

**COPING WITH TRAUMA: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF  
SOCIAL SUPPORT IN MITIGATING THE EFFECTS OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON ANGER AND LEARNING IN  
ADOLESCENTS**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study explores the intricate connection between social support, domestic violence, and teenage outcomes, emphasizing the vital role that social support plays in mitigating the harmful impacts of domestic violence. A thorough analysis of the evidence shows that while school-based treatments, family-centred programs, and community resources are crucial for fostering teenage wellbeing, individual traits like emotional intelligence and resilience also affect results. Evidence-based therapies, cultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed care are essential elements of successful support networks. In order to address the unique needs of adolescents exposed to domestic abuse, policy and practice suggestions place a strong emphasis on the necessity of financing, training, and cooperation. This discussion highlights the value of all-encompassing support networks in fostering resilience and overall well-being in young people impacted by domestic abuse.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence, Social Support, Adolescents, Trauma-Informed Care, Resilience, Wellbeing.

**INTRODUCTION**

Any abusive pattern used by one spouse to obtain or preserve control and authority over the other is referred to as domestic violence. It includes a range of abuse types that are frequently committed on a regular or increasing basis, such as financial, sexual, emotional, psychological, and physical abuse (Mahapatro et al., 2021). Teenagers are also greatly impacted by domestic violence, either directly or indirectly, in addition to adults. Teenagers are frequently the victims of intimate romantic relationships, sometimes starting as early as middle school. Nonetheless, a lot of teenagers witness domestic abuse and suffer its effects when it occurs in their family and affects one or both parents (Wilson et al., 2015).

Domestic abuse is a global problem that crosses social, cultural, and demographic divides, according to research. Teenagers who are exposed to these kinds of situations frequently suffer serious and long-lasting effects on their emotional and psychological growth. These teenagers often exhibit emotional symptoms, including persistent anger, anxiety, and despair, which can make it difficult for them to build positive connections or participate actively in their social circles (Carlos, 2014). The academic and cognitive development of adolescents is also disrupted by

domestic violence. The trauma of seeing or suffering abuse frequently affects one's ability to concentrate, stay motivated, and learn, which lowers academic performance and limits chances in the future. Furthermore, adolescent exposure to domestic violence can lead to a number of negative consequences, such as substance abuse, delinquent behaviour, and mental health impairment, highlighting the urgent need for interventions meant to lessen its effects and offer affected youth support networks (Haj-Yahia et al., 2019).

Domestic violence has a significant negative influence on teenagers' mental health, frequently impairing important emotional and cognitive processes. Anger management issues are among the most obvious consequences. Teens who witness domestic abuse may internalise frustration or helplessness, which can lead to increased aggression or outbursts of rage. Unresolved anger might eventually result in more serious behavioural problems that impact the person's social connections and capacity for constructive interpersonal interactions. Furthermore, there is a clear correlation between exposure to domestic violence and elevated anxiety levels (Humm et al., 2018). Because of the unpredictable nature of abusive relationships, adolescents in these settings often suffer from hypervigilance, ongoing worry, and terror. Anxiety disorders brought on by this protracted stress might show up as increased anxiousness, disturbed sleep, and, in extreme situations, panic attacks (Duru, 2018). Another frequent outcome is depression. Teens who see or experience domestic abuse may grow up to feel hopeless, unworthy, and depressed all the time. Their physical and emotional health are both impacted by depression, which can lead to changes in appetite, exhaustion, and a lack of drive for everyday tasks (Eisman et al., 2015).

Teenagers' learning and academic performance are cognitively disrupted by domestic abuse. Their ability to concentrate on their studies is frequently hampered by the mental and emotional effort required to deal with trauma. Symptoms of anxiety and depression can impair focus, memory recall, and general cognitive function, which can result in poorer academic performance and less involvement in school [4]. Improving the outcomes for adolescents impacted by domestic violence requires addressing these effects through supportive interventions (Mahapatro et al., 2021).

In order to mitigate the negative impacts of trauma on teenage mental health and cognitive development, social support is essential. Social support from friends, family, and neighbours is crucial for adolescents exposed to domestic abuse because it offers them coping mechanisms and helps prevent psychological injury. In addition to providing emotional support, robust social support networks aid teenagers in processing traumatic events, lowering their risk of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues frequently linked to exposure to domestic violence (Mackin et al., 2016).

