When working with gang exposed young people, there is an infinite number of situations that can come up. So in doing this work, I think we need to understand that nobody has the answer. That collectively we tap into each other’s resources and experience, then we can learn to address whatever particular issue we need to address at that particular moment. And I think this online resource will help facilitate that.

It will help newer programs that don’t have much experience working with gang involved youth develop the infrastructure to ensure that they can offer the proper resources to gang exposed youth. It will make sure that they have an infrastructure in place that will allow them to create a safe program for gang exposed youth and for their staff members.

This online resource will offer essentially a space for experts to come in and share their experience. When I say experts, I mean all these programs that have been working with gang involved youth for a very long time. All these youth programs that have tried things and those things haven’t worked. All these programs that have made mistakes and have corrected their mistakes.

One thing that I want to caution folks is that, if you access this online resource, it doesn’t mean that you immediately can jump into working with gangs involved youth, right? I think it’s important to look at the online resource, look at the material that's provided, and assess where you’re at. And determine the level of support that you’re going to need in working with gang involved youth.

I think this online resource is important because it reaches a larger audience that are of organizations that are experiencing challenges in communities that have a high concentration of gangs or a gang that is terrorizing the neighborhood. And when you have resources declining in neighborhoods like ours throughout the country, that are new for some communities and old for others like ours, but it’s important to have this online access because the strategies have also changed as well.

Organizations that have done gang intervention and prevention work have done a phenomenal job. But it's not a one cookie cutter approach and I think this provides organizations with alternatives who are approaching working with gang involved youth. Like for us, our approach is just to look at what the challenges are with the individual, and not necessarily label it as gang intervention or prevention. But that may not be the case for another group that has to actually design specific programs around a specific gang based on a culture in their community.
So it's important to actually have this online resource so you can gain some perspective of how to maybe approach it different, and not just think it's only one way to approach it, but there are multiple ways and I think to hear that collaboration works. It does work. And it's actually some of the key ingredients to transitioning young people from one place to another because one organization can't do everything. No matter how many resources they have, whatever budget you want to place on that, you still need to partner, and you still need to collaborate, and at the end of the day, that's what's been successful for us. And that's what has worked for other organizations, and I'm sure with cities like ours and governments like ours, it's equally as important to collaborate because we can't all do it on our own.

[MUSIC PLAYING]