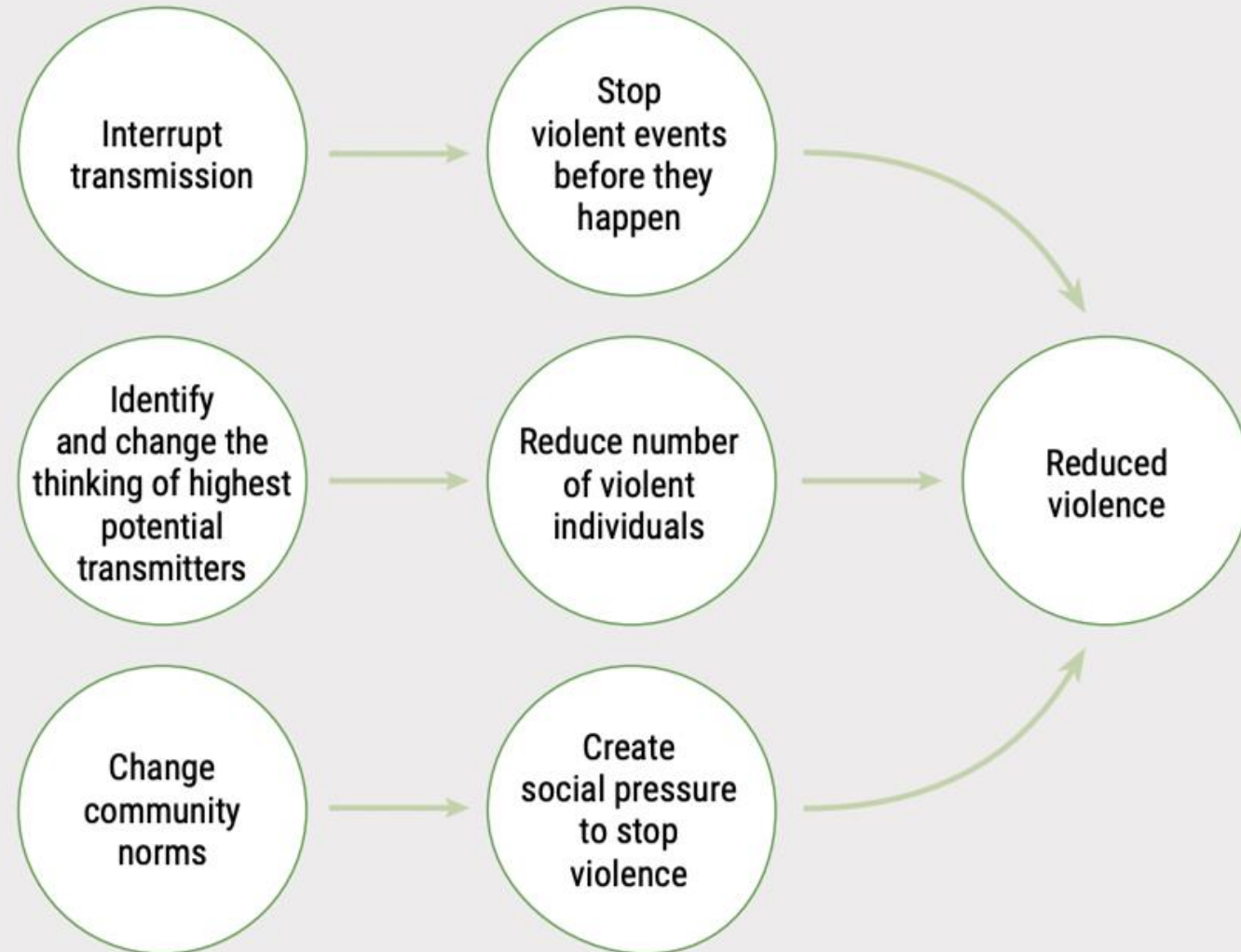


## Sub-cause 2.3.4:

Potentially violent conflicts are not being proactively tracked and interrupted.

- The Cure Violence model is one of the most significant innovations in crime prevention in recent decades.
- It's focus involves a proactive approach to stop deathly conflicts.

## THE Cure Violence Theory of Change



## Sub-cause 2.3.5: All programs target individuals, not the collective group

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### Gang and associated individuals:

- Fill the need for belonging.
- Deliver self-fulfillment.
- Provide social cues about appropriate behavior. Cialdini's Social Proof.



## Sub-cause 2.3.5: All programs target individuals, not collective group

- This general process doesn't consider the social "pull".
- Doesn't intervene with the group.
- It's like sending an alcoholic to a bar with his drinking pals after each AA session.
- The most effective focused deterrence strategies are the ones that target criminally active groups of gang and associated individuals.

