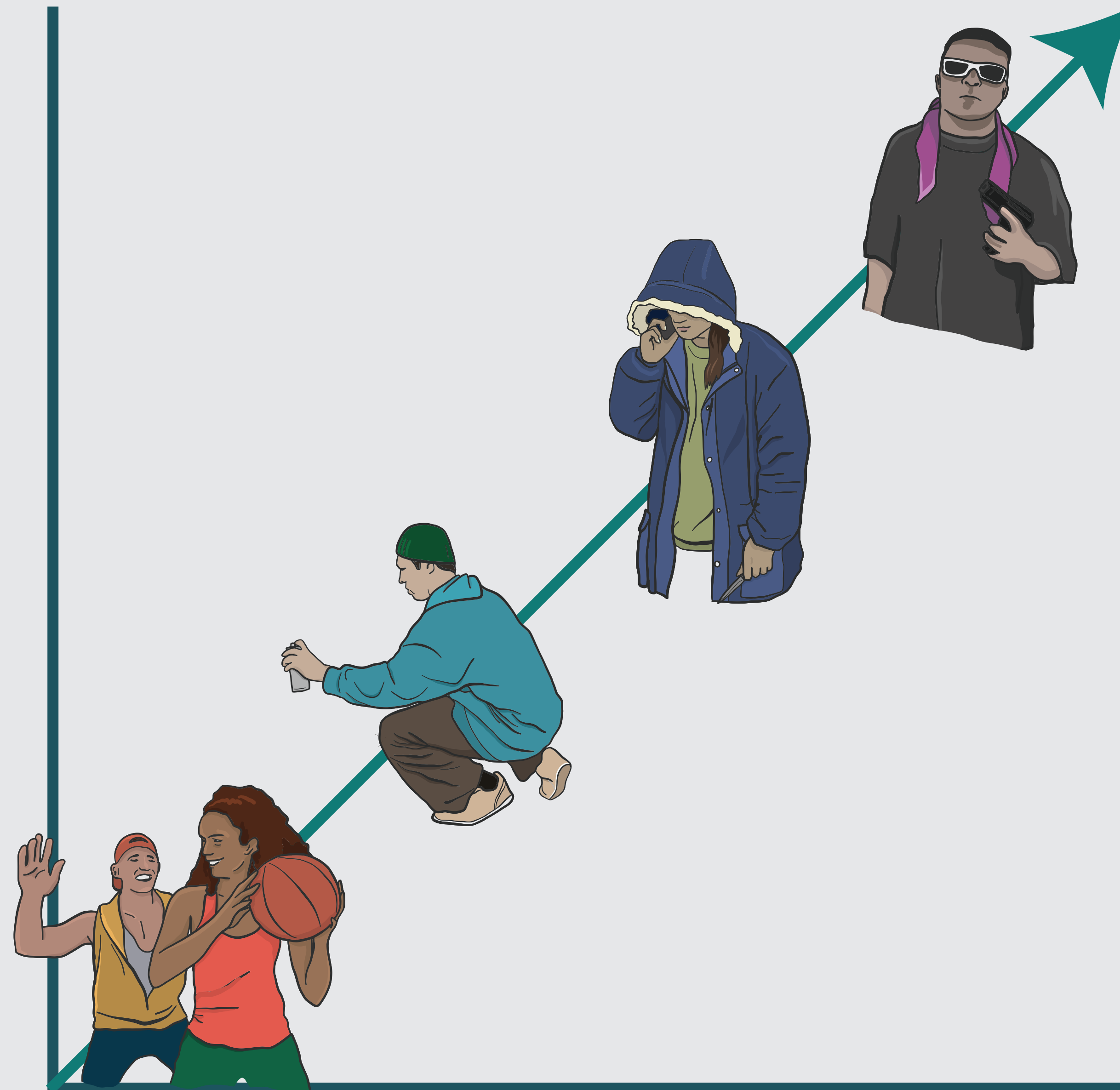


Street gang involvement

Increased violence was associated to weapons and group violence.



