



safe families
peaceful communities



CONNECT is dedicated to ending family and gender violence.

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Our goals are safe families and peaceful communities. Through a holistic combination of prevention, education and early intervention programs, we work within families and communities to transform the beliefs and behaviors that fuel patterns of abuse.

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FAMILY AND GENDER VIOLENCE pervades the everyday lives of families and communities in New York City, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion or age. Everyone close to violence can feel its harm: the serious injury or even death of a victim, the placement of children in foster care, the incarceration of an abuser, and the disruption of vital community ties through the loss of jobs and housing.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE begins within individuals, families and communities. CONNECT has drawn on decades of experience to pioneer a flexible, comprehensive approach to prevention that complements crisis intervention services. Our work supports diverse communities and families in understanding the sources of violence, and in cultivating their strengths and resources to stop it. With these tools of empowerment, people can take charge of mapping their own path to peace.





training



empowerment

Engaging Communities

Across New York's richly diverse communities, many survivors of family or gender violence do not or cannot reach support services. Some are reluctant to identify as abused. Others fear government services or face cultural and linguistic barriers. CONNECT's **Community Empowerment Program**, one of the first of its kind in the United States, assists communities in designing violence prevention and early intervention strategies to meet local needs. These strategies address the individual and social patterns that reinforce violent behavior.

Premised on the notion that individuals hold the power to change their communities, the program holds neighborhood forums to raise awareness and build trust. It rallies primary sources of support, such as social service providers, grassroots activists, faith-based organizations and civic leaders. Training workshops explore social, legal, cultural, emotional and health issues, and develop technical skills for conducting research, designing programs and fundraising.

Community partners look for ways to build on existing infrastructure and to channel more community resources into violence prevention. They make connections with youth groups, HIV/AIDS services, the clergy, the media, small businesses and others. These efforts collectively weave strong networks, ensuring that support systems will take root and thrive.

CONNECT brings people together to tailor local solutions to community concerns.

Deepening Understanding

An Early Head Start Teacher who graduated from the **CONNECT Training Institute (CTI)** knows that inviting local fathers for computer training presents a chance to start talking about family violence. He has found that interest is high: "Sometimes we spend so much time talking we don't get to the computers! The mothers tell teachers that they see changes in their lives." Some fathers have been referred to a batterer's intervention group.

CONNECT established CTI to expand the number of community leaders and professionals with an in-depth awareness of the complex dynamics of family violence. Participants return to their communities with a transformed understanding of power and control, gender, and the full range of consequences from violence. CTI graduates use their insights to create new community resources for prevention and early intervention in settings such as workplaces, schools, health care centers and faith communities.

Intensive training sessions delve into core issues: the empowerment of women and girls, understanding abusive men, parenting and domestic violence, and impacts on children who witness violence. Special seminars reach professional groups such as clergy members, social workers and health care providers.

The CONNECT Training Institute transforms awareness of the causes and consequences of violence.



prevention

Making Connections

In up to 70 percent of child abuse cases, the mother is also abused. But within child welfare agencies, limited understanding of this overlap has often resulted in ineffective and even dangerous interventions, such as the inappropriate separation of children from mothers who are not themselves abusers. CONNECT's **Family Violence Prevention Program** helps over 50 child welfare organizations in New York City keep mothers and children safe and together, while taking steps to hold batterers accountable for their actions.

The program equips child welfare workers with the skills to intervene in families struggling with violence. They attend intensive training sessions and learn to use CONNECT's unique family violence screening questionnaire. Ongoing participation in educational seminars helps child welfare staff to continue increasing their knowledge and skills.

One participant says, "The training has enabled my staff to identify more families in which domestic violence is a precipitating factor in child abuse. They feel more comfortable talking about violence in the home. The camaraderie and collaboration, education and financial resources that we receive from CONNECT have been tremendous."

Recognizing the links between child abuse and family violence can keep families safer.

advocacy



Improving Access to the Law

A graduate of CONNECT training and a teacher of English as a second language, Edna* suspected that her student Afina was in an abusive marriage. She helped Afina contact CONNECT's **Legal Advocacy Helpline** for advice on her rights and legal options. When Afina decided to leave her home, a partner in CONNECT's Brooklyn network of service providers found her safe shelter in a place where her native language was spoken.

Navigating a complex legal system is difficult for everyone, but especially for survivors of violence. CONNECT's Legal Advocacy Helpline reduces the barriers by providing immediate information on the police, courts and district attorneys; it is the only service of its kind in New York City. Helpline advocates also collaborate with other agencies to make service referrals and locate legal representation.

A second CONNECT legal advocacy initiative reaches out to victims who have filed a domestic incident report with the 25th police precinct in East Harlem. The Coordinated Action Against Violence program helps survivors secure an array of support services—from short-term counseling to orders of protection. Its success has encouraged other community organizations to adopt the same model.

Legal Advocacy Helpline (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.): 212 683 0605

**Names and details have been changed.*

CONNECT's legal outreach programs help survivors understand their options.



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Main: 212 683 0015 Fax: 212 683 0016

Email: connect@connectnyc.org Online: connectnyc.org

Legal Advocacy Helpline (Monday - Friday, 9 am - 5 pm): 212 683 0605

For 24 Hour assistance call: 1 800 621 HOPE