



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CRIME LAB  
Urban Labs

# ○ Untapped Levers for Reducing Gun Violence

The Impact of Behavioral Science Programs



# Agenda

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## **Welcome and Presentation**

*Kim Smith, University of Chicago Crime Lab*

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## **Panel Discussion with Researchers**

*Panelists: Nour Abdul-Razzak, Monica Bhatt, and Jonathan Davis*

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## **Panel Discussion with Practitioners**

*Panelists: Jadine Chou, Julie Noobler, and Dave Williams*

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## **Closing**

*Kim Smith, University of Chicago Crime Lab*

# Reducing Gun Violence, Advancing Justice

The Crime Lab designs, tests, and scales data-driven innovations to improve the public sector's response to the dual challenges of America's gun violence crisis and a criminal justice system that is not truly just.



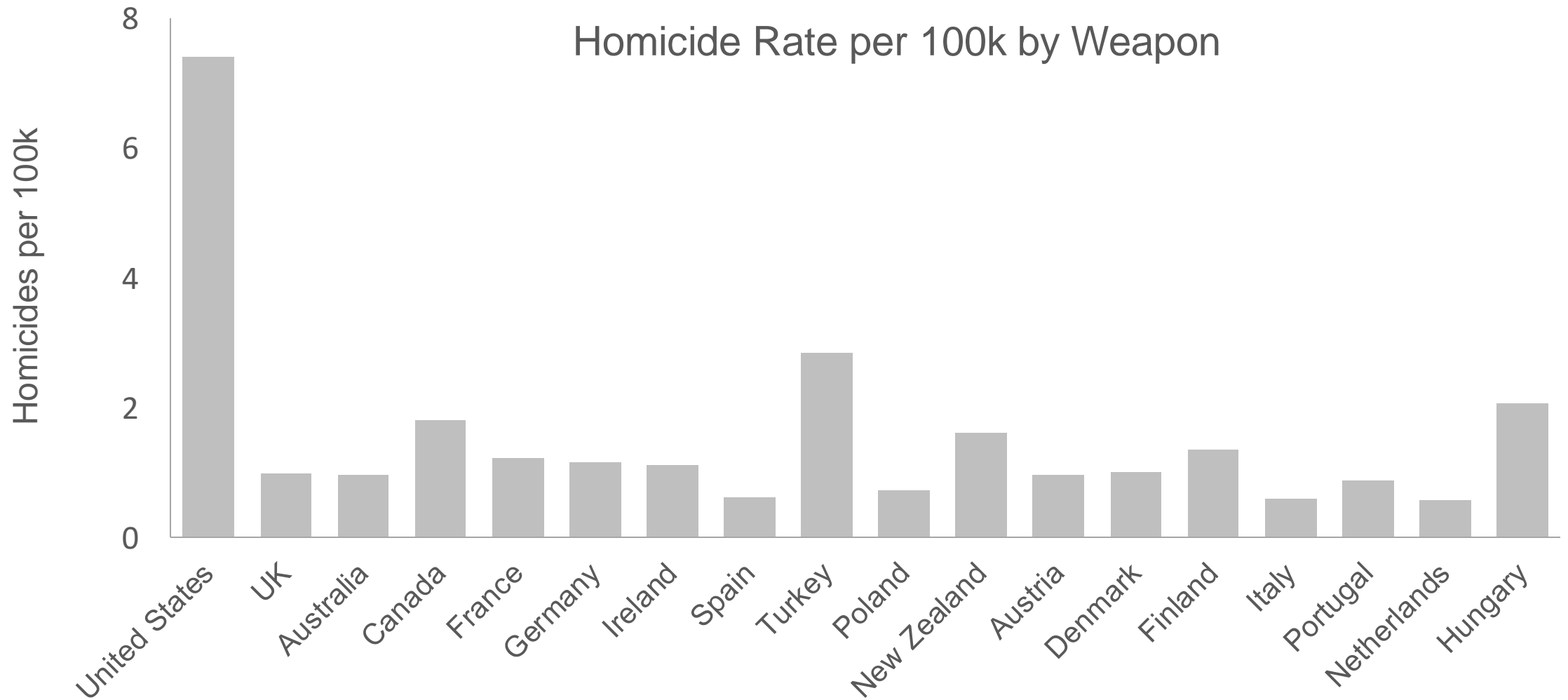


# **Presentation of the Research**

Kim Smith, Director of National Programs and External Engagement, Crime Lab



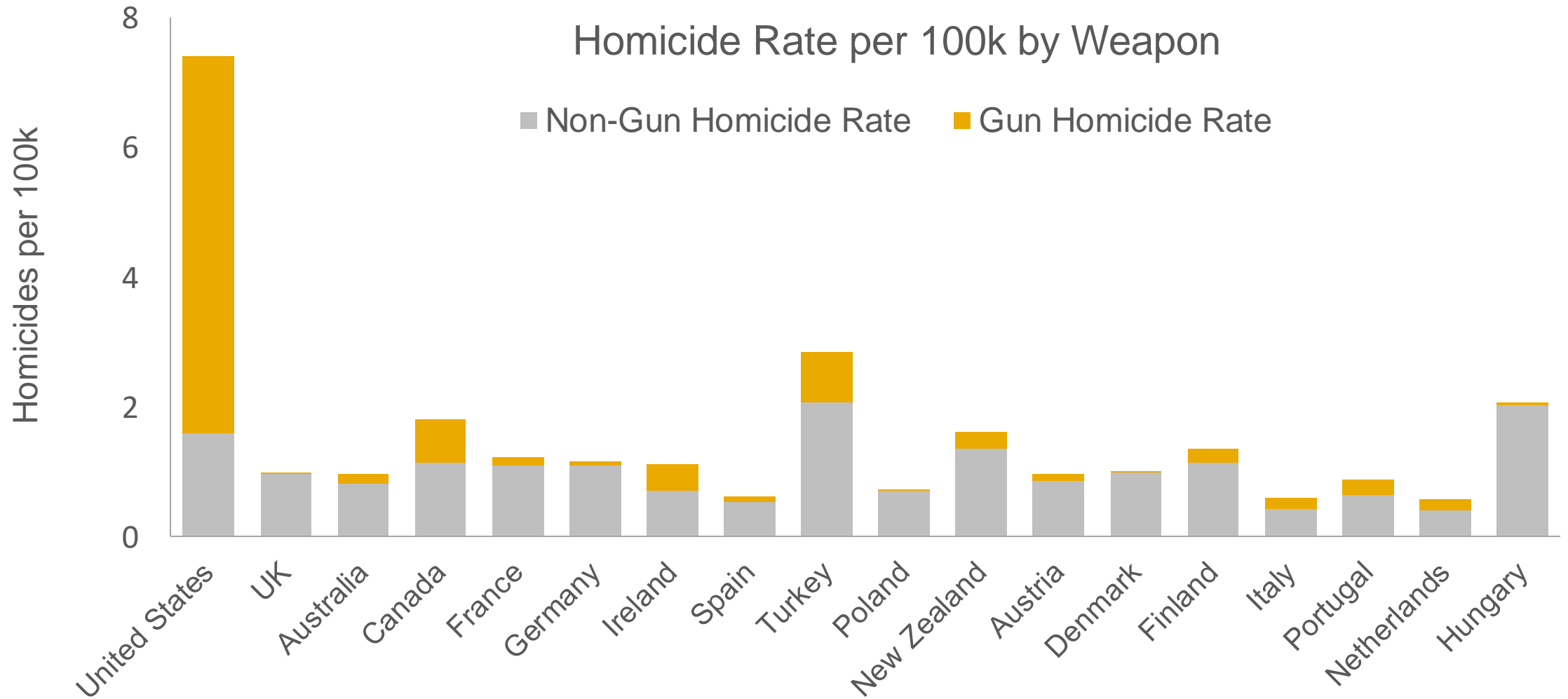
# Our uniquely American Problem



Source: GunPolicy.org



# Our uniquely American Problem



Source: GunPolicy.org

10 minutes

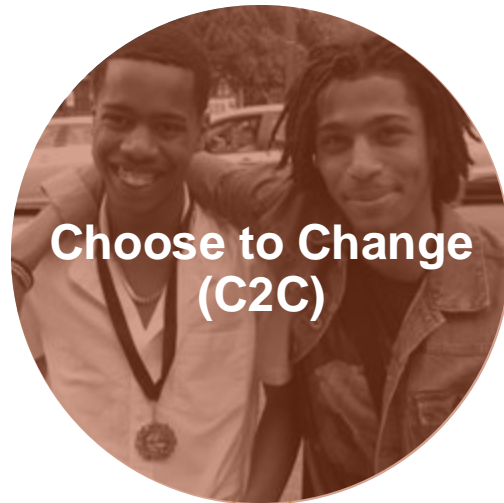
	<b>Becoming a Man (BAM)</b>	<b>Choose to Change® (C2C®)</b>	<b>Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center</b>	<b>READI</b>