Group of friends

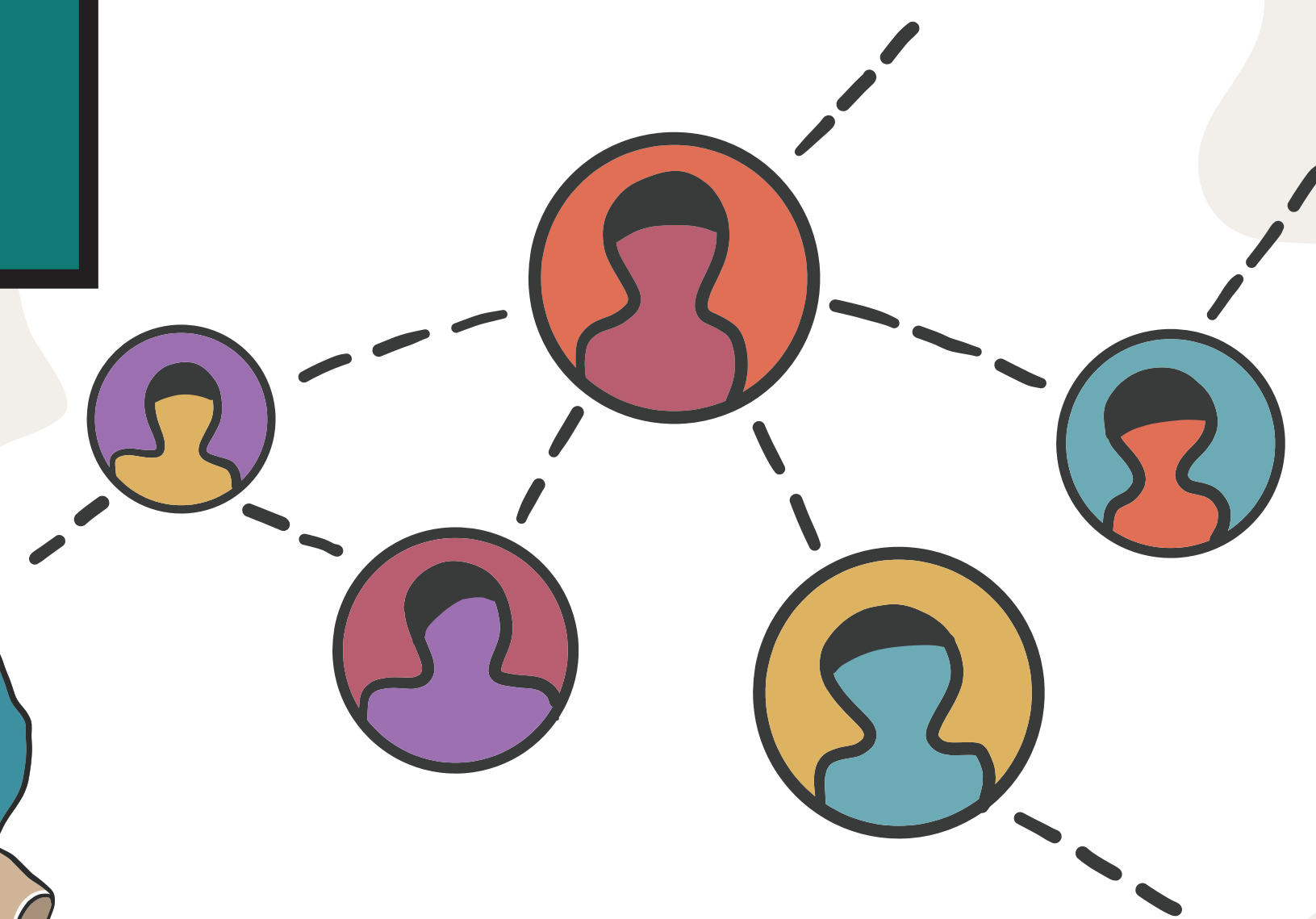
Intent was associated to who was benefiting from the actions or what the actions were intended to provide the individual or group.