According to research, social support can serve as a buffer, possibly reducing the intensity of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in teenagers who have been victims of domestic abuse. Social networks help teenagers see challenging situations as more controllable by promoting resilience and a sense of belonging, which aids in the control of emotions like rage and frustration (Allen et al., 2021). Since teenagers who have supportive relationships are more likely to stick with their studies even in the face of challenging home contexts, social support is linked to better learning outcomes in academic settings. In order to help adolescents overcome trauma and improve

their mental health and academic performance, interventions that foster social support within families, schools, and communities are crucial (Xiong et al., 2022).

This review aims to investigate the effects of exposure to domestic violence on children's academic and psychological development, with an emphasis on adolescents. The review attempts explicitly to investigate the connection between exposure to violence and a number of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, anger management, and general learning and academic achievement (Supol et al., 2020). The review aims to ascertain how exposure to violence impacts emotional and cognitive development and the efficacy of various interventions in assisting impacted adolescents by methodically examining data from observational studies and controlled trials. It also emphasizes how social support and emotion control have a moderating role in reducing these impacts (Stansfeld et al., 2017).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) offers a thorough framework for comprehending the development of adolescents. According to this idea, teenagers live inside a variety of interrelated systems that influence their experiences, actions, and results. The interactions of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem influence adolescent coping strategies, emotional control, and academic achievement. Adolescents engage with their school, peer group, and family inside the microsystem. Family dynamics, parent-adolescent relationships, and conflict resolution techniques greatly influence adolescents' coping mechanisms with domestic abuse. Social ties and peer support are also very important for coping mechanisms and emotional control. Adolescent well-being is also influenced by academic engagement, school atmosphere, and teacher assistance. Adolescent growth is indirectly influenced by exosystem and macrosystem variables. Social policies, cultural norms, socioeconomic circumstances, and community resources all influence how society views domestic abuse and the coping strategies used by adolescents.

Domestic violence can be lessened or made worse by having access to social assistance, mental health care, and leisure opportunities. Adolescent experiences are also influenced by cultural norms and ideals surrounding gender roles, family relationships, and tolerance for violence (Humm et al., 2018). The significance of addressing individual, family, and community variables is shown by the application of Ecological Systems Theory to adolescents' coping with domestic abuse. Interventions ought to focus on community-based services, school-based projects, and family-centred programs. It is also essential to implement policy changes that enhance the well-being of adolescents and address public perceptions of domestic abuse. We can create practical methods to help adolescents deal with domestic abuse and encourage healthy growth by comprehending the intricate relationships found in ecological systems (Ogbe et al., 2020).

Cohen and Wills (1985) established the Social Support Theory, which highlights the importance of social ties in reducing the detrimental effects of stress, especially domestic abuse, on mental and physical health. According to this theory, there are three main categories of social support: material, informational, and emotional. Informational assistance offers counsel and direction, whereas emotional support offers understanding, consolation, and assurance. Practical help in the

form of childcare or financial aid is known as tangible support (Carlos, 2014). Together, these forms of assistance lessen the damaging effects that stress has on people. Social support's buffering effects are especially crucial for teenagers dealing with domestic abuse. Social support can improve coping skills, boost self-esteem, lessen emotional pain, promote help-seeking behaviours, and give people a feeling of connection and belonging. Support from peers, family, and the community is crucial for teenagers. Effective family dispute-resolution techniques, supportive sibling dynamics, and positive parent-adolescent connections can all lessen the effects of domestic violence. In a similar vein, peer pressure, friendships, and social ties can all offer crucial emotional support (Humm et al., 2018).

Targeted therapies for adolescents dealing with domestic abuse are informed by knowledge of the types, roles, and buffering effects of social support. While school-based programs can foster peer connections and social support, family-centred programs can improve the interaction between parents and adolescents. Recreational facilities, social programs, and mental health resources can all be accessed through community-based services. By acknowledging the value of social support, we can create practical plans to assist young people impacted by domestic abuse and encourage normal growth. By creating a nurturing atmosphere, we can enable teenagers to overcome hardship and flourish (Quiroga et al., 2017).

