

Celebrating 10 years of an Innovative Partnership to Meet the Needs of Survivors of Homicide Victims

If you want to go fast,
go alone.

If you want to go far,
go together.

– African Proverb



The Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute are proud to celebrate

Our Innovative 10-Year Partnership



The 2019 LDBPI Walk for Peace. Pictured center: Tina Chéry, Founder and CEO of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute. To her left, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh. To her right, Beth Israel Lahey Health's CEO and Walk for Peace Co-Chair, Dr. Kevin Tabb.

Impactful, authentic, humble, and inclusive

These are a few of the words that describe the unique and meaningful collaboration between the **Louis D. Brown Peace Institute (LDBPI)** and the **Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery (CVPR) at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC)**. Over the course of 10 years, the partnership between a survivor-led organization and an academic medical center has developed into a national model on effective responses to survivors of homicide victims.

The intentional work in Boston demonstrates how positive outcomes can evolve from a commitment to mutual learning, sharing expertise and transparent collaboration. During **Survivors of Homicide Victims Awareness Month** (November 20-December 20), LDBPI and CVPR team members and leaders met to celebrate their partnership's accomplishments and reflect on the future direction. Not only is the LDBPI an integral partner to the City of Boston, but they also assist other cities across the country as well, in transforming society's response to homicide.

Grounded in racial justice and equity, the LDBPI and CVPR work together to **strengthen communities, prevent violence and advocate for more compassionate and equitable health care, criminal justice, and societal responses to homicide**. The partnership's innovation stems from both organizations' deep investment in reflective practices and intentional teamwork to meet the needs of survivors of homicide victims.



“We come into this partnership with equity and respect for each other and, most importantly, for survivors. The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute is an organization led by a Black Latina, and for Beth Israel Lahey Health to engage with us in this way has been phenomenal and powerful.

When we first came together, we did not know each other. And without shaming or blaming about the problems we were facing, we got right down to work. Together, we have opened a portal that cuts right through the hierarchy.”

– Clementina (Tina) Chéry
Founder & CEO
Louis D. Brown Peace Institute

The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute

Louis D. Brown was a 15-year-old high school sophomore honor student and an aspiring community leader. In December 1993, while on his way to a “Teens Against Gang Violence” neighborhood meeting, his life was tragically cut short as he got caught in the middle of a fatal crossfire shootout near his home in Dorchester, MA.

Louis' parents, Joseph and Clementina (Tina) Chéry, co-founded the Peace Institute in 1994 in his name to honor his legacy and continue the peacemaking work he was leading. It's mission is to serve as a center of healing, teaching, and learning for families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief, and loss.



The Center for Violence Prevention & Recovery at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Established in 1997, our center offers programs and services to improve the health and well-being of people impacted by multiple forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, community violence, and homicide by providing trauma-informed services and programs that are private, confidential and free.



Center for
Violence Prevention
and Recovery



“We trust each other. We have invested the time to develop positive and cooperative working relationships. From day one, we had a desire to make this partnership meaningful. We recognize how special LDBPI is as a place of light, hope and healing, rooted in beloved community.

We believe that homicide survivors deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. We want to be part of a community that cares deeply for victims, survivors and their families.”

- Lisa LaChance, LICSW
 Director
 Center for Violence
 Prevention and Recovery

Crisis Intervention

In the aftermath of a homicide, the partners work together to coordinate immediate crisis intervention and proactively address the immediate, complex, and long-term needs of survivors. **The LDBPI guides survivors in decision-making, understanding their rights and options, making funeral arrangements, and navigating interactions with healthcare providers, medical examiners, law enforcement, and the media**—while simultaneously attending to the shock, trauma, and grief of losing a loved one. On-site at the LDBPI’s offices in Boston’s Dorchester neighborhood, **CVPR clinicians support the staff and survivors, participate in the team meetings, and provide counseling, healing circles, creative arts groups, and advocacy services.** Over the holidays, staff hold wreath-making workshops to help survivors remember and honor loved ones lost to violence. During COVID-19 all of these programs have been transferred to a virtual platform.