Group Structure and Progression

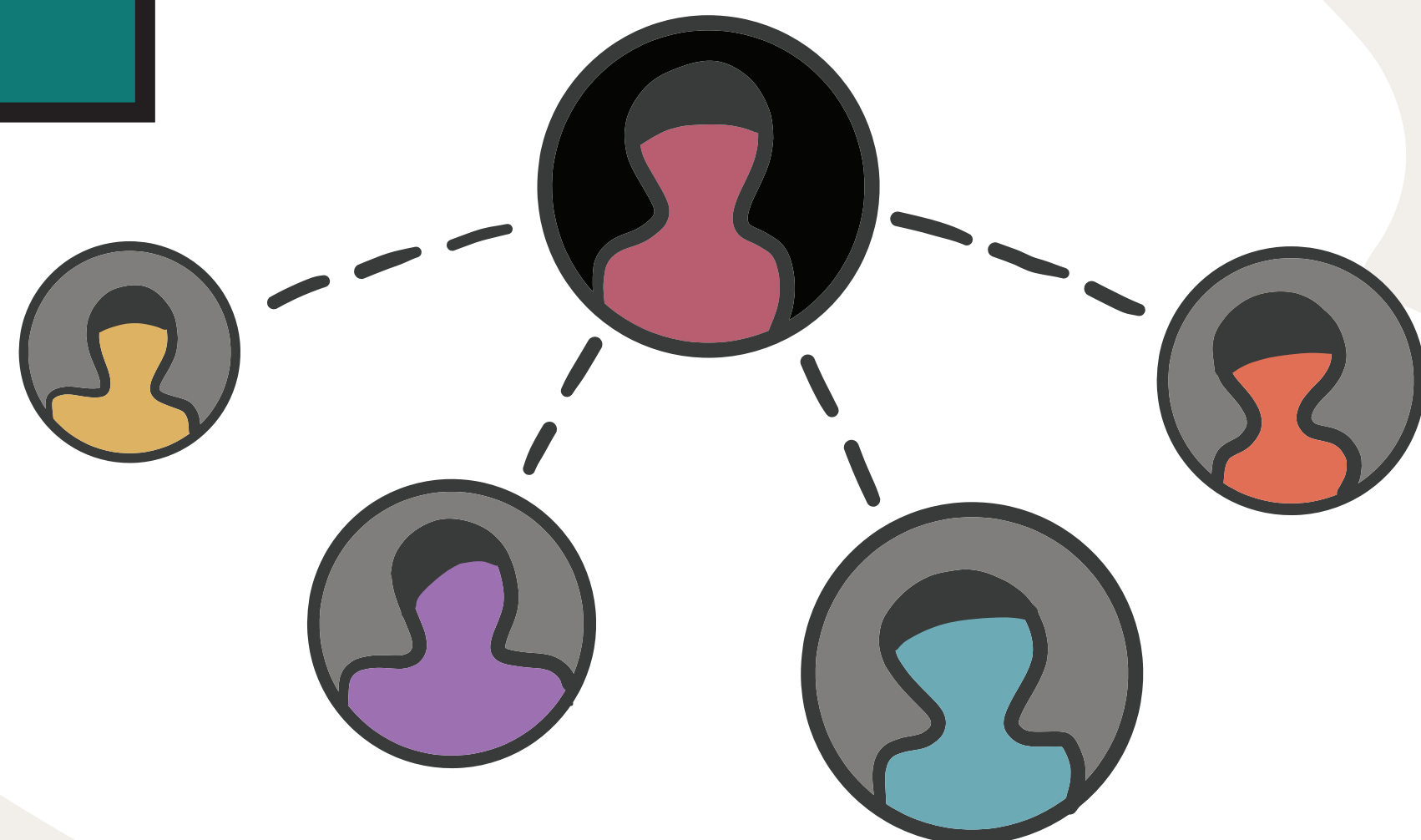
LEVEL 1



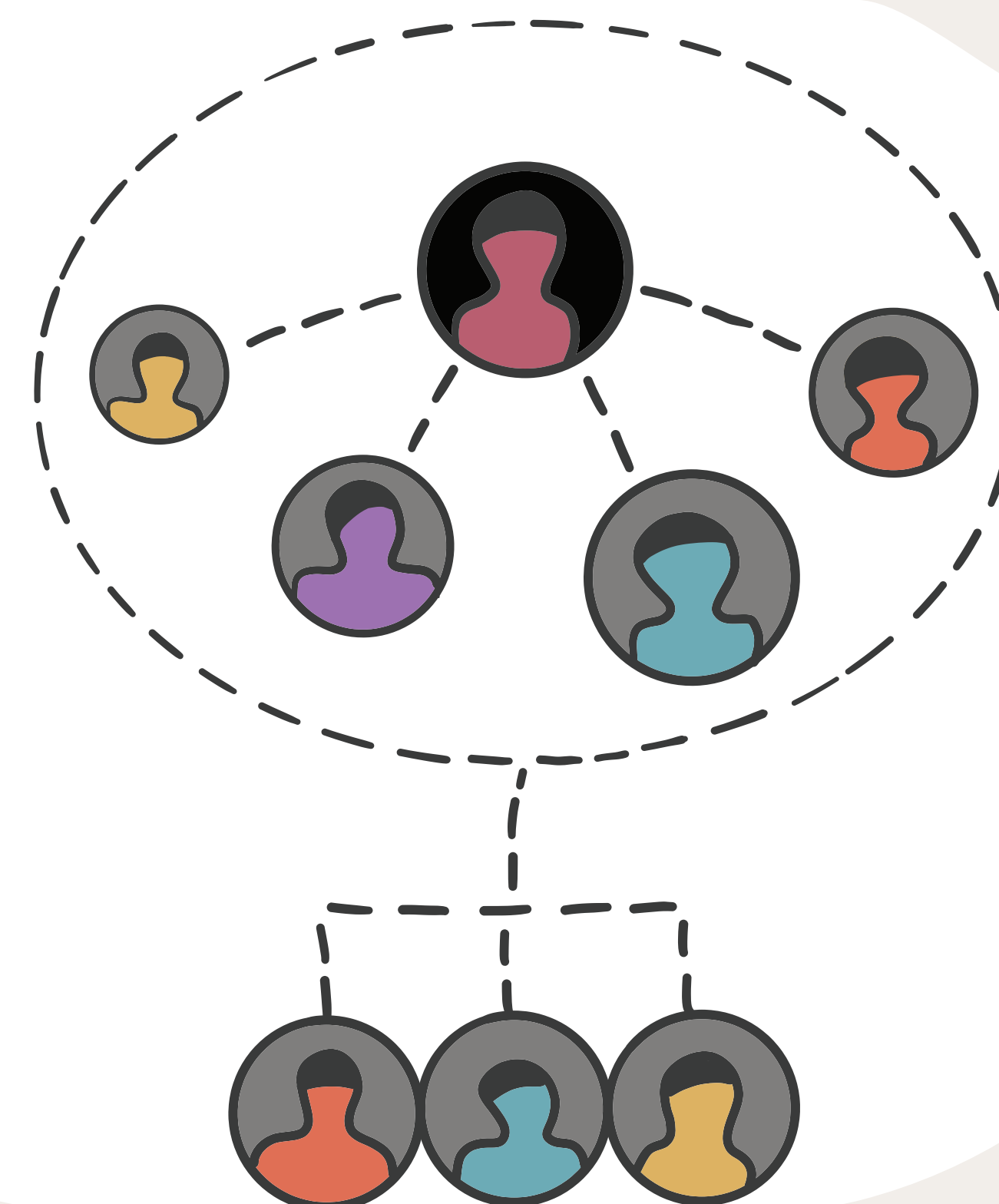
LEVEL 2



LEVEL 3



LEVEL 4



LEVEL 1

Pro-Social Group of Friends

BEHAVIOURS

At this level, individuals are bonded through common goals and experiences. At this level the group provides a sense of identity, belonging, and connection to community. Individuals are engaged primarily in pro-social activities. It was understood that this group engaged in violence, however violence was sporadic and most often interpersonal between its own members. Individual group members may engage in illegal activities that include alcohol consumption (<19), illegal drug experimentation, and small petty theft.

It was noted that sports teams are included at this level, but that due to their structure and use of violence in some communities that they may fit in both Level 1 and Level 2 depending on their behaviours.

STRUCTURE

The groups are loosely structured as leadership is fluid. There are no defined initiation rites for individuals to join. Individuals may dress the same, but the selection of clothing is associated to 'fitting in'; rather than to be identified by other community members. Colours are not a part of dress, but may be dependent on the community, youth and young adults may dress in specific colours as a mode of protection.



LEVEL 2

Bully Groups and TAGGING CREWS



BEHAVIOURS

At level 2, groups continue to provide support, identity, and a sense of belonging. Individuals begin to use violence as a way to increase power over others outside of their group. It was noted that violent behaviours were not just physical but also psychological through intimidation. The outcomes though are damaging to the victims. The intent of violence shifts to group intimidation. Weapons may become more available and readily used; however it was noted that it was group violence that was more prominent at the level such as swarming (larger groups swarming on individuals or smaller groups). Weaponized violence is still minimal, but individuals may begin to carry weapons (knives, spray, etc.) for protection only.