<b>Implementing Organization</b>	Youth Guidance; Chicago Public Schools	Brightpoint; Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.; Chicago Public Schools	Northern Illinois Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Task Force	Heartland Alliance
<b>Participant Population</b>	Male 7th-10th graders, CPS elementary and high schools	13 to 18-year-olds at risk of school disengagement and/or violence involvement	Residents held in the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center	Men at the highest risk of shooting or being shot
<b>Intervention Frequency and Duration</b>	Weekly one-hour group sessions; 1-2 school years	16 group therapy sessions over 6 months; 8 hours of mentoring per week	Four 90-minute sessions	Daily sessions; 18 months of programming and 6 months of follow-up support



# Research finds cognitive behavioral interventions can reduce violence



Violent Crime Arrests  
**-45-50%**



Violent Crime Arrests  
**-48%**



JTDC Readmission  
**-19%**



Violent Crime Arrests  
**-43%**



# **Panel Discussion with Researchers**



# Research Panelists



**Nour Abdul-Razzak**  
Research Director  
UChicago Inclusive  
Economy Lab  
Affiliate UChicago Crime Lab



**Monica Bhatt**  
Senior Research Director  
UChicago Crime Lab



**Jonathan Davis**  
Assistant Professor,  
University of Oregon  
Affiliate, UChicago Crime Lab



**MODERATOR**

**Kim Smith**  
Director of National Programs  
and External Engagement  
UChicago Crime Lab

	<b>Becoming a Man (BAM)</b>	<b>Choose to Change® (C2C®)</b>	<b>Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center</b>	<b>READI</b>
