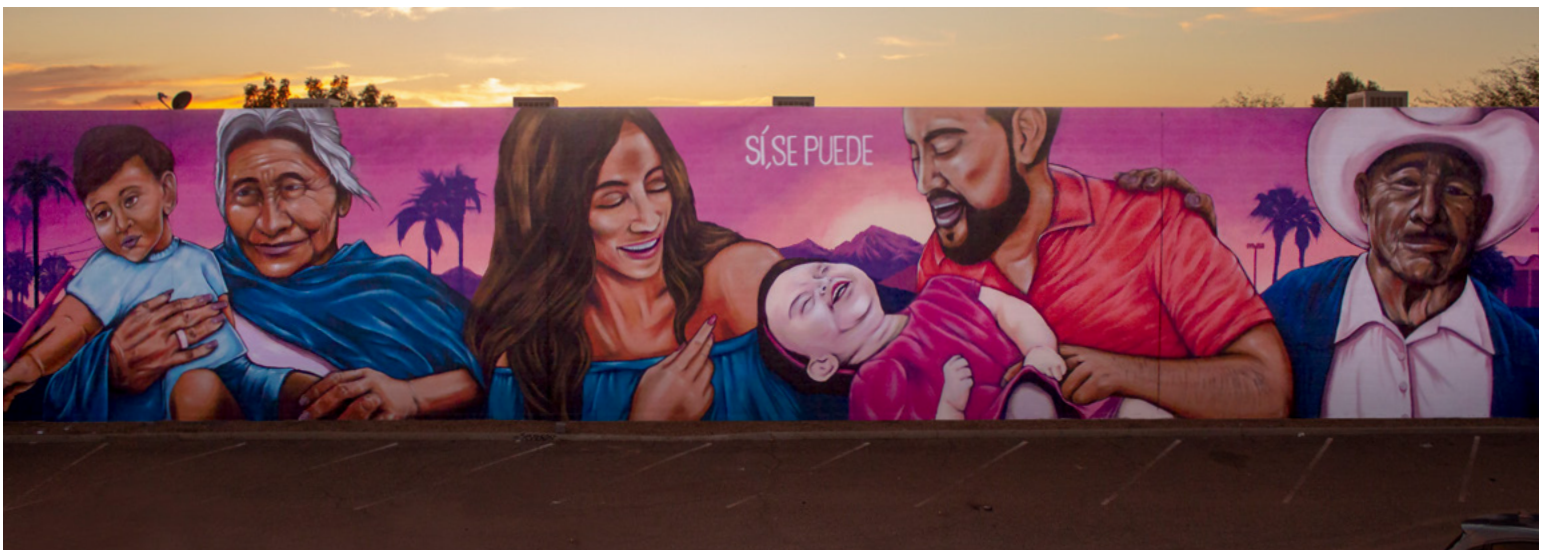# Build Healthy Relationships to End Violence

A Grand Challenge for Social Work

Formerly known as the Grand Challenge to **Stop Family Violence**, the Grand Challenge to **Build Healthy Relationships to End Violence** recognizes the traumatizing impact of interpersonal violence across the lifespan on individuals and families, *as well as* on communities and society. Whereas the former name of this Grand Challenge focused on the overlap between child maltreatment and intimate partner violence, the new framing assumes a broader mandate, grounded in the recognition that violence extends beyond the family unit. Violence is associated with power differentials between dominant and non-dominant groups (e.g., gender, race) and, as such, is perpetuated by prevailing social norms, structures, and systems. The goal of the Grand Challenge is ambitious yet specific: to reduce interpersonal violence by 10% within the decade by strengthening healthy relationships.

To this end, network members have spent the past five years publishing widely, convening inclusively, and collaborating creatively with researchers and practitioners from inside and outside the field of social work. They have also articulated and advocated for their policy recommendations. Looking ahead, they have developed a robust strategic plan to organize their activities over the next five years.

MURAL HONORS THE POSITIVE ROLE OF LATINX FAMILIES IN THE PHOENIX AREA

The Si Se Puede — Yes We Can! mural was created in collaboration with the Survivor Link program in the School of Social Work at ASU and community partner Chicanos Por La Causa.

Photo courtesy of Jill Messing, MSW, PhD

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LOOKING BACK

Over the past five years, members of **Build Healthy Relationships to End Violence** network and their colleagues have:

- **Published** two working papers on *ending gender-based violence* and *reducing child maltreatment*
- **Convened** over 200 practitioners, researchers, and advocates at Arizona State University for a conference on *Promoting Just and Effective Solutions to End Gender Based Violence*
- **Worked** with the *Jim Casey Initiative* to identify gaps in child welfare research and early intervention work
- **Hosted** a one-and-a-half-day workshop at Washington University in St. Louis which included a systems dynamics analysis exercise related to mainstreaming gender
- **Secured** a $6.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to create *The Center for Innovation in Child Maltreatment Policy, Research and Training* (CICM) at Washington University in St. Louis as well as a $1 million grant from the National Institute of Justice *to study intimate partner violence among youth* at the University of Washington

- **Contributed** to a special issue of the journal Social Work on *"Mainstreaming Gender in the Grand Challenges"*
- **Delivered** two webinars on the implications of COVID-19 for *children* and *families*
- **Contributed** to the development of *myPlan*, an online tool designed to help students who may be experiencing dating violence evaluate their safety, make decisions, and connect to campus and community services
- **Directed** the *AmeriCorps Survivor Link Program* at Arizona State University, where members have engaged in over 186,000 hours of service across 70 community partner sites, earned $1,190,000 in scholarship funding, and implemented 961 risk-informed safety plans with domestic violence survivors
- **Evaluated** an anti-human trafficking initiative in Colorado (Innovate Colorado)
- **Participated** in ongoing research projects — DataSMART and SURROUND — at the Center for Innovation in Child Maltreatment Policy, Research, and Training

LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next five years, the network to **Build Healthy Relationships to End Violence** will focus their work to:

1. *Scientifically ground the Grand Challenge to inform future research and support other Grand Challenge goals*
2. *Advance the field's understanding that healthy relationships are a major factor in ending multiple forms of violence*
3. *Develop a toolkit for researchers and practitioners with relevant healthy relationship definitions and interventions*
4. *Position themselves to approach funders to support research, policy development, and practice*
5. *Better prepare social workers (practitioners, students, educators, policymakers, researchers, advocates) to promote healthy relationships and intervene in violence across practice areas and social ecological levels*
6. *Provide a forum to discuss the re-visioning of systems that bridges research to practice and practice to research*

In addition, they intend to:

- **Continue to advocate** for their *policy recommendations*:
  1. Increase federal funding for prevention and intervention activities, including efforts to reduce the structural inequalities that perpetuate gender-based violence (GBV)
  2. Increase research funding for evidence-based interventions that strengthen and enhance safety in families victimized through abuse and violence
  3. Link data systems to identify opportunities for preventive services

- **Collaborate** with other Grand Challenges around mainstreaming gender and developing approaches to violence prevention that are less carceral and more relationship-based (e.g. **Promote Smart Decarceration**)

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