

Community-Driven Approaches to Violence Prevention

Facts about Close to Home

FEATURED INTERVIEW

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BY

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OVERVIEW

Close to Home is a community organizing approach that engages community members to design solutions and lead social change to prevent domestic violence, teen dating violence, and sexual violence.

AIMEE THOMPSON BIO

Aimee is currently on the leadership team of the Resonance Network. Prior to Resonance, she was the founder and executive director of Close to Home, where she developed mobilization strategies to foster community-wide responsibility to prevent domestic and sexual violence.

Aimee is a Movement Maker in NoVo Foundation's Move to End Violence Program, and has been recognized by Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, the Social Innovation Forum, and Facing History and Ourselves. Prior to Close to Home, Aimee managed the development of coordinated community responses to domestic violence in seven cities in Russia, Ukraine, and the Republic of Georgia, and has since provided trainings in the United States, Europe, and Africa.

Aimee's commitment to community-driven approaches to violence prevention began when she was a community health worker seeking to improve access to health care, promote racial justice, and increase neighborhood civic participation through grassroots organizing.

TOP 10 FACTS ABOUT CLOSE TO HOME

1. Location: originally Dorchester (Boston), Massachusetts; then adopted in other parts of Massachusetts and California; currently, the California Department of Public Health is funding its third cycle of sites implementing the approach.
2. Start date: 2000 in Boston; implementation in California began in 2009.
3. Organization or group that runs the program: Close to Home emerged from grassroots organizing with local community members, then added organizational and government partners, and in 2002 grew into a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In 2008-9, the program was replicated in Massachusetts and California. In 2014, Close to Home's Massachusetts programs were transplanted into new organizational homes, while its leaders turned their focus to documenting the approach and training new California communities. Currently, the California Department of Public Health is funding multiple Close to Home sites, most of whom are DV/SA organizations with strong ties to their communities, deep experience with prevention, and close community partnerships.
Close to Home has been implemented in multiple communities, primarily by staff of non profit organizations with a focus on domestic and sexual violence prevention. It is also well suited to community centers and other community based entities that engage the community in sustained community development or community change work.
4. Community the program is intended for: Close to Home engages community members, including youth, adult community residents, and civic and organizational leaders, along with other key stakeholders. These vary by community, as it depends on who the key actors/ stakeholders are in each context. Ideally, the group is intergenerational and reflects the community's makeup.
5. Issue or problem the program is intended to prevent: domestic and sexual violence, as well as other forms of community violence.
6. Brief description of program goals: The program's long-term goals are to prevent domestic and sexual violence, as well as other forms of community violence, and to increase civic health and

collective capacity. Short- and medium-term goals include supporting and increasing individual community members' skills and knowledge; community leadership and action to prevent violence; and community connectedness and cohesion.

7. Experience and/or evidence informing the program: Close to Home's development was informed by the community health worker movement, social justice organizing, intersectional approaches to violence prevention, asset-based community development, and network leadership theory. As the program was implemented in Massachusetts, it obtained qualitative feedback from program participants regarding their experiences and changes they have made as a result of participation in the program. The California sites intend to collect qualitative and quantitative data on program impact.
8. Number of program participants per year: Depends on the stage of work in local implementations. A core network of 120 can reach over 14,000 participants.
9. Program resources (staffing & budget): Ideally at least 2 full time implementation staff to engage youth, adults and civic/organizational life in the community, in addition to program expenses. Deep buy in from organizational leadership and collaboration from managers and other organizational staff is also critical.
10. Lessons learned and adjustments to the program over time: While Close to Home is meant to be adapted to each community's unique context, it has also come to recognize [nine principles](#) as core to its approach. Anchoring in these principles, and the stance or orientation they embody, matters more than using any particular method. Other foundational elements include getting buy-in across all levels of an implementing organization, meeting people / community where they are, and making connections between prevention and intervention (such as services).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- To learn more, contact: c2homeinfo@gmail.com
- Close to Home Website: <http://www.c2home.org/>
- [Resource Set](#), with three key documents:
 - [Communities Leading Change](#) – philosophy & practice for DV/SV prevention
 - [Close to Home Assessment Guide](#) – using action research in community organizing
 - [Tips for Practitioners](#) – lessons learned
- California Department of Public Health
[Close to Home Community Mobilization Project Brief: Preventing Domestic Violence, Teen Dating Violence and Sexual Violence \(seven sites, 2014-2018\)](#)
- Additional reading about this issue:
 - Creative Interventions: <http://www.creative-interventions.org/>
 - Raising Voices: <http://raisingvoices.org/>
- [Aimee's top three resources that helped her design and run this program:](#)
 - [Helping Health Workers Learn: A Book of Methods, Aids, and Ideas for Instructors at the Village Level – David Werner & Bill Bower \(2012\)](#)
 - [Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community & Assets – John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight \(1993\)](#)
 - [The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations – Ori Brafman & Rod A. Beckstrom \(2006\)](#)