

Center for Nonviolent Solutions Survey Report

In order to assess current attitudes towards violence and ways it may be reduced, the Center (advised by Wallace Andrews of InterGlobal Communications Group) conducted a random survey of 280 Worcester residents. This assessment of the Worcester community's perceptions establishes a benchmark that enables us to see what work we have to do and evaluate our progress.

The survey results are both encouraging and sobering. On the one hand, 94% of Worcester residents completely reject the use of physical force in conflicts between people who live together, 86% believe that most conflicts can be solved with nonviolent methods, and 82% believe that Worcester should have a Peace Fair with information on anger management and mediation programs.

On the other hand, only 71% feel completely secure in their neighborhoods, only 54% are sure that people are unafraid of speaking what they really think, only 36% believe that the U.S. should not use military force and 49% feel that the U.S. should maintain all its military bases its other countries.

Almost half (46%) of our respondents were able to give an example of a conflict which had affected them personally. Many of these concerned disputes between neighbors, some involving racial tensions. Many others concerned the drugs and gangs prevalent in economically deprived neighborhoods. However, it is also seems clear that the Center must deal with a general cultural derangement, with many reporting disrespect, verbal abuse, and road rage.

Some examples:

R22 “We have a neighbor who just doesn't care for their property and that bothers me something awful...it's starting to look like a slum. I've tried to call the board of health, they come up and they clear for awhile, but...”

R35 “Someone on my street puts trash out on the streets. It is a back road. People aren't talking to this guy and the high school students produce trash. R43 A woman who lives in an elderly high rise addresses a man is black who parked in wrong parking spot and is accused of being racist when she said something.”

R102 “I used to live in an unsafe neighborhood three years agojust crossing the street with men yelling out lude gestures and comments and things like that. They say that just because you live in this area, you must be a prostitute.”

R 201 “There is a lot of violence: drug deals. I saw a man killed, have been assaulted and feel police are not aware of these streets where people want to establish a culture of drugs and violence.”

R 73 “ I was in a store, had two grandchildren with me and a gentlemen took his shopping cart and nearly broke my ankle because he didn't want to wait in a line.
R92 Some people are very disrespectful. It seems like everybody is always in a hurry, pushing to get ahead of you. One of the most cited examples was road rage (I witnessed a girl driving with a couple in the back. She tried merging into the next lane. People started arguing and fighting ensued.)”