<b>Core Components</b>	Cognitive-behavioral intervention	Mentoring + wraparound services + trauma-informed group therapy	Cognitive-behavioral intervention + Mentoring + discussion of rationale, criminal, and non-criminal consequences	Cognitive-behavioral intervention + jobs
<b>Curriculum</b>	BAM curriculum of 20+ modules developed by Youth Guidance	Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS)	Developed by Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Taskforce	Initially, University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute CBI-CA curriculum; Later, “Control+Alt+Delete” READI homegrown curriculum
<b>Staff</b>	BAM counselors	Brightpoint therapists and YAP advocates	PSN Taskforce	READI Chicago outreach workers
<b>Geography</b>	One city (Chicago)	One city (Chicago): South and West sides of Chicago	One city (Chicago)	One city (Chicago)



# **Panel Discussion with Practitioners**

# Practitioner Panelists



**Jadine Chou**  
Chief of Safety and Security  
Chicago Public Schools



**Dave Williams**  
Chief Program Officer  
Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.



**Julie Noobler**  
Program Director, Mental  
Health and Wellness  
Brightpoint



**MODERATOR**  
**Kim Smith**  
Director of National Programs  
and External Engagement  
UChicago Crime Lab



# Choose to Change® (C2C®) serves youth who are justice-involved or disconnecting from school



## Six-month program

Behavioral health support, relentless engagement, and mentorship



## Strong relationships

Staff bring lived experience and compassion to build life-long relationships



## Community-based

Youth outreach, intensive mentoring, and tailored supports offered *outside* of school



