

Bridging Movements

COMMUNITY CENTERS AS VIOLENCE AND ABUSE PREVENTION

Parks, libraries, cultural centers, faith centers, senior centers, and other public spaces bring people together and connect us to not only each other, but our broader communities as well. Being connected to and within our communities helps protect against violence and abuse. The existence of community centers makes our communities healthier and safer and helps prevent violence and abuse.

- Community centers expose us to **diverse and expansive learning opportunities** which expands our access to information and perspectives. This in turn helps us build awareness, empathy, and knowledge and to support equity, health, and safety for all people. When we learn from diverse communities, it becomes harder to tolerate and perpetrate violence towards people.
- Community centers offer **space and programming** for groups (like youth) which gives people places to engage and connect outside of work and school and contribute back to the communities we are a part of. This increases our connection to, investment in, and support from our communities which helps make our communities healthier and safer for everyone.
- By **ensuring access** to low-cost/free public spaces (particularly those that are physically accessible and offer a wide range of accommodations) community centers reduce barriers to community connection and community organizing that can improve our communities, increase opportunities, and protect against violence and abuse.
- It is important for individuals to have access to **spaces that are physically safe and welcoming** to exist in. This is particularly meaningful for groups that are targeted with violence and abuse more frequently based on their identities, including BIPOC communities, LGBTQ+ and Trans* communities, youth, and more.