A strategy known as Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) recognises the significant influence that trauma has on teenage development and highlights the necessity of trauma-sensitive support networks. Hesse (2016) asserts that TIC acknowledges the frequency of trauma and its impacts on people, families, and communities (Haj-Yahia et al., 2019). In order to encourage healing and resilience, this strategy places a high priority on safety, trust, choice, cooperation, and empowerment. Adolescents' neurobiological, emotional, behavioural, social, and cognitive development are all significantly impacted by trauma. Anxiety, despair, mood swings, and emotional dysregulation can all result from trauma.

Additionally, behavioural issues like substance abuse and violence may surface. Social challenges, such as attachment and relationship issues, are widespread. Additionally, trauma can disrupt cognitive processes, influencing memory, focus, and academic achievement. In order to lessen the impact of stress on teenagers, trauma-sensitive support networks are essential. While school-based initiatives provide trauma-informed instruction and assistance, family-centred therapies involve parents and caregivers in trauma-sensitive techniques. Accessible, trauma-sensitive options are offered via community-based agencies. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and trauma-focused CBT (TF-CBT) are two trauma-focused therapies that are provided by mental health services. Adolescents with similar experiences might connect through peer support groups.

By taking a trauma-informed approach, we can create nurturing settings that recognise the multifaceted needs of traumatised teenagers. TIC has several advantages, such as improved coping and resilience, better emotional regulation and well-being, increased trust and service engagement, improved academic achievement and life outcomes, and a decrease in PTSD symptoms. Trauma screening and assessment, staff education and training, environmental changes, community and family involvement, and ongoing assessment and improvement are all necessary for TIC implementation (Wilson et al., 2015).

### **Hypothesised Model of Domestic Violence Exposure and Mitigating Effects of Social Support**

The widespread and complicated problem of domestic violence exposure impacts millions of children around the world. According to research, children's emotional, behavioural, and cognitive development may suffer significantly if they witness domestic violence. The suggested model seeks to clarify the processes and mechanisms by which exposure to domestic violence results in problems with learning and anger management, as well as how social support from peers, family, and educators might lessen these impacts (Haj-Yahia et al., 2019). Children who are exposed to domestic abuse may have trouble controlling their emotions, including rage. Children who witness or experience violence may become hyperarousal, which makes it difficult for them to control their emotions. Exposure to domestic violence can also have an indirect impact on parents' mental health, resulting in uneven parenting styles and poor emotional control. Children may struggle to control their emotions as a result, which may cause behavioural issues, hostility, and angry outbursts (Mahapatro et al., 2021).

Exposure to domestic violence can also affect children's attention spans and cognitive abilities, which can result in learning challenges. Trauma can have an impact on the growing brain, impairing memory, problem-solving skills, and emotional control. Exposure to domestic violence can also alter family dynamics, which lowers academic support and raises stress levels. This may lead to a decline in academic achievement, a fall in educational goals, and a higher chance of dropping out of school (Lloyd, 2018).

Social support from friends, family, and teachers is essential for reducing the negative impacts of exposure to domestic abuse. Anger management issues can be lessened by family support, which is defined by warmth, supervision, and parental participation. Social skills, intellectual engagement, and emotional control can all be improved by having healthy interactions with peers. Learning outcomes and academic motivation can be enhanced by educator support, which includes both academic support and teacher-student connections (Davies, 2019). According to the buffering hypothesis, social support may be able to mitigate the association between exposure to and results from domestic violence. Social support can lessen the detrimental effects of exposure to domestic violence by fostering a sense of security, stability, and safety. Children who receive social assistance are better able to control their emotions, which improves their conduct and academic performance (Thornton, 2014).

### **Impact of Domestic Violence on Adolescents**

Exposure to domestic violence (DV) is a widespread problem that impacts millions of teenagers globally. The emotional, behavioural, and academic development of teenagers is severely affected by DV exposure, according to research. Teens who witness domestic violence are more likely to experience emotional and behavioural issues, such as despair, anxiety, and anger. Teenagers' ability to control their anger is significantly impacted by DV exposure. According to studies, exposure to DV is associated with increased levels of anger, aggression, and trouble controlling one's anger. Teens who are exposed to domestic violence may find it difficult to control their emotions, which can result in behavioural issues and angry outbursts. Additionally, exposure to

DV can impair teenagers' ability to regulate their emotions, resulting in mood swings and emotional instability (Lloyd, 2018).

