

Given the extraordinary human cost of failure, we must inform every aspect of what we do with the most current science, then divest personal ego and scrutinize our work with objectivity and scientific rigor, course correcting each step of the way. A partial summary of the major bodies of theory and research that inform the central tenets of Green Dot etc. is provided below.

Violence Against Women

A review of the literature within the field of violence against women suggests that despite years of sustained effort, we have not yet realized a measurable reduction in violence. However, an examination of the outcome/evaluation research does provide some clear indicators of prevention strategies that have not been effective. For example, a meta-analysis of sexual assault education programs conducted by Anderson and Whiston in 2005 found that traditional awareness programming in the form of one-time only educational sessions, large-scale events and the dissemination of printed educational materials – are not effective means to reduce violence. Traditional

program content, including facts, statistics, myths, and definitions have also failed to demonstrate a decrease in violence. These types of approaches have demonstrated success at increasing basic knowledge, as well as some success at improving violence related attitudes, particularly in the short term. These approaches have also had some success in increasing utilization of direct services (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). There is little to support prevention programming that focuses exclusively on risk reduction targeting women, and there has been little demonstrated effectiveness in approaching all men as potential perpetrators with messages related to obtaining consent.

Application to Violence Prevention:

Stop doing what doesn't work. Stop calling "awareness education," "prevention." Look outside our own field for potential applications of successful prevention strategies from other disciplines.

Bystander Literature

Within the field of Social Psychology, there are decades of research documenting basic principles of bystander behavior that have a broad impact on individual and group choices. This body of research seeks to understand why individuals choose to intervene or remain passive when they are in the role of a bystander in a potentially risky, dangerous or emergency situation. The current body of knowledge demonstrates bystander influences such as: (1) diffusion of responsibility – when faced with a crisis situation, individuals are less likely to respond when more people are present because each assumes that someone else will handle it (Darley & Latane, 1968; Chekroun & Brauer, 2002); (2) evaluation apprehension - when faced with a high risk situation, individuals are reluctant to respond because they are afraid they will look foolish (Latane & Darley, 1970);

(3) pluralistic ignorance – when faced with an ambiguous, but potentially high-risk situation, individuals will defer to the cues of those around them when deciding whether to respond (Clark & Word, 1974; Latane & Darley, 1970); (4) confidence in skills – individuals are more likely to intervene in a high-risk situations when they feel confident in their ability to do so effectively; (5) modeling – individuals are more likely to intervene in a high risk situation when they have seen someone else model it first (Bryan & Test, 1967; Rushton & Campbell, 1977). These well-documented principals not only suggest what inhibits bystanders from intervening, but also, strategies for effectively overcoming these inhibitions and increasing the proactive and reactive responses of bystanders.

Application to Violence Prevention:

The bystander research provides the targeted behavior we want to endorse. The behaviors include actively intervening in situations that are imminently or potentially high-risk for violence, as well as effective means to elicit that targeted behavior. Further, this body of research provides specific strategies to increase the likelihood that the trained individuals will actually intervene when they are in the role of a bystander.

Diffusion of Innovation / Social Diffusion Theory

The social diffusion theory (Rogers, 1983) is based on the premise that behavior change in a population can be initiated and then will diffuse to others if enough natural and influential opinion leaders within the population visibly adopt, endorse and support an innovative behavior. Based on this model, early adopters of any given population are systematically identified, recruited, and trained to serve as behavior change “endorsers” within their community and sphere of influence, resulting in a shift in the targeted attitudes and behaviors within that community. In other words, opinion leaders shape social/ behavior changes by making it easier for others to initiate and maintain certain “new” behaviors. Diffusion of innovation theory and the influence of early adopters to establish new behavioral trends has been studied extensively for decades and proven widely successful across settings and content areas (Kelly, 2004). For example, Kelly et al. (1997) has

demonstrated the effectiveness of training early adopters in increasing safe-sex practices among populations of gay men. One study targeting gay men in four cities, implemented five, weekly training sessions, and found at the one year follow-up an increase of more than 25% in condom use. Additionally, Sikkema (2000) focused on safe-sex practices among impoverished, inner-city women. At the one year follow-up they found a 12.5 % drop in unprotected sex and an increase of 17% in condom use. The strength of the community-wide behavior shift was further demonstrated; in populations where changes were made – the population still demonstrated the documented improvement at the three year follow-up (despite that the actual intervention had ceased within the first year). Though there is evidence that over-use or misuse of early adopters can backfire, an appropriate utilization of Social Diffusion Theory has been consistently demonstrated to be an effective and efficient method for creating culture change.