Holiday Wreath Making hosted by the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and the Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Support Needed Now More Than Ever

In 2020, homicides have increased by 54 percent compared to 2019, taking the lives of 57 individuals and traumatically affecting the lives of children, families, elders, and entire Boston neighborhoods. The need for the LDBPI and CVPR model is imperative and necessary for effective responses to survivors of homicide victims, especially now. **Structural racism, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the disproportionate impact of community violence on communities of color expose racial inequities that the partners have long been addressing together.** What makes the partnership effective is that LDBPI has trust and credibility in communities of color and with those impacted by homicide. LDBPI shares their expertise with the hospital-based center to ensure their responses to survivors are culturally humble, and equitable.





The 2019 LDBPI Walk for Peace. Pictured left: Beth Israel Lahey Health's CEO & Walk for Peace Co-Chair, Dr. Kevin Tabb.

Annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace



Beth Israel Lahey Health's CEO, Dr. Kevin Tabb has been a champion and co-chair of LDBPI's annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace. This event brings together a community to remember and speak out about the injustice of violence. **Alberte Altine-Gibson, Manager of Community Health at Bowdoin Street Health Center** reflects on the past 12 years

she's participated in the Mother's Day Walk, stating "It has been an invaluable resource to our clients who have to navigate their lives after homicide. LDBPI has been a life line to help clients rebuild their faith in humanity, become stronger advocates and help other survivors."



"We know that healing, grieving and the aftermath of a homicide occur throughout the rest of your life. Our

model is flexible, always listening to the needs of survivors, families, communities, and everyone working in our organizations. We respond to people at different stages in their process of healing.

We create opportunities for medical providers to interact with survivors to promote their well-being. The connection with us could be right after the homicide, 5 years later, or even 10 years later."

- Piper Derenoncourt, LICSW, MSW, MPH
Former Project Lead
Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery



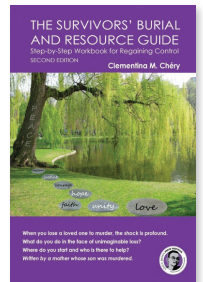
"Beth Israel Lahey Health's partnership with the LDB Peace Institute has allowed us to do concrete, and meaningful work together to strengthen our communities and care for and support individuals and victims affected by violence."

- Dr. Kevin Tabb
CEO
Beth Israel Lahey Health

Training Sessions & Survivor's Guides

In addition to positively impacting survivors, the partnership has expanded the health care system's response to community violence through training and technical assistance resources. **Over the past 10 years, the LDBPI has provided over 100 training sessions to social workers, nurses, doctors, and other hospital personnel on how to support victims and survivors.** The in-depth training with health care providers highlights the importance of building skills, cultivating empathy, and fostering an organizational culture that wraps care around families and loved ones after sudden and tragic losses.

In addition to LDBPI training sessions, Founder Clementina Chéry has authored **The Survivors' Burial and Resource Guide, A Step-by-Step Workbook for Regaining Control** which has come to be an essential resource for families. And with this partnership, the CVPR is committed to always having LDBPI guides available for use in the BIDMC Emergency Department and Social Work Department so that no family leaves the hospital empty handed.



As **Elaina DeStefano, Strategic Projects Coordinator at the LDBPI** shares, "As a result of our work with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, LDBPI has been requested nationally in such places as San Francisco, Philadelphia and the U.S. Virgin Islands to help other hospitals learn about how to make referrals and develop these types of community partnerships." **The LDBPI and CVPR have become a model** on how to best support survivors of homicide victims.