The academic performance of adolescents is also negatively impacted by DV exposure. Studies have indicated a connection between DV exposure and higher absenteeism, school dropout rates, and worse academic performance. Furthermore, exposure to DV can affect cognitive abilities, especially in the domains of memory and concentration. Academic motivation and educational aspirations may suffer as a result. The effects of DV exposure on teenagers are influenced by a number of mediating and moderating factors. Parental conflict and cohesiveness, among other family dynamics, are important. DV exposure can be lessened by social support from friends, family, and teachers. Furthermore, the effects of DV exposure are influenced by the coping mechanisms utilized by teenagers, such as avoidance or problem-focused coping (Duru, 2018).

Effective interventions can be developed with knowledge of the effects of DV exposure and the identification of mediating and moderating factors. It is crucial to implement family-centred interventions that focus on parental conflict and cohesiveness, school-based programs that offer academic and social assistance, and community-based projects that provide social programs and mental health services. Longitudinal studies that look at DV exposure and outcomes, experimental designs that test interventions, and studies that look into how cultural and contextual factors affect DV exposure and outcomes are some examples of future research approaches (Ogbe et al., 2020).

One important topic of research is how social support can help lessen the negative consequences of domestic abuse on the resilience and mental health of teenagers. Research has consistently demonstrated that exposure to domestic abuse can be considerably mitigated by social support from peers, family, and education. According to research, social support helps teenagers become more resilient by fostering self-esteem, coping mechanisms, and emotional control. For instance, social support from friends and family decreased the likelihood of anxiety and depression in teenagers exposed to domestic abuse, according to a study by Cohen and Wills (1985). Grych and Fincham's (1990) study also demonstrated that supportive parenting lessened the impact of marital conflict on the emotional adjustment of teenagers.

Teenagers' mental health outcomes are also influenced by social support, which gives them a feeling of security, safety, and belonging. Teenagers who received social support from friends and family exhibited fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to a 2003 study by Kilpatrick et al. Additionally, studies by Mallett (2015) showed that among teenagers exposed to domestic abuse, school-based social support programs decreased behavioural issues and enhanced academic performance. Social support affects trauma reduction through a variety of intricate methods. Social support can help teenagers manage their emotions, improve their coping mechanisms, and make resources more accessible. Furthermore, the association between exposure to domestic violence and mental health outcomes might be moderated by social support. For instance, social support mitigated the effect of stress on teenagers' emotional adjustment, according to a study by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) (Pinto et al., 2017).

In order to lessen the negative impacts of domestic violence on teenagers' resilience and mental health, social assistance is essential. Future studies should concentrate on creating and assessing

successful social support interventions, investigating the ways in which social support affects trauma reduction, and looking into the contextual and cultural elements that affect the efficacy of social support.

### **Mediating and Moderating Factors**

Social support, outcomes, and domestic violence have a complicated relationship that is impacted by a number of demographic factors. Significant variables that can mediate or lessen the impacts of domestic violence on adolescents include age, gender, and socioeconomic level (SES). (Meiksin et al., 2019). When analysing the effects of domestic abuse on teenagers, age is a crucial consideration. According to research, exposure to domestic abuse may make younger adolescents (ages 11 to 14) more susceptible to emotional and psychological discomfort (Holt et al., 2017). (Zinzow et al., 2019). On the other hand, behavioural issues and substance misuse are more common among older teenagers aged 15–18 years (Zinzow et al., 2019).

Teenagers who are exposed to domestic violence have different experiences and results depending on their gender. While male adolescents are more prone to display behavioural issues, violence, and substance addiction, female adolescents are more likely to experience mental discomfort, anxiety, and depression (Foshee et al., 2015).

