

Civic Coalition to Save Lives

www.savephillylives.org

September 2023

EMIR - Helping Heal the Trauma of Gun Violence

As with many accidental advocates, it was a traumatic event that changed the life of Chantay Love, Co-Founder and Director of Every Murder Is Real, better known as EMIR Healing Center.



When Love's brother, Emir, fell victim to gun violence on March 26, 1997, the Germantown native followed her mother's lead, sharing their personal experience to forge a path toward healing for other families, friends, schools, and communities who lose loved ones to violence.

No Judgment Zone

Love points out that one of the biggest obstacles to healing can be judgment and public sentiment that is quick to cast blame on the shooting circumstances. Every Murder Is Real is not just an acronym for the name of Love's brother; it's a non-judgemental response to any violent death.

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"At EMIR, we ask different questions," said Love. "It doesn't matter why it happened or if the person had shot someone before or had a criminal history - that person was a son, a friend, and a grandson."

Chantay further explained that gun violence is the cause and effect of pervasive trauma occurring daily in the most vulnerable communities. "When an entire community experiences daily trauma, trauma is the result. Trauma fires the weapons that are loaded with more trauma."

Healing and Change

Without judgment and through a lens of family, hope, and peace, EMIR provides free, comprehensive trauma-informed care and resources for families and loved ones affected by gun violence.

EMIR's multifaceted programming extends to community engagement, advocacy and awareness, offering, among other things, funeral planning, counseling and group therapy with licensed therapists.

The goal of the healing center, now in its 24th year, is to empower those traumatized by gun violence to heal and become agents of change to prevent further bloodshed in Philadelphia.

"We know their lives will never be the same, but we want to show them that they are not alone and that we can help them travel through the journey to healing," said Love.



For more information about EMIR, visit www.emirphilly.org