The Seven Principles of Peace

The partnership is inspired by the LDBPI's Seven Principles of Peace: Love, Unity, Faith, Hope, Courage, Justice and Forgiveness. Aligning practices with these principles, the partnership is well-positioned for future work together. They had a cross-training in February 2021 for CVPR clinicians and the LDBPI advocates to advance clinical offerings for survivors of homicide victims. In addition, the Beth Israel Lahey Health system has requested that the LDBPI offer more frequent training sessions with CVPR throughout the healthcare system. **The partnership has a vision to co-design a future conference or virtual learning platform for health care providers on advancing the health and wellness of homicide survivors.** Together, they hope to expand skills-based training sessions on how to use The Survivors' Burial and Resource Guide, translate resource materials into multiple languages, and lead a wider variety of culturally specific healing circles.



"The services that the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute provides for families impacted by homicide are timely, personal and powerful. I'm proud that Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center is a supporter of this incredibly important work", **Joanne Pokaski**, Senior Director of Workforce Development and Community Relations at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center shares.



Inspiring Others

Tina Chéry reflects on the imperative of this type of partnership, emphasizing its reciprocity and deep investments over time, "I want to share our model to compel other hospital CEO's to take a look at what authentic community partnership looks like in reality. This is how you sustain relationships with the community. The hospital asks us what we need. The hospital listens and values the expertise that we bring as leaders." **"What we have created with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and the Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center is essential and effective. I am excited for our next 10 years together."**

Tina Chéry
Founder & CEO, Louis D. Brown Peace Institute

A Powerful Perspective from the Mother of a Homicide Victim

The loss of a family member to gun violence is devastating. For **Alexis Smith, the passing of her son Ameen Lacy after a December 2017 shooting in Mission Hill** was unspeakably traumatic. Ameen was brought to the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (CVICU) and received treatment for three days before his passing. Throughout Lacy's time in the hospital, Smith noted the compassion and care she and her son received from doctors, nurses, and social workers.

"They all became a part of Ameen's life, even for such a short time," Smith says. "I'm so happy that he was brought here, because everything the care team did gave me more time with my son."

Several months after his death, members of Lacy's team from the CVICU and the Emergency Department (ED) reunited with Smith in person to re-connect and discuss the impact health care providers have on families impacted by gun violence. **Charles Parsons, MD, Acute Care Surgery**, was one of Lacy's doctors, and the experience has stayed with him.



"This meeting closes the loop, in a sense," he says. "It allows the care team to hear about other support systems that are outside of our silo and honestly, it's comforting to know that when families leave here, they are being supported in the community."

The partnership has created a seamless transition for homicide survivors like Smith to access invaluable supports in a time of profound sadness and grief. The CVPR provided a bridge to the supports at LDBPI. "I was grateful that I didn't have to go through things alone," Smith says. "It was like no one let go of my hand." Staff from LDBPI reached out to Smith and helped organize funeral and memorial services for Lacy and continue to work with her. "Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the Peace Institute remain a huge part of my life," Smith says. **"They were really there for me during my darkest hour."**

A version of this survivor's story originally appeared in BIDMC Today - Beth Israel Lahey Health's newsletter in April, 2018 - "Practicing Compassionate Care at BIDMC and in the Community", which can be found on the BIDMC Portal.

Promoting peace

To learn about the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute trainings, please visit:
LDBpeaceinstitute.org/training

To request an LDBPI training session, please contact:
Chukwuemeka (BJ) Bernard Jr. Osuagwu
Email: bernard@LDBpeaceinstitute.org

To purchase the LDBPI Survivor's Burial and Resource Guide, please visit:
LDBpeaceinstitute.org/best-practices-for-serving-survivors-of-homicide-victims
(Available in English, Spanish and Cantonese)

To donate to the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, please visit:
LDBpeaceinstitute.org/donate
or mail to: **15 Christopher Street, Dorchester, MA 02122**

For more information on the Center for Violence Prevention and Recovery at BIDMC, please visit:
bidmc.org/centers-and-departments/social-work/center-for-violence-prevention-and-recovery

