

MISSION STATEMENT

North Carolina's first anti-gun violence group; under the Department of Durham County's Community Intervention and Support Services, Bull City United is a community-based effort to reduce gun violence. Using an evidence-based practice model, from Chicago called Cure Violence, Bull City United is committed to change the normalcy of gun violence within assigned focus areas. BCU evaluates gun violence through a public health lens: as a deadly epidemic with cluster break outs, in areas capable of spreading to other vulnerable communities. Bull City United prevents gun violence epidemics by interrupting transmission, preventing future spread, and changing the norm.

1. Interrupt transmission – Identify, mediate, and prevent retaliation

2. Prevent future violence- Change the normalcy of highest risk behavior

3. Change community norms- Shooting responses within 72 hours – violence is not tolerated • Community events • BCU guides high risk individuals to change their normal behaviors and thinking • Provide other opportunities and linkage to resources • BCU models change

The Durham County funded team of Violence Interrupters and Outreach Workers are trained to resolve conflicts beforehand, throughout, and prevent retaliations. Bull City United detects possibly violent conflicts, treats individuals of the highest risk, and alter the public viewpoint that gun violence is normal. Bull City United started working in two gun-plagued communities in 2016, with the goal of approaching violence as an epidemic and preventing the spread of the disease (gun violence). Subsequently to BCU efforts and data, North Carolina has three additional anti-gun violence counties.

Program Overview

The Community Intervention Program utilizes trustworthy messengers to detect conflict, interrupt violence, and neutralize abrupt tensions in effort to help shape long-term peace, while creating a nonviolent community. This is accomplished by employing individuals of the community who have had parallel life experiences to those at highest risk of promising acts of violence or being a victim of violence. Bull City United started with two adjacent areas, based on Durham County and City's 2010 census data, census tracts 13.01 and 14.00 — identified as having problems with community violence. Subsequently, in 2021, BCU has expanded to an additional four tracts, 13.04, 17.09, 23.00, and 11.00.

The energetic components utilize by BCU are- Management, Violence Interrupters, and Outreach Workers. Management, Violence Interrupters and Outreach Workers are critical to the success for change and development of a non-violent community. Bull City United has three primary components to support the communities:

1. **Credible Messengers:** VI's and OW's can Identify and interrupt conflict. VI's mediate to prevent conflict and retaliations from any type of conflict. Community members trust the VI's and OW's with concerns, guidance, and change.
2. **Outreach for High Risk:** Outreach Workers work with those who are at highest risk for injuring someone or have been injured. According to the Cure Violence model, highest-risk individuals are those who meet four of these criteria: • 16-25 years old • Recently released from prison • Recent victim of a shooting • Connected to a street organization • Involved in high-risk behaviors (drug dealing, robbery, gangs) • History of violence or crimes against persons • Weapons carrier
3. **Community-based Ongoing Engagement:** BCU staff are present and housed in the focused communities to engage residents, distribute public education materials, and host community activities to promote "Peace Is a Lifestyle."

Bull City United Focus Areas

- 13.01- Southside I
- 14.00- McDougald Terrace Community
- 13.04- Cornwallis
- 17.09- Oxford Manor
- 23.00- Southside II
- 11.00- East Durham/ Golden Belt

Employees

Currently, Bull City United has 22 team members that consist of 2 Program Managers, 6 outreach workers, and 14 violence interrupters.

Start of Bull City United

In 2015, Durham native and retired Public Health Director, Gail Harris focused on the increase of gun violence in neighborhoods she once grew-up in. After months of researching reducing gun violence programs through a public health approach, Mrs. Harris found the Cure Violence model through the vision of epidemiologist, Dr. Gary Sulkin. Dr Sulkin believe violence should be address as a disease. He contends that aggression and violence are learned or modeled behaviors and should be treated as epidemics. He advocates that violence can be reduce by treating the epidemics like a contagious disease. Dr. Sulkin's anti- violence initiatives has shown a reduction in of outbreaks of aggressive behaviors with unorthodox treatments: detect outbreaks areas, disrupt further transmission, and treat the disease.

P.H. Director Harris advocated for the program to the Durham County Board of Commissioners and was approved.

