

# Community Safety: Where are we at in Ottawa?

Melanie Bania, PhD

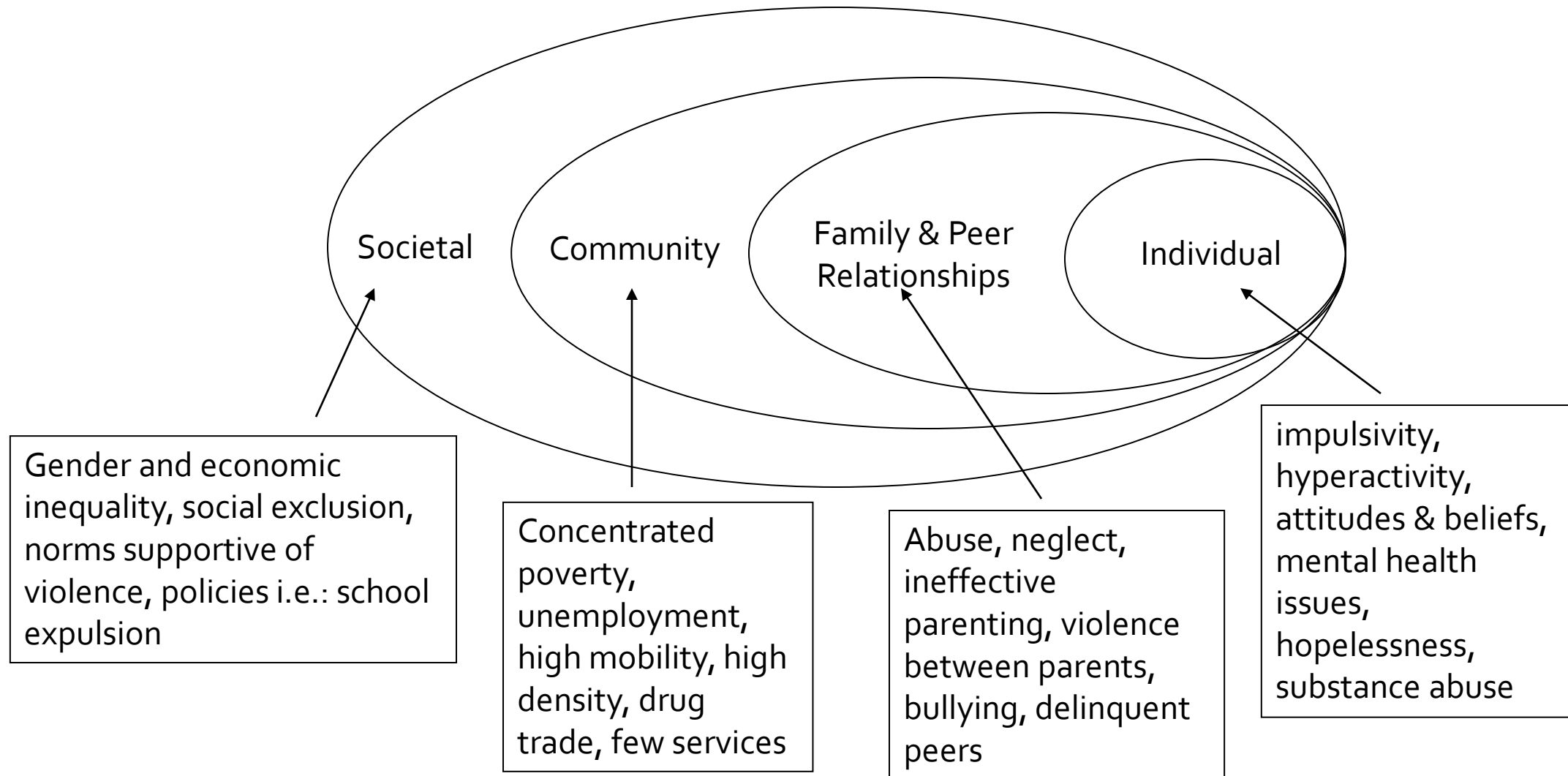
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Who am I?

## Melanie Bania, PhD

- **Canadian Centre for Safer Communities**  
(formerly CMNCP)
- **Community Safety Consultant**
- Director, Youth Justice Services (2017-2021)  
**Youth Services Bureau (YSB) of Ottawa**
- Graduate Work on **Crime Prevention through  
Community Development in Ottawa** (2008-2012)

# Risk Factors for Crime & Violence



The key is...

ROOT  
CAUSES!



