

**La Convención Internacional de Salud,  
Cuba Salud 2018**

**The Hidden Face of Violence in the U.S.**

Jonathan Projansky  
University of Illinois Chicago  
College of Medicine  
School of Public Health  
Chicago, Illinois, USA  
hehrman@uic.edu

**Summary:**

One of the greatest public health crises to plague the citizens of the United States is violence. While this is often studied through a micro-lens of subjects such as police violence, mass incarceration, and mental health crises, the reality is these and many other “symptoms” are all a part of a larger picture.

The root cause of many of the issues that plague people in the U.S. on a daily basis has to do with a form of violence called oppression. While Americans supposedly live in the “land of the free”, much of the time people spend from the time they are brought into this world is connected to violence. We therefore hypothesize that people living in a society that will suppress their mental, physical, and spiritual growth and development, will ultimately keep them from developing to their full potential. What is ultimately more violent than that?

Looking at various case studies, we can illustrate that whether we are discussing the effects of trauma as a result of grief and loss from intercommunal or police violence, to the impact of decades of imprisonment on families, to an educational system that is focused more on profit and competition than growth and development of young people... all of these are forms of institutional violence. They are inherently violent for how they suppress the full potential of people living free and productive lives, and systemically violent for the way they used like tools on a rack of institutional torture to inflict day-to-day violence upon our lives.

This is a crisis that must be stopped by implementing holistic solutions created by the people most affected. Several of these self-healing solutions are already working toward stemming the tide of the cancerous violence of oppression, and may be the key to solving this illness once and for all.