



SUFFOLK
UNIVERSITY
BOSTON

2025 RESEARCH & EVALUATION OF BOSTON'S CVIPI

YEAR END REPORT

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RESEARCH & EVALUATION PROJECT GOALS

Goal 1: Support Boston's CVIPI Planning Process

Support Boston's CVIPI planning process in an action research capacity. To meet this goal, the research team will provide feedback on key program and initiative data collection measures and data repositories; provide resources on evidence-informed practices; and provide consultation on planning processes to the lead agency and planning group during Boston's CVIPI planning phase.

Goal 2: Process Evaluation

Conduct a process evaluation that examines adherence to the implementation of the planning strategy, evidence-informed practices, program delivery and output, and theory of change taking place during Boston's CVIPI implementation phase.

Goal 3: Outcome Evaluation

Conduct an outcome evaluation focused on key violence and victimization measures at the individual and community levels, and key well-being measures at the individual and family levels during the last six months of Boston's CVIPI implementation phase with continuation for another year to gather data and analyze results.

YEAR 1: COLLABORATIVE CVIPI LOGIC MODEL CREATED

Boston CVIPI Logic Model

Date	Sept. 2024
Desired Result (Theory of Change statement)	By focusing on culturally sensitive healing from trauma and building positive connections to others and to communities for returning citizens and their caregivers, individuals, families, and communities will be strengthened and community violence will be reduced.
Goals	(1) To develop or enhance a community-specific and evidence-informed Violence Reduction Strategic Plan in the first phase; (2) To implement the Strategic plan in the second phase that increases healing, reduces trauma and violence, and build meaningful returning citizen, caregiver, and community involvement in promoting health and well-being.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes		
			Short-term	Intermediate (6 mo-1 yr)	Long-term (post 1 yr)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs describe the resources needed to implement a program's activities successfully. <p>BPHC TPP WAB2G VIP (MPDC, Project Right, TE)</p> <p>(Staffing, training, materials needed to implement activities effectively)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities describe the actions needed to achieve a program's goals and objectives. <p>What each program does relative to CVIPI grant funding</p> <p>WAB2G – working with survivors, advocacy, circles, support, triage</p> <p>TPP – circles mentorship, advocacy, support, triage</p> <p>VIP – community projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outputs identify what happens from a program's intended activity. Outputs are generally represented as a number, such as the number of people trained. <p># of people served in each program</p> <p># of times engaged with program</p> <p># projects with caregivers & returning citizens (VIP)</p> <p># of returning citizens & caregivers involved in VIP projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes describe the results of an activity, program, or initiative. Short-term outcomes reflect the immediate result of an activity, such as a change in knowledge, or change in practice. <p><u>Individual level:</u> -stabilization -engaging with positive role models</p> <p><u>Relational level:</u> -connection to family -connection to community</p> <p><u>Community level:</u> -projects to take back spaces, beautify, reduce criminal opportunities (through VIPs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermediate outcomes reflect the result that occurs after achieving the short-term outcome, such as a change in behavior or implementation of a new system. <p><u>Individual level:</u> - reduced violence (ret citizen) - reduced victimization (ret citizen) - reduced weapon-carrying (ret citizen) - improved well-being (ret citizen, caregiver) - engagement with prosocial individuals (ret citizen, caregiver)</p> <p><u>Relational level:</u> - improved family functioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term outcomes demonstrate the ultimate change in a population or system the activity, program, or initiative hopes to achieve, such as decreased community violence, decreased recidivism, decreased victimization. Increased community-building <p><u>Individual level:</u> positive sense of well-being (ret citizen, caregiver) -continued reduction in violence, victimization, weapon-carrying violence and victimization (returning citizen) -mentorship (returning citizen & caregiver)</p> <p><u>Relational level:</u> -improved family functioning -positive connection to</p>
				<p><u>Community level:</u> -community engagement (returning citizens & caregivers)</p> <p>- advocacy at different levels of government/institutions (ret citizen, caregiver)</p> <p>- Positive social networks [positive-based on dosage (frequency, intensity, duration)]; (ret citizen)</p>	<p>community</p> <p>-Moving from allowing loved ones to engage in violence to not condoning it in the home (caregiver) -prosocial connections</p> <p><u>Community level:</u> -continued community engagement - (as a whole) reduced community violence in VIP areas - (as a whole) increased collective efficacy in VIP areas - continued advocacy at all levels of government for transformative change - continued advocacy at institutional levels (e.g., hospitals) for transformative change</p>



RESEARCH TEAM ACTIVITIES - YEAR 2

What

Over Year 2 (2025), the research team accomplished:

- Conducted 21 interviews with those reentering society from incarceration
- Completed 3 caregiver focus groups and reports on findings from each focus group
- Met with city and community partners 12 times over six months
- Completed quarterly communication and coordination surveys of core implementation partners
- Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual conference
- Created public-facing slide deck for partners and city collaborators on research team efforts
- Provided data collection instruments for Power of WE Violence Healing and Response conference
- Developed and posted webpage about the NIJ research on Suffolk University website
- Completed full draft of scholarly paper based on CVIPI planning phase

How

The research team employs an action research approach that includes:

- Individual interviews with TPP participants at 6-month intervals (target: 60 participants over two years)
- Focus groups with WAB2G caregivers (target: six focus groups over two years)
- Quarterly stakeholder surveys assessing communication and coordination
- Monthly meetings with partners during implementation phase
- Collaborative data collection and capacity building with community partners
- Documentation of collaborative work across CVIPI partners



CVIPI PARTNERSHIP: COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, COORDINATION

CVIPI Charge: Work together effectively to implement violence intervention and prevention strategies.

Research Team Charge: Provide ongoing feedback on communication and coordination.

2025 at a Glance: The 2025 CVIPI stakeholder surveys captured feedback from core implementation group members across four quarters. Response patterns, communication metrics, and qualitative feedback reveal both consistent strengths and evolving areas for improvement.

Core Partners: Transformation Prison Project (TPP), We are Better Together (WAB2G), Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), Teen Empowerment, Project Right, & Boston Project Ministries.

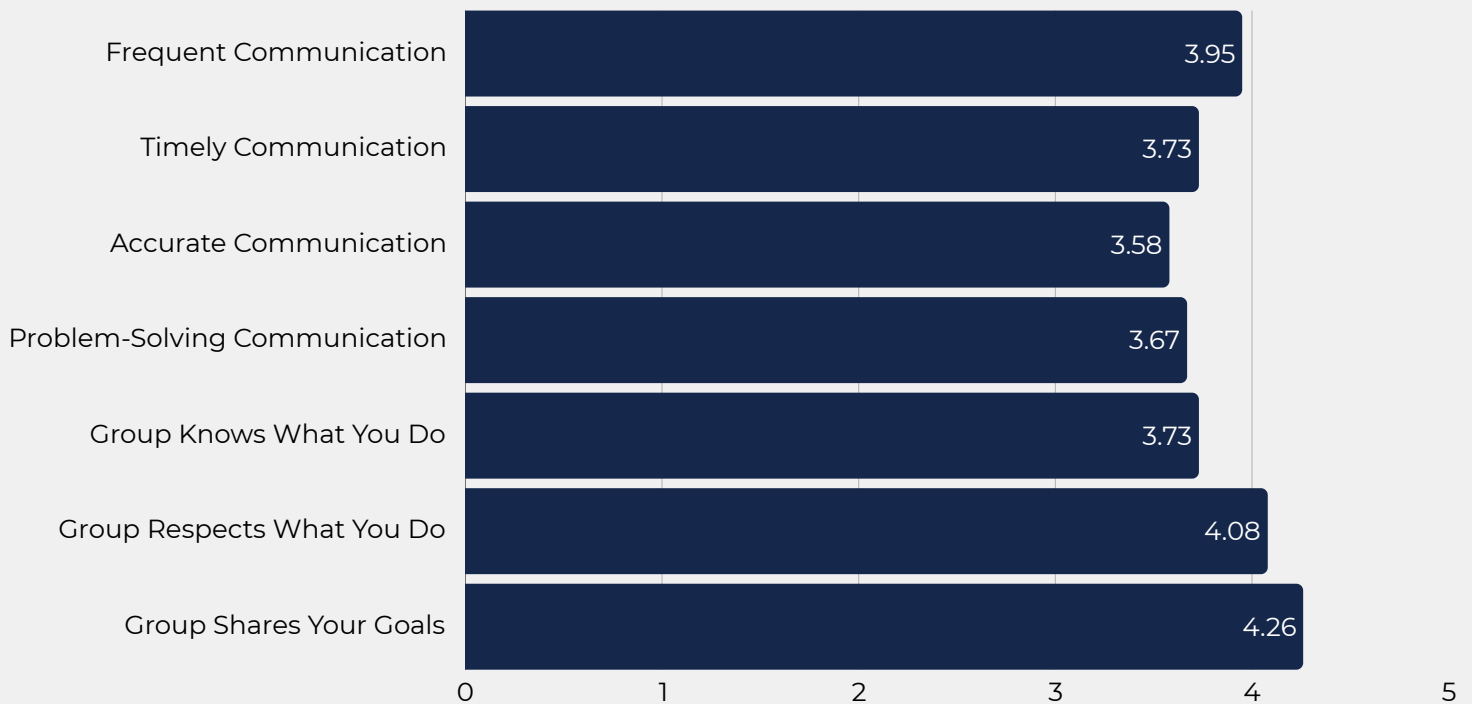
Survey Metrics: The January 2025 survey reflected the transition from a broader planning group to the core implementation group. Throughout 2025, four quarterly surveys were conducted with 26 total respondents, yielding an annual average response rate of 53%. Survey participation varied by quarter: 14% in January, 92% in May, and 54% in both August and December.