There is an increase in substance use at this group with a growing propensity for individuals to begin selling small quantities to support personal drug addictions and for minimal personal economic capital

STRUCTURE

Groups at this level are understood to have more structure and hierarchical values. There is a more defined leadership as well as codes for initiation and conduct for members. Individuals begin to identify more closely to their group ties through identification, and can include the wearing of symbols and clothing, as well as self-identifying to the group as part of their identity.

The groups at this level are seen to become identifiable to the broader community through concerted dress or symbols that they use to identify themselves from other groups. For example, tagging crews although may not engage in high levels of violence, use tags as a way to identify from other groups, and the tagging is seen to take the form of vandalism of private property. Therefore, increased community efforts are needed to address damages caused by directed vandalism.

LEVEL 3

Cliques and Wannabes

BEHAVIOURS

At level 3, these groups are focused on constructing a name for themselves within street spaces. Individuals and groups work to build a reputation or status in relation to local street codes in order to be noticed by street gangs. Individuals at this level become more engaged in violence, with the intent of creating fear and intimidation so as to increase their power becoming more engaged in violence, with the intent focused on fear and intimidation to increase power. Groups are focused on supporting members with a place to belong, sense of identity, economic opportunities and protection from other groups at this level. Individuals are more inclined to be involved in multiple forms of criminal activities which include small break and enters activities, assaults, robberies, theft, and greater involvement in local illegal street economies.

Violence is validated at a group level, as it is used to for the protection of the group's name and to claim territory. Tagging is often used to claim space, but the tags are not used primarily in open street spaces. Individuals become more engaged in understanding and practicing local street codes, inundating themselves more fully into local street literacies and economies. Protection of the group's identity becomes more centralized than in level 2. This level becomes the primary feeder group for street gangs.

There is an increased usage of illegal drugs, but these are controlled due to local street codes. For example, it was noted that for individuals to move to the street gang level they could not be viewed as an individual who is addicted to needles or other 'dirty' drugs because their focus is on the drug and not the gang.

Weaponized violence increases, as weapons are used for illegal activities and a form of intimidation over others. There is an increased tendency to carry firearms or have access to firearms, however knives and other concealable weapons are noted to be more acceptable at this level.

Individuals will become more withdrawn from their community or family, with shifts in attitudes and dress. However, it was noted that if street gang activity is prevalent in the community, the shift in clothing may just be a protection factor or worn to get noticed by the local street gang of the neighbourhood.

STRUCTURE

Structurally cliques and wannabes are seen to be closely connected to street gangs. There is a greater structured hierarchy of leadership than with level 2 groups, with the primary purpose being to increase the power of the group. Groups are identified by a name, develop their own colours and codes of dress, and often have their own group tag.

It was noted that the majority of groups at this level are formed around deep seeded friendships and familial relationships. Most often the relationships are enhanced through engagement within child welfare, young offender facilities, and adult corrections.

The primary purpose of individuals or groups at this level are to be recognized and acknowledged by a larger more organized street gang. As a result the majority of those involved at this level are youth or young adults.

This level also sees more fluidity than at the street gang level as bonds are not as strong to the group. Due to the fluidity of members, these groups are not as large as established street gangs and most often come and go over time. If they are noticed by a larger street gang, they are often consumed by them, but only those members that are identified by the street gang are seen to be worthy to join.

Illegal activities are conducted with some proceeds coming to the group to support individuals or 'parties'.



LEVEL 4

Street Gangs & Hate Groups



BEHAVIOURS

Level 4 is viewed as where individuals are involved in street gangs. It was noted though that the street gang definition that has been used to identify street gangs (see the National Youth Gang Survey definition that is most commonly used – Chettleburgh, 2007) is inadequate as it excludes particular groups that promote hate and focus on increased violence against peoples in a community. Thus, the inclusion of hate groups (Aryan Nations, Soldiers of Odin, etc.) into the term street gang is necessary, as their behaviours and activities are violent and most often engaged in illegal street activities.

Behaviours at this level focus on increased violence through fear and intimidation to control territory and local street economies. They are identifiable through colours, tags, clothing, and specific ways of movement moving one's body. They are knowledgeable in local street codes and street literacies.

There is an increased focus on identifying as a member of the group and less about personal identity. The group becomes central as one's daily life is on the maintenance of or improving the status of the group within their community.

Violence is more structured than at level 3, but the violence is more intense. Weaponized violence becomes normalized with increased use of firearms generally against rivals. Individuals and groups are targeted for specific reasons, but primarily they challenge the group in some form (i.e. new immigrants and people of colour targeted by hate groups. The violence creates a need for these groups to band together for protection, thus increasing the chance of moving up the typology and the creation of new ethnic street gangs).