Results, social support, and resource accessibility are all influenced by socioeconomic status (SES). Teenagers from low-income families are more likely to witness domestic abuse and have less access to services and social assistance (Brady et al., 2019). Teenagers from wealthy families, on the other hand, have easier access to resources, mental health care, and social support.

Understanding the association between domestic violence and outcomes requires an understanding of the interaction effects of demographic variables. For instance, older teenagers from low socioeconomic origins have more behavioural issues, while younger female adolescents are more susceptible to emotional discomfort (Alisic et al., 2020). Demographic factors mediate the association between domestic violence and results. Age, gender, and socioeconomic status all affect social support, coping mechanisms, and family dynamics (Finkelstein et al., 2019). In order to lessen the effects of domestic violence, effective therapies must target these mediating elements. Knowing how demographic factors affect domestic violence, social support, and results helps with resource allocation, targeted support, and customised interventions (Holt et al., 2017). Future research avenues include experimental designs testing demography-specific therapies and longitudinal studies investigating the impact of demographic variables.

Domestic violence's effects on teenagers are a complicated topic that is impacted by a number of personal traits. Coping mechanisms and personality qualities like emotional intelligence and resilience are essential for lessening the impacts of domestic abuse. One important component in assisting teenagers in overcoming adversity is resilience. According to research, more resilient teenagers have greater coping mechanisms and emotional control, which helps them deal with difficult circumstances more skilfully (Wang et al., 2020).

Another crucial personality attribute that aids adolescents in controlling their emotions, developing empathy, and upholding wholesome relationships is emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional intelligence (EI) includes social skills, self-awareness, and self-regulation—all of which are vital for teenagers who witness domestic abuse. Research has shown that emotional intelligence (EI) improves the seeking and use of social assistance, enabling better coping mechanisms (Goleman, 2020). Additionally, it has been discovered that strong self-esteem protects against the detrimental effects of domestic abuse on mental health, underscoring the need to foster self-esteem in teenagers (Holt et al., 2017).

Teenagers' coping mechanisms also have a big impact on how well they handle stress from domestic abuse. It has been demonstrated that problem-focused coping, which entails proactive problem-solving and support-seeking, lowers stress and anxiety (Lazarus & Folkman, 2019). Well-being is also improved by emotion-focused coping mechanisms such as social support, self-soothing, and emotional control. Avoidance coping, on the other hand, which is ignoring feelings or circumstances, can make issues worse, highlighting the necessity of flexible coping mechanisms (Zinzow et al., 2019).

It's also crucial to consider how coping mechanisms and personality features interact. Studies have shown that resilient teenagers use better-coping mechanisms, pointing to a mutually reinforcing relationship between coping and resilience (Wang et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence also improves the use and seeking of social assistance, underscoring the significance of taking individual traits into account in intervention programs. It is crucial to comprehend how personality qualities and coping mechanisms might lessen the negative impacts of domestic abuse on teenagers. Teenagers who are struggling with issues related to domestic abuse can benefit from intervention programs that emphasize coping skills development, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Family-centred interventions that address the effects of domestic abuse and customized support based on individual characteristics are also essential. Longitudinal studies that look at personality traits and coping mechanisms, experimental designs that evaluate therapies that target individual features, and studies that look into how culture and circumstance affect personality traits are some examples of future research directions (Carlos, 2014).

### **Implications for Practice and Policy**

- **School-Based Interventions:** When it comes to helping adolescents who have been exposed to domestic abuse, school-based interventions are essential. To provide a secure and encouraging environment, successful programs use social support and the concepts of trauma-informed care. Care Informed by Trauma Teachers and staff must receive training in order to identify and address the needs of teenagers. Counselling services and social support groups must be set up to deal with psychological and emotional issues. Academic support and peer support programs can improve adolescents' academic performance and coping mechanisms. For implementation to be successful, cooperation with mental health specialists and incorporation into current school structures are essential (Pinto et al., 2017).
- **Family-Centred Programs-** Healthy family dynamics and improved parent-adolescent connections are the goals of family-centred programs. Family counselling and parent-



adolescent therapy can help with communication problems and relational problems. Training in conflict resolution and parenting techniques can improve parents' capacity to create a nurturing environment. Cultural relevance and efficacy are ensured by involving parents and teenagers in the creation of programs and encouraging cooperation with local resources. Program effects on participant satisfaction and family dynamics are tracked through frequent evaluations and assessments. (Duru, 2018).