## Trauma-informed

Group cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) sessions





# Choose to Change® (C2C®) Program Guide



Photo by Chicago Public Schools

This document was created in partnership with the University of Chicago Crime Lab and Education Lab, Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP)™ and Brightpoint

SEPTEMBER 2024

## Session Topics and Adaptations

### SESSION 1: Welcome and Introduction

- In the opening session of the SPARCS group, participants are oriented to the purpose and expectations of the group. Groups discuss norms and rules for SPARCS sessions.
- Youth are also introduced to feelings identification activities and coping skills that will be referenced throughout the 16-week intervention. Clinicians work to support youth and youth advocates when they practice these foundational skills in session.

### SESSION 2: Stress Trauma and the Body

- Discussion of Stress, Trauma, and the Body
- This session builds the foundation for future discussions on the impact of stress and trauma on the body.
- Safety planning is introduced here for two reasons: 1) to help the participants begin to think about the importance of their own safety, and 2) to help them mindfully (rather than automatically or impulsively) prepare to protect themselves in a number of ways should the need arise.
- Participants may be exposed to material that may stir cognitive, affective, or somatic distress.

### SESSION 3: Mindfulness

- Discussion of Emotion Mind, Reasonable Mind, and Wise Mind
- This session introduces the concept of mindfulness. This session builds on earlier skills to help group members be better able to respond when struggling with emotional and behavioral dysregulation. Emotion Mind, Reasonable Mind, and Wise Mind are the three States of Mind that drive our behavior. Emotion Mind represents times during which our actions are driven entirely by our emotions, as opposed to Reasonable Mind, in which behavior is driven solely by reasoned thought. While at times there is a tendency to view emotions as "bad" and reason as "good," Wise Mind represents the combination of the two and requires an integration of emotions, reason, and one's intuition. Wise Mind = Emotion Mind + Reasonable Mind + intuition.

### SESSION 4: Mindfulness - Continued

- This session builds on the previous session and contains the core content on mindfulness. It is critical that during each group meeting, clinicians describe reasons mindfulness is important and the ways it can be helpful to group members' daily lives. Leaders should be able to highlight core concepts when conducting mindfulness activities throughout treatment. Clinicians will review skills that explain exactly what to do to be mindful (observe, describe, and fully participate) as well as skills that explain how to do it (don't judge, stay focused, and do what works).

### SESSION 5: Distress Tolerance - Distract

- In this session and the next, group members will learn strategies to help them cope in the moment when they are overwhelmed and/or unable to solve the problem right away. Distress tolerance skills are tools for coping with upsetting situations and feelings that cannot be immediately changed.
- Review of the first distress tolerance skill: "distract." Clinician will work with youth to identify examples of this skill and talk about the risks and benefits in these real-life examples.
- Keep in mind that while some traumatized adolescents are adept at distracting, many do so automatically and not mindfully.



Choose to Change® participants at their mentoring group session. Photo by Beking Media

CHOOSE TO CHANGE® PROGRAM GUIDE, OCTOBER 2024

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# Closing

Kim Smith, Director of National Programs and External Engagement, Crime Lab



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SCAN TO VISIT  
OUR WEBSITE



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Crime Lab website. At the top, there is a dark red navigation bar with the University of Chicago logo and the text 'THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO' on the left, and a link 'Visit the Education Lab' on the right. Below this is a white header with the Crime Lab logo and 'Urban Labs' text. A navigation menu includes 'ABOUT', 'RESEARCH', 'NEWS AND EVENTS', 'SUPPORT US', and 'SEARCH Q', along with a 'Subscribe' button. The main content area features a large headline: 'Reducing Gun Violence, Advancing Justice'. Below the headline, there is a section titled 'THE LATEST' with two article teasers. The first article is titled 'Community Violence Intervention Leadership Academy Graduation of Second Cohort' and includes a small image of a group of people. The second article is titled 'New research: Choose to Change\* (C2C\*)' and includes a small image of a group of people. Below these teasers is a large group photo of many people, likely participants or staff, in a formal setting. The bottom left of the page has a 'NEWS AND EVENTS' link.





## **Additional Q&A**