Addictions at this level include heightened behavioural and substance addictions. Behavioural addiction is connected to power, respect, and status and gained through violence. Substance addiction increases at this level for some as they are looking to suppress psychological and physical trauma associated to violence that they have engaged in to increase their power and status within local spaces.

There are specific codes for dress, as certain colours and brands of clothing are worn to differentiate from other groups, but still maintain hidden from those not knowledgeable of local street codes.

STRUCTURE

There is a defined hierarchy with leadership and activities defined by the group. Individuals have specific 'jobs' at this level and their allegiance to the street gang is predicated on doing their job. Most street gangs have an inner circle that provides the guidance for the street gang and is involved in local street politics.

There are defined initiation rites of passage connected to correctional institutions. Most rely on violent entries to gain membership such as 'minutes' with specific tasks also associated to prove one's loyalty and commitment to the street gang. Local street codes are used as a way to promote street justice, as groups are more connected to illegal street economies.

Most street gangs are connected to larger more organized international crime syndicates and are the street level drug dealers and distributors. They use their connections and knowledge of the community to increase their economic capital.

***Bringing together all of the collected data,
5 overarching themes or priorities emerged,
each with their own sets of recommendations:***

- 1** ***INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP;***
- 2** ***ADDRESSING TRAUMA, COLONIZATION, AND SETTLER COLONIALISM;***
- 3** ***KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND MOBILIZATION;***
- 4** ***ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION AND STRUCTURAL ISSUES OF
POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS;***
- 5** ***INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS.***

THEME 1

Development of Infrastructure and Leadership

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Develop a strategic committee that is inclusive of the various partners and representation from STR8 UP, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, youth advisory positions, mental health, police and corrections, probation, non-profit/grassroots organizations, regional representation, child welfare, social services, people with lived experiences etc. It is recommended that the province look to the community-based model formed with the Gang Action Interagency Network (GAIN)⁷ in Winnipeg as an example that can be adapted for Saskatchewan, and that those who sit on the strategy be compensated if they are not already by their organization. For example, it was expressed that individuals with lived experiences will provide invaluable information, however they are expected to be there on their own time while others are paid to be there for their employment. Therefore, a method of payment should be provided to pay for the time of individuals with lived experiences;
- 2** That a centralized location and entity be created or appointed as the leader of the prevention and intervention strategy and that it be funded and supported so that communities can contact it for information and resource support. It was expressed that STR8 UP should be the leader of the SPISGS;
- 3** That the SPISGS and the Government of Saskatchewan look to the adaptability and adoption of grassroots, relentless programming that targets those viewed as highest risk to street gang involvement and those looking to exit street gangs. STR8 UP and Homeboy Industries (Los Angeles, California) were highlighted due to their community-based/engaged focus on the hardest to reach. Many communities expressed that they would like to see STR8 UP support programming expanded into their communities.

THEME 2

Addressing Trauma, Colonization & Settler Colonialism

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Increase and improve support services, specifically in northern and rural communities where access to mental health services are limited. Indigenous communities expressed the need to control mental health services where traditional mental health practices are validated and supported financially in relation to western mental health services;
- 2** With the closing of public transportation services, that the SPISGS strategy and the provincial government look to focus on providing alternative ways for individuals to travel from their communities to larger centres where mental health and addictions services are more readily available. The closing of the public transportation also has impacts that will be related to justice with individuals looking to escape violence within their community, as well as visit members of their family who may be incarcerated;
- 3** Improve services and approaches within correctional centres and upon release back into the community. There is a lack of communication between corrections and community organizations supporting individuals upon release and there needs to be stronger communication and organization in order to implement healthy reintegration programming. For example, it was stated at the Public Forum that STR8 UP has tried to work with corrections to develop exit plans, but there has been resistance to the sharing of one's exit plan, resulting in the duplication as well as lack of community services;
- 4** The need for intervention programming to focus on where people are at and not use an individual's trauma against them, i.e. documenting traumatic experiences as a risk factor;
- 5** To build and support culturally relevant programs. Communities expressed that they do not want to be told what program to implement (i.e. gold star programs developed in other provinces or countries), but want to work with the Province and the Strategy to develop programming that is relevant to the intergenerational traumas that continue to impact health and well-being, and have led to the increase of violence and addictions;
- 6** More training and education on trauma-informed care that is also culturally relevant. It is recommended that all peoples who work in Saskatchewan, following recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)11, come to understand the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools and how this history continues to impact Indigenous communities and relationships with non-Indigenous peoples.

