

COMMUNITY ISSUE BRIEF

Street Memorials



Throughout Philadelphia, people are noticing street memorials that appear near the site of a fatal shooting or stabbing. While we refer to these as “street memorials” here, they may go by other names depending on the neighborhood. You may have seen memorials like the one in the picture on streets in your neighborhood.

There are different opinions about these memorials. Some believe that these are natural expressions of sadness for the loss of a friend or family member. Others believe that these memorials are negative or are associated with gang activity. Still others are worried that youth will gather at these spots and that more violence might erupt. This is especially a worry for neighborhood residents who find such memorials in front of their homes.

How do you feel about these memorials? Are they healthy or dangerous? Do they attract gangs and violence, or do they help youth heal? How long should they be left in place? Who should remove them safely?

We want to hear from you. If you have ideas, thoughts or questions, please email them to us at pcvpcnews@drexel.edu.

Focus Groups

What is a focus group?

A focus group is a type of research where a researcher invites a group of people to come together and discuss a particular topic. For example, the research team at the PCVPC invited community members from a number of different neighborhoods to come together and talk about youth violence. The research team asked the group questions and then members of the group were free to talk about whatever aspect of youth violence seemed important to them. The meetings were tape recorded. The research team, listened to and transcribed the recording of the session in order to fully understand what the members of the group were saying. This information was then used by the research team to make sure that the PCVPC research is addressing the issues and concerns of community members.

Why are focus groups useful?

A focus group allows members of the community to add their voices about what is really important to know. Researchers may not live in communities where youth violence occurs and may not be familiar with concerns that community members have. By bringing together community members and listening carefully to what they say, researchers gain a better understanding of the key issues.

How were PCVPC focus groups conducted?

The research team, which consisted of researchers and community members, designed a four-step approach. In the first step, they met with community representatives to decide on the questions that would be asked in the focus groups and how they would be asked. In the second step, they brought together members of the community in focus groups and heard their perspectives on youth violence. In the third step, the researchers looked at what the people in the groups said and then presented the information back to participants in the groups to make sure that they had heard them correctly. This feedback from the group helped researchers to clarify points and make any corrections. It also allowed the participants in the focus groups to add their voices to the analysis. The final step of the research was to look across all of the different focus groups and find themes or ideas were similar or different among the different groups. Finally, the results of the cross group analysis were presented back to focus group participants.

Where can we learn more about the focus groups?

In future issue briefs, we will present some of the results and findings from the focus groups. If you would like more information about the focus groups you can also view a summary of the results on the PCVPC web site at <http://stokes.chop.edu/programs/pcvpc/>

In This Issue

Focus Groups	Page 1
Street Memorials	Page 1
Resources	Page 2
Back to school	Page 2

Terms to remember:

- PARCC: Philadelphia Area Research Community Coalition**
- PCVPC: Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center**

Community Resources

Free Library of Philadelphia

A library card can open up a wealth of resources for you and your family. Your local public library has lots of resources for your child and for you, including after-school programs, career services & workshops and internet access. Here are some examples:

- The LEAP After-School Program provides homework assistance, computer literacy, library skills, and multicultural enrichment activities for school-age students in grades 1-12. It's an open drop-in program, so no registration is necessary.
- Family Literacy: Family Literacy programs and workshops are at selected libraries during June, July and August. All participants in Family Literacy at the Library receive a free book, free backpacks and school supplies.

There are a several libraries in West/Southwest Philadelphia. **Call or visit www.library.phila.gov for more information.**

Kingsessing Branch, 215-685-2690
1201 S. 51st Street

Blanche A. Nixon/Cobbs Creek Branch
215-685-1973
5800 Cobbs Creek Parkway

Lucien E. Blackwell W. Philadelphia Regional Library 215-685-7424
125 South 52nd Street

We want to hear from you!!

We welcome your ideas about topics related to violence that you would like to see in future PCVPC Community Issues Briefs. If you have ideas or suggestions, please email them to us at pcvpcnews@drexel.edu.

For each Community Issues Brief, we will randomly select a person who has submitted a suggestion by email, to receive a \$25 gift certificate for groceries from The FreshGrocer.

Back to school

Now that your child/children have been back to school for several weeks, here are some refresher tips to make them more successful.

Take aim on morning madness

- **How are school mornings in your home?** Crazed and chaotic, or calm and cheerful? Plan ahead to send your schoolchildren out the door in a happy mood. Each evening, think ahead to the next morning. Set the breakfast table. Lay out children's clothing the night before. Multi-child households may need a bathroom schedule so that everyone gets equal time before the mirror.
- **Review all information.** Ask your child often if the school has sent any materials home. Review the material sent by the school as soon as it arrives. These packets include important information about your child's teacher, sign ups for after-school sports and activities, school calendar dates, bus transportation, health and emergency forms, and volunteer opportunities.
- **Clear a place to do homework.** Older children should have the option of studying in their room or a quiet area of the house. Younger children usually need an area set aside in the family room or kitchen so that an adult can supervise and encourage.
- **Difficulties at school.** Give your child ways to deal with difficult situation on his or her own. But encourage your child to tell you or the teacher if the problem continues. Stay in touch with the school.
- **Turn off the TV.** Encourage your child to play quiet games, do puzzles, flash cards, color, or read in the morning instead of watching television. This will help ease your child into the school routine. If possible, do this throughout the school year. Television is distracting for many children, and your child will get to school better prepared to learn each morning.

- **Good physical and mental health.** Be sure your child is in good physical and mental health. Schedule doctor and dental check-ups early. Talk about any concerns you have over your child's feelings or behavior with your pediatrician. Your doctor can help figure out if your worries are normal issues or need further assessment. Your child will benefit if you can start addressing an issue early. Schools appreciate when parents deal with problems as soon as they recognize them.

Here are a few encouraging words to help your child have a fantastic day:

- Get enough sleep.
- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Try your best.
- Develop good work habits, like writing down your assignments and turning in your homework on time.
- Take your time with school work.
- If you don't understand something, ask the teacher.