Application to Violence Prevention:

Given that sexual, domestic and stalking violence in our communities exists on a scale that clearly reaches the scope of a public health concern that requires broad-based, community level change, it is imperative that a critical mass of individuals endorse and engage in targeted behaviors that are proactively and visibly intolerant of violence. Since few organizations have the resources to provide direct training to enough individuals to obtain this critical mass, strategically targeting the most socially influential individuals becomes necessary, as these “popular opinion leaders” can then most effectively and efficiently impact the attitudes and behaviors of their peers through modeling, endorsing and engaging in the targeted behaviors. Furthermore, social diffusion theory suggests that we take an approach different from the peer education and mentoring models we have historically used, finding that peers are most influential in their natural, social environments rather than when placed in paraprofessional roles.

Marketing / Rebranding Research

Rebranding of corporations, organizations and services is a process that has been well examined and documented within marketing research. A smart rebranding strategy allows an entity the chance to meet the needs of consumers and investors, and is most often prompted by a gap between the espoused brand, and the actual brand image that others may have or underperformance toward meeting the organization’s goals (Davies and Chun, 2002; Kapferer, 1997). When engaging in a rebranding effort, key issues include: focusing on how the brand should be changed, weighing the potential costs and benefits of a brand change, and understanding and addressing internal resistance

that key stakeholders may have to the change (Merreilees & Miller, 2008). In addition, it is essential to carefully and thoroughly review an organization’s mission, vision and values – then, redefine in a way that translates into an image that is relatable to the targeted audience and sensitive to the customer base (Ewing et al., 1995). Finally, marketing literature emphasizes the need to re-vision the brand based on a solid understanding of the consumer, to meet both existing and anticipated needs (Merreilees and Miller, 2008). Though a rebranding effort can involve considerable commitment, the research is full of examples of companies that were able to revitalize their products, reputation and consumer buy-in through this process.

Application to Violence Prevention:

The evidence is clear and consistent that there is a significant gap between the espoused “brand” of violence against women prevention (i.e., inclusive, want men to join the movement, urgently relevant to all of us) and the brand perceived by the community (i.e., man-hating, choir-only, not their issue). Despite our best intentions, this branding crisis is resulting in the violence against women prevention movement remaining a largely choir-based, women’s-only movement that has gained little traction in terms of broader community support in the past several decades. By better understanding and addressing the explicit and implicit concerns of the “consumer” (community members we are trying to engage), we can