THEME 3

Knowledge Translation and Mobilization

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** It is recommended that the SPISGS create a reliable way to assess, determine, and provide information to the broader community about the realities of individuals involved in street gangs. Communities expressed that they are also worried that this database may be used to further criminalize Indigenous youth as they will be targeted if street gang numbers become a political tool to gain access to funding. Despite this, communities stated that they need to know what is really happening in their community. It is recommended that the street gang typology created for this report be used to assess these numbers;
- 2** Related to theme 1, communities expressed that there needs to be a way to bring together key stakeholders to address street gangs with the ability to evaluate its effectiveness in a non-biased way. Therefore, research and data collection tools need to be created to provide the proper metrics of success, but these must be created in partnership with communities to incorporate community histories and legacies that have led to street gang development;
- 3** Information be created and offered to communities to help better comprehend street gangs, local and provincial street gang exit programs, and specific supports for individuals moving to a new community;
- 4** The SPISGS, once it is created, be funded to create knowledge sharing tools and that there be at minimum bi-annual reports on the progress of the strategy and issues that other communities may be facing;
- 5** It is recommended that an annual conference be held bringing together stakeholders across the province to talk about success stories and issues related to their communities. Experts, specifically those that are not solely focused on policing or criminal justice, should be encouraged to attend.

THEME 4

Addressing Systemic Oppression and Structural Issues of Poverty and Homelessness

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** It is recommended that the province implement anti-racist training for justice, health, education and human service providers across the province. Such training is seen as an important step to build relationships across Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and a step-in rebuilding reconciliation. The training should not be focused on cultural training or multiculturalism, but focus on the need to deconstruct power relations and how colonization/settler colonialism continues to marginalize Indigenous peoples specifically in Saskatchewan. It is recommended to work with anti-racist scholars such as Drs. Verna St. Denis, Sheelah MacLean, and Alex Wilson to develop this training;
- 2** To combat poverty and homelessness in the province, it is recommended that the broader business community have the opportunity to strengthen work opportunities with individuals exiting correctional institutions. Studies continue to show that Indigenous and peoples of colour are routinely overlooked in hiring practices and therefore are at heightened risks to engage in illegal street economies to provide for their families. Because of this, the broader business community needs to have training to break down barriers and build relationships to increase economic opportunities;
- 3** The province look to provide funding to support additional community holistic training residences where mental health and job training services be provided, and individuals service plans be designed to support transition to sustainable living;
- 4** It is recommended that the province invest in job training and hiring practices, specifically for those who are incarcerated. It is hoped that this extends beyond skill training opportunities, rather individuals have opportunities to partake in other aspects of adult education. It is recommended that scholarships and bursaries be created for individuals who are exiting corrections, and if they are in place that they are promoted;
- 5** That education programs be created to address hyper and toxic masculinity. The development of the typology has shown that to address violence in Saskatchewan, communities and aspects of masculinity need to be addressed. Therefore, programming to support healthy masculinity is needed to prevent individuals progress through the typology.

THEME 5

Institutional Supports

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** The Province of Saskatchewan should provide essential, timely, and adequate funding that can be rolled into long-term project funding if effective. Community consultations expressed that this funding should only be accessible to those outside of Policing and Corrections. Rather than taking the lead in such initiatives, Policing and Corrections should be consulted as partners to access these funds;
- 2** Although the HUB model has been presented to communities as the standard of organization, communities expressed that to develop the Saskatchewan Street Gang Strategy a different approach is needed, one that is not as top down or controlled by Policing and Corrections;
- 3** That funding be made available to agencies and communities looking to work in prevention and intervention at a grassroots level. Communities expressed that they know the importance of metrics to prove program success, but that the indicators must be relevant to both the program and the realities of the community. Therefore, adequate data collection tools must be created that are localized but hold community accountable for change;
- 4** A fund should be created that can be readily accessible for communities that may be experiencing a phenomenon. This fund is to be made available for communities who are experiencing a heightened level of violence, addictions, or trauma in order to prevent or intervene within the typology so that violence is reduced. This funding can be made to cover short timeframes and should be separate from long-term funding of specific programs.