QUARTERLY SURVEY RESULTS

Communication & Coordination Trends

Each quarter, core implementation group members rated seven key aspects of communication and coordination on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Scores of 4.0 or above are generally considered strong, while scores below 3.5 indicate areas for focused improvement. Below is a chart containing the average annual scores for each of the seven aspects.

Annual Communication Metrics Overview



Key Findings

Strengths

- **Shared Goals (4.26):** Consistently highest rated across all quarters
- **Mutual Respect (4.08):** Strong foundation for collaboration
- **Frequent Communication (3.95):** Partners feel communication occurs regularly

Areas for Growth

- **Accurate Communication (3.58):** Opportunities to improve clarity and precision
- **Problem-Solving Communication (3.67):** Need for stronger collaborative problem-solving
- **Role Awareness (3.73):** Continued need for role clarification

QUARTERLY SURVEY RESULTS

Successes Throughout 2025

Pilot Initiatives and Early Wins: During the planning phase captured in the January survey, respondents praised the DYS girls initiative, joint events, and listening sessions as critical early accomplishments that built momentum for the implementation phase. These early wins established a foundation of trust and demonstrated the group's ability to collaborate on tangible projects.

Common Success Themes Across 2025

- Successful execution of major events (The Power of WE Conference, gatherings)
- Strengthened collaboration, networking, and relationship-building
- Increased clarity around partner expectations and shared objectives
- Growth in prevention work and community engagement
- Effective use of facilitation to establish clear goals
- Commitment and passion from partners despite external challenges

Challenges Throughout 2025

Role Clarity and Coordination: Confusion around **roles and responsibilities** appeared consistently throughout the year. August respondents emphasized the need for clarity around *"who are the lead agencies and who are the support teams,"* while December participants noted challenges with *"everyone not being on the same page or clear of their roles."* This persistent theme suggests that despite progress in building relationships and shared goals, there remains work to be done in clearly defining and communicating organizational roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structures.

Common Challenge Themes Across 2025

- Communication overload and need for clearer, more organized coordination
- Persistent lack of clarity around roles, responsibilities, and leadership structures
- Need for transparent resolution of past conflicts
- External funding uncertainty and national budget pressures
- Scheduling difficulties and competing priorities
- Opportunities to strengthen community engagement beyond partner organizations

YEAR 2: TPP IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

TPP — Outputs & Initial Outcomes

TPP CVIPI Charge: Engage those returning from incarceration who are at high risk for recidivism and those who are part of the Youthful Offender Coalition in services, programming, and support.

Research Team Charge: Conduct semi-structured interviews with 60 TPP participants at three intervals (as soon as possible upon release, 6 months, 1 year) to examine criminal justice and well-being outputs and outcomes.

Interview Participant Profile

29

Participants

37

Average Age (Ages
range from: 18-60)

4

Median Months Since
Release

86.2%

(25) Possess High
School
Diploma/Equivalent or
Above

69%

(20) Employed at Least
PT and at Least
Temporarily

52%

(15) Have Voted Since
Release

TPP PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Summary: Results from participant interviews show that TPP is meeting the outputs and initial outcomes identified in the logic model. Consistently, findings show that there is a “TPP Difference.”

Narrative: TPP participants report that agency support meets their unique needs through various forms of support. These include emotional support (e.g., support at difficult moments – no matter day or time), financial and digital literacy classes, material needs (clothing), helping to build their post-incarceration community (e.g., advocating for positive change at community events, running restorative justice circles), and supporting them to thrive (e.g., rides, work papers).

A common theme throughout these interviews was that TPP follows through on their promises and engages with those returning from incarceration in ways that matter to them, which for many interviewees, was and is not their experiences with other reentry and social service organizations. Further, when asked directly, who beyond family and friends they rely on for social support, many participants identified TPP as integral to their network. Beyond improvement in individual and family outcomes, participants voiced being able to be “part of the solution” to reduce community violence through supporting positive legislative action, living model lives, and telling their stories to others, especially justice-involved young people.

The TPP Difference: *"For us, it's personal"*

- TPP staff are trusted; they have similar lived experiences, and many participants had worked with TPP behind the wall.
- TPP circles are safe spaces that allow participants to be fully human.
- TPP staff follow through on what they say they will do.
- TPP staff are positive role models who are available at all hours in critical times of need
- TPP organizes collaborative, prosocial events (circles, community briefings, statehouse discussions)
- TPP offers tailored services and necessary skill building (ex: digital and financial literacy)

TPP PRELIMINARY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

Social Support

Most participants strongly agreed that they received good support from family, friends, and other important people in their lives, with TPP staff identified as positive social support and counted as critical to participants' positive support network.