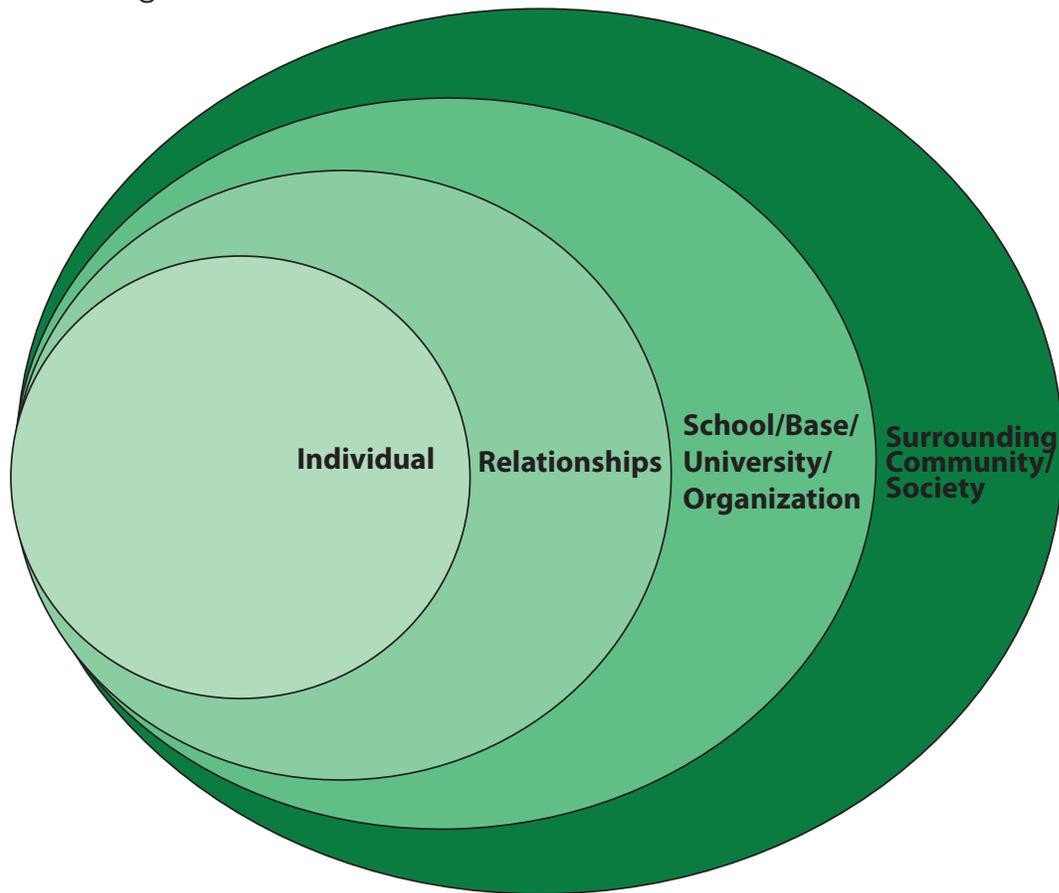
reposition ourselves in a way that will reduce the obstacles that prevent more from joining prevention efforts. Another key application of the marketing research involves the importance of working closely with key stakeholders (i.e., current educators, advocates and direct service providers) to ensure they are fully engaged and supportive of the rebranding and any pockets of resistance are addressed (Merreilles and Miller, 2008).

Public Health

Violence can be understood as an adverse health condition given its multiple, negative affects on physical and psychological wellbeing (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Public health frameworks for prevention hold promise for violence reduction because they have

proven their ability to address and eliminate negative conditions which foster health problems (Prothrow-Stith, 2010). The World Health Organization (2010) contends that prevention of adverse health conditions requires action at each of the four, interrelated spheres of the social ecology:

Socio-ecological Model



Application to Violence Prevention:

Work in addressing other public health issues clearly indicates that an effective prevention strategy is going to include addressing aspects of the issue that intersect with each level of the social ecology – including the individual, relationship, community and society levels. Green Dot’s broad lens of “bystander” incorporates individuals with the ability to impact not only a high risk situation at a party – but also individuals with decision making power that can impact policies, enforcement, and resources.

Adult Learning

Research in the field of androgogy (methods or techniques used to teach adults) clearly tells us the best ways to ensure individuals learn and retain the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in and endorse a new behavior or set of behaviors. Key components of effective androgogy include: emotion, repetition, varied instructional methods, connection with previous knowledge, consideration of attention span limitations, and harnessing intrinsic motivation (Knowles, 2011; Laird, 1985; Dirkx 2001; Keating, 1994; Pike, 1989). Furthermore, it is imperative that adult instruction focus on the learner (i.e., how students learn affectively, behaviorally, and cognitively), the instructor (i.e., the skills and strategies necessary for effective instruction), and the meaning exchanged in the verbal, nonverbal, and

mediated messages between and among instructors and students (Mottet & Beebe, 2006). Components of effective instructional communication include: motivation, humor, immediacy, clarity, and content relevance (Aylor & Opplinger, 2003; Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006; Chesebro, 2002; Keller, 1987). Educational products should also seek to ensure that knowledge and skills attained in the training context are applied to learners' jobs and other community responsibilities (Broad, 1997). An effective training engages and motivates learners, obtains stakeholder buy in, facilitates the transfer of information from short-term to long-term memory, and in many cases, brings about new behavior (Reeve, 2005; Ericsson et al., 1993).

