

Community Violence Forum Small Groups on September 23

1. What would you say is the most significant factor driving crime? (Many answers repeated)
Lack of parental discipline and support for guidance, drugs, peer pressure, weakness, need for money, mental illness, poverty, respect for others, gang activity, anger, fractured homes, lack of respect, better paying jobs, communication, too easy to accept those coming to commit crimes, poverty, fractured homes, respect for authority.

There were concerns expressed about what appears to be a greater number of persons from outside the state which are appearing in Burlington and taking up residency. The concern is that many of those who arrive have no established employment or means of support when they arrive. While expressing support for immigrant residents there was also concern that many of those might not have access to employment due to either a lack of employable skills or no access to local programs to help them learn needed skills or get guidance. Most of the table discussion focused on this point and the concern that a lack of employment could lead to conditions that make violence more likely.

2. To be effective, law enforcement agencies must constantly adapt to the changing nature of crime and the way criminals behave. In your opinion, what is the biggest issue facing law enforcement today?

Lack of respect for police and laws and teachers, anger, violence, mindset, constrictions of law enforcement, criticism of police, lack of communication, fear of police, better gun regulations, better training for police, cooperation, perception of family, death of a spouse, help from the community, police are the enemy, manpower is restrictive, more police officers, breakdown of families, 3 day for assistance, welfare reform, support judicial, legislative, community,

Several of the shooting crimes that have occurred in this year have involved established felons, who are believed to still not be permitted to possess firearms. There was concern that there may be problems with controlling availability and access to firearms by felons.

Working with afterschool, bridges, middle school, younger age, DARE

3. What is the best way to prevent crime—educational programs, more police officers, stiffer prison sentences, youth diversion programs? (cga.ct.gov 1-3)

Marketing law enforcement, family values, core values, respecting neighbors and families, poverty. Raising the family right, helping families, building relationship, teaching, awareness and participation, youth programs, building self esteem, educate so the trend to seek violence is not the first reaction, diminished value of life, increasing consequences, mental illness, improve graduation rate, Engagement: communication, neighborhoods, micro communities, events, parks, Where is Mr Rogers?

Of those shooting incidents for which the background circumstances are known, several appear to have grown out of arguments or confrontations, which apparently escalated due to the ready availability of firearms. There was concern expressed about the ready ability to carry firearms in public.

4. What can the citizens do to help reduce and prevent crime?

Work in communities that have problems, get involved, more security cameras, report what you see, report what see, crime stoppers, Turquoise tables, COMMUNICATION

One participant made the observation that Burlington has developed a reputation for being a ready source of drugs in the area. While those drugs are apparently imported and not produced here there is concern about the circumstances or conditions in town that would lead to such a development. This last point was brought up after you had closed the meeting, so it may not be legitimate to consider along with other results. But it was an expressed concern.

5. What is your plan to do something positive for the community?

Clean up the community. Show sincere interest, advocate for more security, make connections with people outside your own circle, speak to legislators, say something, get young people involved, running for office, volunteering, participating, promoting, making better rentals