# Three Main Types of Crime Prevention / Intervention

Tertiary prevention:  
police enforcement  
& criminal justice

Secondary prevention:  
Interventions targeted to  
persons & situations where risks are present

Primary prevention:  
Universal social, educational and economic policies  
that foster equity and inclusion

# What DOESN'T Work

- Repression, deterrence, dissuasion, punishment alone
- Harsher sentences or programs that don't target risk/protective factors (ex: 'three strikes' policies, longer sentences, boot camps)
- Initiatives that focus only on relationship building amongst partners without targeting risk/protective factors

# According to research, the challenge is to:

- Improve general socio-economic policies & supports (poverty, housing, inclusion, health & mental health, etc.)

## **AND**

- Build significantly on current efforts that address the conditions and situations that are associated with crime, violence and victimization (social supports and community development)

## **WHILE**

- Improving standard law enforcement and criminal justice practices (policing, courts, corrections)
- Stop wasting time, energy and resources on what doesn't work

# What can we all do?

## Keys to Reducing Crime at Local Level:

1. Need strong commitment of local residents and community groups to support leaders and initiatives that tackle root causes;
2. Need strong commitment of local community leaders to focus on tackling root causes (e.g., City Councillors, Mayor, Chief of Police);
3. Need coordination among residents and all orders of government to support and adequately fund sustained local actions and programs that target root causes;
4. Need to share and use data and evaluation to guide decisions on what works and to apply resources most effectively to tackle local issues and priorities;

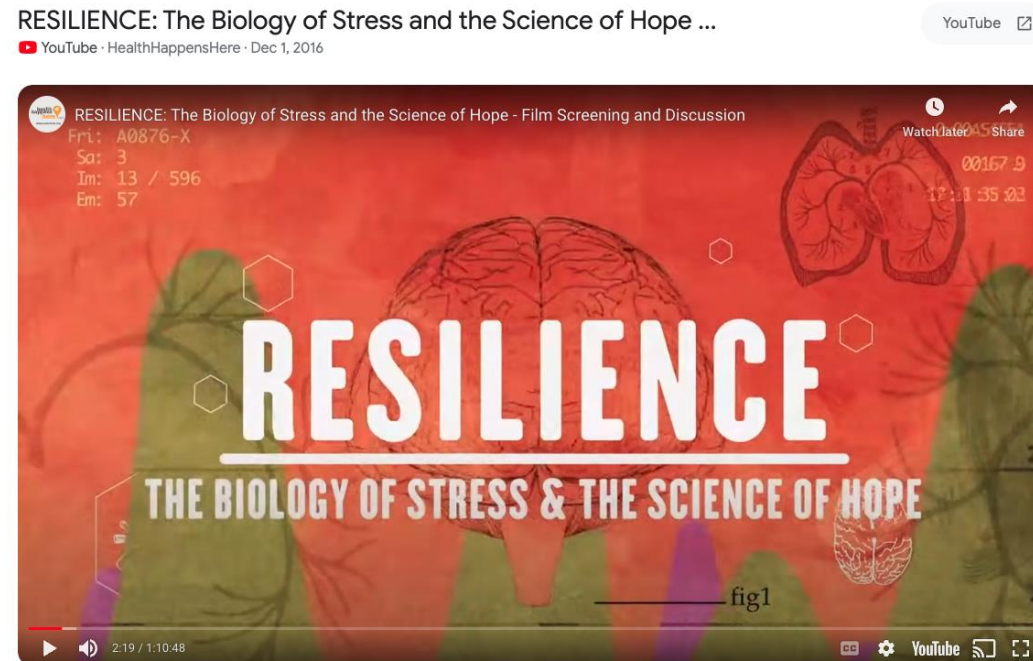


Strong commitment of  
local residents &  
community groups to  
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# Addressing & Preventing Childhood Adversity in our Communities

In rural, suburban, and urban communities alike:

- Safer Homes = Safer Communities
- Safer Relationships = Safer Communities

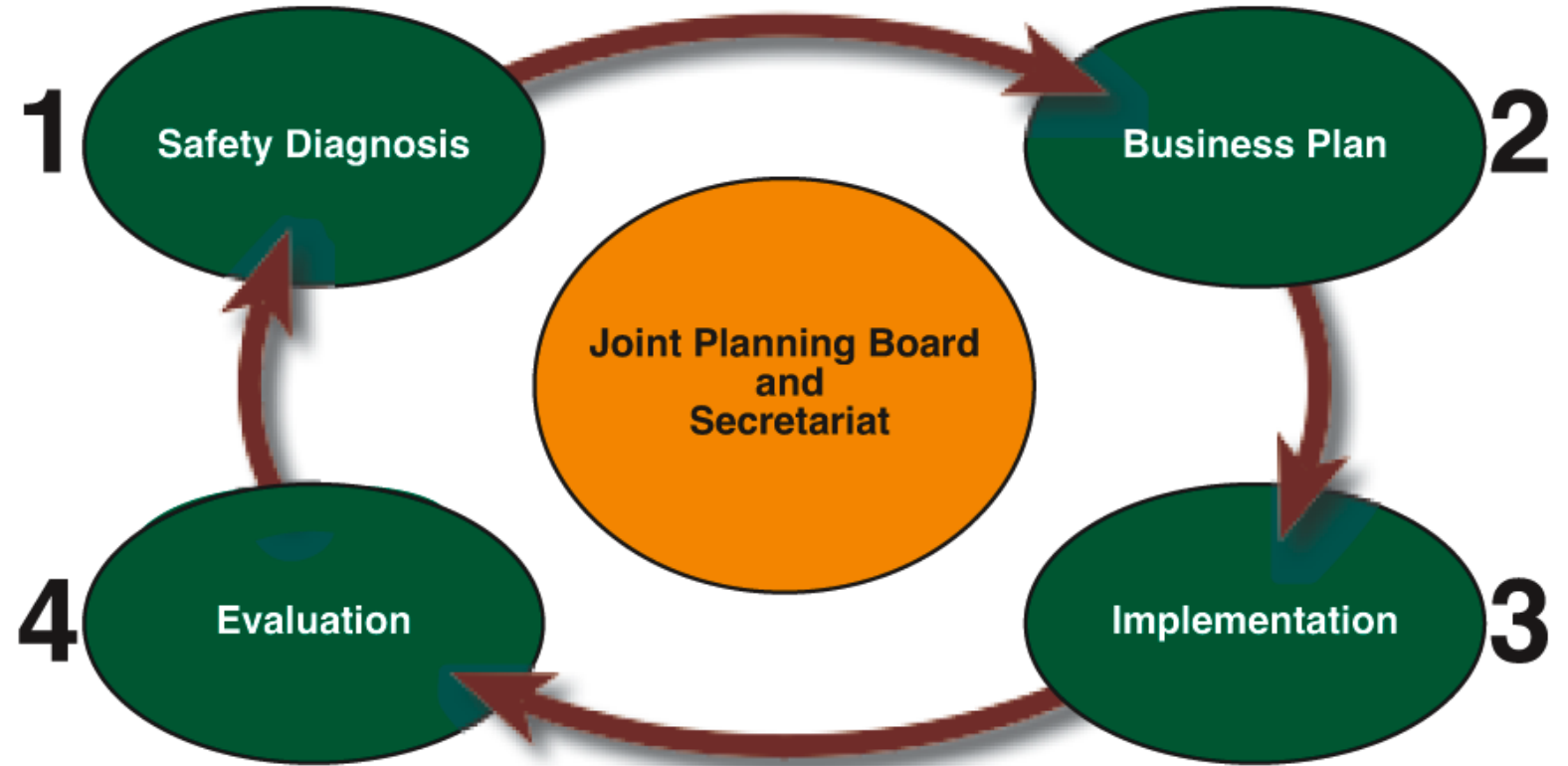


<https://kpjrfilms.co/resilience/bonus-content/>

Strong commitment of  
local community  
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tackling root causes

Local  
Community  
Safety &  
Wellbeing  
Plans

City crime prevention planning office



Multi-sector governance to tackle multiple risk factors

# Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan in Ottawa: Priorities



<https://engage.ottawa.ca/Community-Safety-Well-Being-Plan>

# Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan in Ottawa



Multi-sector governance to tackle multiple risk factors

## Local Context

- There are many current initiatives and services in Ottawa that are based on best practices, but they operate on shoestring and short-term budgets – **how can you help amplify and sustain what is working?** ex:
  - Community Health & Resource Centres - community development and safety initiatives for residents
  - Ottawa Youth Justice Services Network (OYJSN) - many agencies working on targeted intervention, but none (except the police) have core funding
  - Hospital-based violence intervention – we have a program for gang exit (T4C), but what about intimate partner violence?

# One Approach to Amplify & Sustain What is Working

## The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

### Common Agenda

All participants have a **shared vision for change** including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

### Shared Measurement

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

### Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Participant activities must be **differentiated while still being coordinated** through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

### Continuous Communication

**Consistent and open communication** is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and appreciate common motivation.

### Backbone Support

Creating and managing collective impact requires a dedicated staff and a specific set of skills to **serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.**

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Where are we at with this in Ottawa?  
How will we ensure investment in root causes?

Thank you

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