

# Countering Violent Extremism With the Public Health Model

By: Ethan Peterson

# The Public Health Model

- “The science and art of promoting and protecting health and well being, preventing ill health and prolonging life through the organized efforts of society.” – UK Faculty of Public Health
- These interventions are predominantly population based and recognize underlying socioeconomic and wider determinants of health and disease.
- Health improvement requires attention to education, inequalities, housing, employment, lifestyles, family and community, and surveillance systems; therefore, the public health approach emphasizes partnerships with all those who contribute to the health of the population.

## Research Question from DHS Academic Subcommittee on CVE

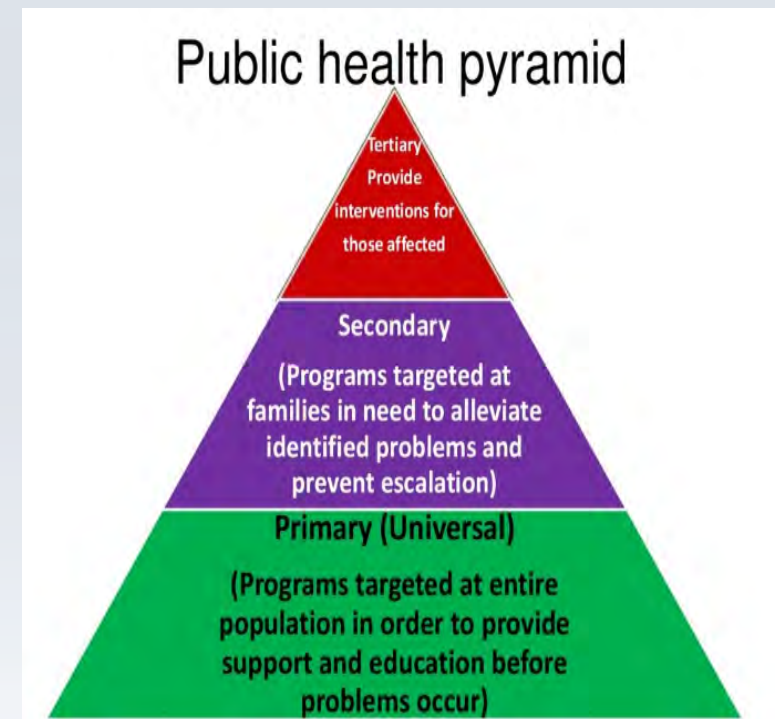
How can DHS help campuses integrate with local communities to establish CVE initiatives and partnerships?

### Thesis

Government can best implement CVE policies by utilizing the infrastructure already in place from public health model such as the violence and anti-gang programs which focus on prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs, and are currently implemented by local communities and law enforcement. By comparing the similarities of individuals at risk of radicalization to individuals susceptible to violence and gang related activity, we can gain a better understanding of the characteristics that make up a workable law enforcement and community engagement model that utilizes the partnerships and infrastructure already in place.

# Using the Public Health Model to Address Violent Extremism

- Violent Extremism shares many of the same risk factors as Gang Violence
- Public Health Model doesn't consider specific initiatives, programs or policies, rather it lays out a framework through which to view the problem
- Model is flexible and adaptable, can be implemented in any community



# Using the Public Health Model to Address Violent Extremism

- **Primary Prevention** is a broad approach directed toward society as a whole. Success at this level mitigates the root causes of extremist behavior by addressing social grievances that can drive populations to violent extremism.
  - Activities include: education, health services, social engagement, cultural awareness, and personal development programs.
- **Secondary Prevention** focuses on individuals and groups identified as at-risk for violent extremism. Success at this level stops any radicalization progression and reduces the potential for future radicalization.
  - Activities include: intervention, community engagement, and counter-messaging
- **Tertiary Prevention** is a targeted approach directed toward radicalized individuals or groups who are actively planning attacks or recruiting for a violent extremist cause. Success at this level prevents violence and neutralizes the individual or group's ability to carry out violence.
  - Activities include: disengagement, de-radicalization, isolation, and redirection.

# Recommendations

1. School Programing
  - schools can pick and choose elements based on the needs of their community
  - Adapt existing programs that have proven successful at prevention youth violence and gang activity
  - Make Standardized CVE Materials accessible
  
2. Community Programing
  - programming should be driven by the community and its unique attributes, characteristics and needs
  - Focus on building and promoting protective factors of violent extremism
  - Community involvement and buy-in are **CRITICAL**
  
3. Law Enforcement
  - remain mindful of individual community concerns
  - DO NOT view CVE as an intelligence gathering opportunity
  - Undertake training how to transition community policing into CVE activity
  - Focus on building trust between LE and Communities