Application to Violence Prevention:

Given the pervasiveness of violence, prevention requires nothing short of a cultural shift. In order to shift culture, we need a critical mass of people to engage in a targeted behavioral change which requires that we design and present maximally effective educational products. Green Dot applies the principles of androgogy in both our instructional design and our facilitation in the learning environment. Furthermore, Green Dot is premised on the notion that the messenger matters and as such is designed to maximize the effectiveness of prevention educators. Given the stakes of this issue, it is imperative that anyone delivering a violence prevention program demonstrate exceptional ability in the area of education. For this reason, the Green Dot strategy utilizes a train-the-instructor rather than a train-the-trainer design.

Developmental Psychology

In order to be effective, programs intent on behavioral change must align with the developmental capacities – socially, emotionally and cognitively – of individuals across the lifespan. The field of developmental psychology helps us understand and adapt to the unique needs and abilities

of individuals at varying formative stages. A bystander-based approach to addressing conflict, aggression, and intergroup discrimination requires a number of age appropriate considerations:

Developmental Considerations for Elementary School Programming

- Ability to take another's perspective
- Emotional regulation
- Understanding rules and intentions
- Prosocial behavior/ altruism
- Concrete reasoning
- Emerging sense of self in a social context
- Development of problem solving ability

Developmental Considerations for Middle School Programming

- Ability to use inductive logic
- Abstract thinking and reflection
- Increase in importance of peers and peer conformity
- Changes in self esteem
- Conflict between creating autonomy and maintaining parental connection
- Systematic problem solving

Developmental Considerations for High School Programming

- New and more mature relationships
- Autonomy and independence from adults
- Establishment of personal identity
- Sense of invincibility
- Acquisition of values and an ethical system
- Abstract and nuanced reasoning
- Desiring and achieving social responsibility

Developmental Considerations for Young Adults

- Movement into adult roles and responsibilities
- Awareness of consequences and personal limitations
- Future-orientation
- Development of new skills, hobbies, and adult interests
- Idealism
- Decreasing importance of peer group as a determinant of behavior
- Empathy
- Completion of values framework

(Dereli, 2009; Dunn, 1994; Sullivan, Zaitchik, & Tager-Flusbuerg, 1994; Turiel, 1983; Marcus, 1986; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1982; Tan-Niam et al., 1998; Fischer & Rose, 1994; Chen, 1997; Jessor, 1992)

Application to Violence Prevention:

Early to middle childhood provides a window of opportunity to introduce the role of “prosocial bystander” and the corresponding script that accompanies it. Just as a child comes to understand and embody the “student” role, the hope is that the role of pro-social bystander will become internalized and an integrated part of the child’s evolving identity. In early adolescence, middle school students have the capacity to benefit from a bystander perspective because (1) they can consider other people’s feelings and perspectives, and (2) they have the cognitive capacity to engage in problem solving. While individual self-esteem is beginning to emerge, it is largely shaped by the influence and response of peers. Therefore, Green Dot does not rely on the ability of individual students to “take a stand” against their peers. Though explicitly negative peer pressure is less prominent for most kids, the need for conformity is high. Therefore, the goal of Green Dot for middle school students is to create behavioral options that would allow them to “do the right thing” while minimizing the need for them to stand-out from their peers. As peer conformity is of paramount importance during this stage, engaging peers with greatest influence as role models allows the program to harness the power of peer pressure, rather than fight against it. As students age, the Green Dot program for high school students is designed to tap into the establishment of personal and social responsibility, asking students to develop personal creeds and to identify self-defining moments when they have the power to make their communities safer. Because students at this developmental stage tend to feel invincible, Green Dot does not ask that they identify themselves as potential victims of violence nor does it threaten students with punishment if they fail to intervene or if they engage in risky behavior. Rather, Green Dot puts each student in the role of pro-active bystander with the power to shift social norms. At the college and community levels, Green Dot engages adults in honest and open conversations about obstacles to action and realistic solutions. Green Dot is infused with hope for a different future where violence is not inevitable, helping individuals understand how their individual choices can have a lasting, positive impact.