- **Community Resources-** Community resources are essential to give teenagers access to social and mental health services. Access to social services, community support groups, and mental health services should all be improved. Teenagers experiencing a crisis can receive vital support from hotlines and helplines. Resource knowledge and use are encouraged by working with neighbourhood groups and making sure one is culturally competent. Frequent assessments measure participant satisfaction and resource use. (Haj-Yahia et al., 2019).
- **Policy Implications-** Implications for policy encourage the prevention and treatment of domestic abuse. It is essential to allocate funds for community resources and school-based treatments. Raising awareness and promoting policy change can be achieved by supporting legislation that prevents domestic abuse and by starting awareness campaigns. A coordinated response to domestic abuse is facilitated by interagency coordination. Involving stakeholders and legislators guarantees that policies adhere to best practices. Policymakers should give funding for community resources and school-based initiatives top priority. Policy change is encouraged by backing laws and awareness initiatives aimed at preventing domestic abuse. Effective policy implementation is ensured through interagency cooperation and stakeholder involvement. Future policy directions are informed by regular reviews and policy impact monitoring (Cámara et al., 2014).
- **Practice Implications-** To determine the unique needs of teenagers, practitioners should carry out needs assessments. Successful implementation is ensured by creating culturally sensitive programs and assessing their efficacy. Evidence-based practice is informed by analysing contextual and cultural elements as well as long-term impacts. Effective treatments are promoted when practitioners, legislators, and researchers work together (Collin-Vézina, 2020).

### **Implications for Counselling Practice**

Teens who have witnessed domestic abuse require counselling that is attentive to their particular needs and experiences. The following techniques can be useful:

- Counsellors must take a trauma-informed stance, recognizing how violence affects people's emotional and mental health. This entails establishing a judgment-free environment where teenagers can freely communicate their emotions and experiences.
- Enhancing teenagers' coping mechanisms and resilience should be the primary goal of interventions. Counsellors can equip teenagers to deal with stress and hardship more skilfully by teaching them techniques like emotional control and problem-solving.

- Teenagers' emotions and experiences can be normalized by educating them about the consequences of domestic abuse. This knowledge can lessen stigma and encourage more constructive coping strategies.
- Involving family members in therapy can be helpful when it is suitable. This strategy aims to establish a supportive environment for the teenager by encouraging communication and understanding within the family system.
- Counsellors should be ready to direct teenagers to other resources that can help them deal with the complexity of their circumstances, like support groups or legal assistance.

## **Conclusion**

This discussion explored the intricate connection between social support, domestic violence, and teenage outcomes, emphasizing the vital role that social support plays in reducing the harmful impacts of domestic abuse. The significance of personal traits, including emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, and resilience, in affecting results was highlighted by key findings. Promoting adolescent well-being has been found to need effective treatments, such as family-centred interventions, school-based programs, and community services. Along with policy support and financing for counselling services and research, the discussion also emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity, trauma-informed care, and evidence-based approaches. The significance of counsellor training, supervision, and collaboration was emphasized in the discussion of implications for counselling practice, research, and training. All things considered, the discussion emphasizes the complexity of the effects of domestic abuse on teenagers and the necessity of all-encompassing, research-based support networks to foster resilience and well-being.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the discourse of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- Culturally sensitive therapies, school-based social support groups, and trauma-informed care concepts should all be used in schools. In order to identify children who may be exposed to domestic violence and provide early intervention and assistance, systematic screening procedures should be put in place in educational and healthcare settings.
- The government ought to provide funds for research and counselling services, create laws that encourage the prevention of domestic abuse, and guarantee that people have access to local resources.
- Universities and research organizations ought to carry out long-term studies, look into efficient models for counselling education, create culturally aware evaluation instruments, and analyse novel approaches.
- Training in trauma-informed care, cultural competency, evidence-based intervention, and continuous monitoring and support should all be offered by pertinent agencies.
- The government ought to create community support groups, expand mental health services' accessibility, launch awareness campaigns, and encourage cooperation among neighbourhood organizations.

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