Mental Health & Coping Strategies

Most participants reported managing emotions and healthy coping strategies such as doing things to make their situation better, getting advice from others, and coming up with strategies on how to improve their situations.

No participant reported criminal activity. Many discussed changing their habits and people they associated with to remove themselves from any potentially problematic situations.

Identified challenges relate to finances, housing, & employment:

51.7% (15) Difficulty finding & maintaining stable employment

51.7% (15) Worried about how they will survive financially

44.8% (13) Have barely enough money to get by

41.4% (12) Difficulty finding/paying for stable housing

41.4% (12) Difficulty receiving food stamps



YEAR 2: WAB2G IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

WAB2G Charge: Engage caregivers and family members of those who are incarcerated or are returning home to help them provide support, challenge narratives, and become agents of positive change.

Research Team Charge: Examine logic model outputs and outcomes through six focus groups with caregivers over two years.

Focus Group Participants Profile

**Dorchester &
Roxbury**

Most common residence
location of participants

20's-60's

Age Range of
Participants

100%

Impacted by Community
Violence

85%

Identified as
Black/African American

WAB2G PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Summary: Logic model outputs and initial outcomes are being met with caregivers reporting to increased feelings of safety, emotional regulation, and family functioning.

Narrative: Focus group participants consistently expressed that WAB2G and other WAB2G participants provide emotional support, acceptance, and a safe, non-judgmental space to be vulnerable. Through working with WAB2G they find emotional healing, in part because they feel safe to share things that they do not feel safe sharing with others including family members.

Participants frequently referred to **tools provided by WAB2G** that they used throughout their lives to improve their individual well-being and family functioning. These included setting boundaries, taking accountability, and communication skills. Participants commented that their work with WAB2G helped them to support their children and their grandchildren in making good choices. These included non-violent messaging and boundary setting with regard to risky activities. Women also discussed **being advocates for change** and supporting other people in and outside their WAB2G community.

WAB2G participants often call the group a “sisterhood” articulating that participation has changed their lives for the better.

The WAB2G Impact

- “Sisterhood” - support from the group, safe space to be real, belonging & acceptance
- Building accepting and supportive community from positive interactions with staff and other caregivers through agency groups, events, and group chats
- Tools and techniques to support well-being include setting boundaries, taking accountability, “step back to come back”
- Using tools and techniques across their interactions with others for better relationships



YEAR TWO TAKEAWAYS

- **Connection** with clients and with partners through shared lived experiences and ongoing, positive experiences are critical across the CVIPI initiative
- **Community building** in non-geographically bound spaces with people sharing similar experiences provides social support, networks of service, and support in real time
- **Intensity** (Dosage) of support & **Type of Support** (what they need in the moment) is important for all CVIPI populations
- **Collaboration across providers**, such as the TPP and WAB2G DYS efforts, can realize grant goals, and lead to better outcomes for individuals and their families as they reach across multiple spheres of life (individual, family, community)



GAPS & FUTURE STEPS

A short-term logic model outcome that was not addressed over the last year by Boston's CVIPI grant was "projects to take backspaces, beautify, reduce criminal opportunities." This has been discussed in CVIPI meetings. A late start to include Village in Progress (VIP) neighborhoods in the initiative has been ignited so progress may be evident within the next six months. Additionally, with the recent Boston Police hire to extract community-level police data from the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC), we can better examine data related to place alongside people.

Future Steps

- Examine the VIP outcomes identified in the logic model
- With CVIPI partners, close the gap in the systematic documentation of collaborative CVIPI efforts
- Discuss data collected from research team efforts and BRIC outputs at partner meetings
- Examine outcomes (a.k.a., impact) of CVIPI on individuals, families, and communities

APPENDIX: METHODS & DATA SOURCES

Research Methodology

Participatory action research is used throughout the research project. This means that those who are most impacted by violence are given equal opportunities to participate in the research, from developing strategies to collect data, to developing instruments to collect that data, to interpreting results from the data. In other words, stakeholders that include agency participants, staff, and residents will actively engage in shaping the research methodology, developing data collection tools, and interpreting the findings. This research project employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand the effects of the initiative.

Data Sources Include

- Semi-structured interviews with those returning from incarceration and engaging with services
- Focus groups held with caregivers of those returning from incarceration and survivors of violence
- Observations at meetings and events
- Semi-structured surveys of core CVIPI implementation partners

In order to evaluate the intermediate and long-term effects of Boston's initiative, the research team will look at data on violence, victimization, and restorative-centered health and well-being. During the last year of the research and evaluation study, stakeholders will work together to develop a ground-up, lived experience-informed causal model of community violence intervention and prevention as a way to carry forward the CVIPI-funded work that can be infused into Boston's overall violence prevention strategy.