



2026 Frank M. Norfleet Forum

“Violence Prevention Through a Public Safety Lens”

Planning committee co-chairs

Regan Williams, MD, MS
Professor
Department of Surgery
College of Medicine

Ron Cowan, MD, PhD, FAPA
Harrison Distinguished Professor and Chair
Department of Psychiatry
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Welcome!

Michael Hocker, MD, MHS

Executive Dean

College of Medicine

Professor

Department of Emergency Medicine

College of Medicine - Memphis

Foundations of this forum

- Violence is present in all human cultures and has devastating effects on happiness, well-being, and prosperity
- Environmental, social, and economic factors present in Memphis (and most large US cities) **negatively impact the brain**
- The resultant brain damage leads to **increased response to threat and anger** and **decreased ability to inhibit aggression**
- Violence can be **dramatically reduced** by sustained and systematic interventions
- Community, governmental, law enforcement, and business leaders in Memphis have implemented violence reduction interventions—we will learn about some of these today
- Our hope is that today's forum will increase awareness, encourage collaborations, and support sustained evidence-based violence interventions

Major Factors Predisposing to Violence

Social Environment

Family and peer influences
Cultural influences

External Environment

Alcohol availability
Blight and low green spaces
Fine particle air pollution
High ambient temperature

Biological Factors

Genetics
Poor cognitive function
Addiction

Poverty

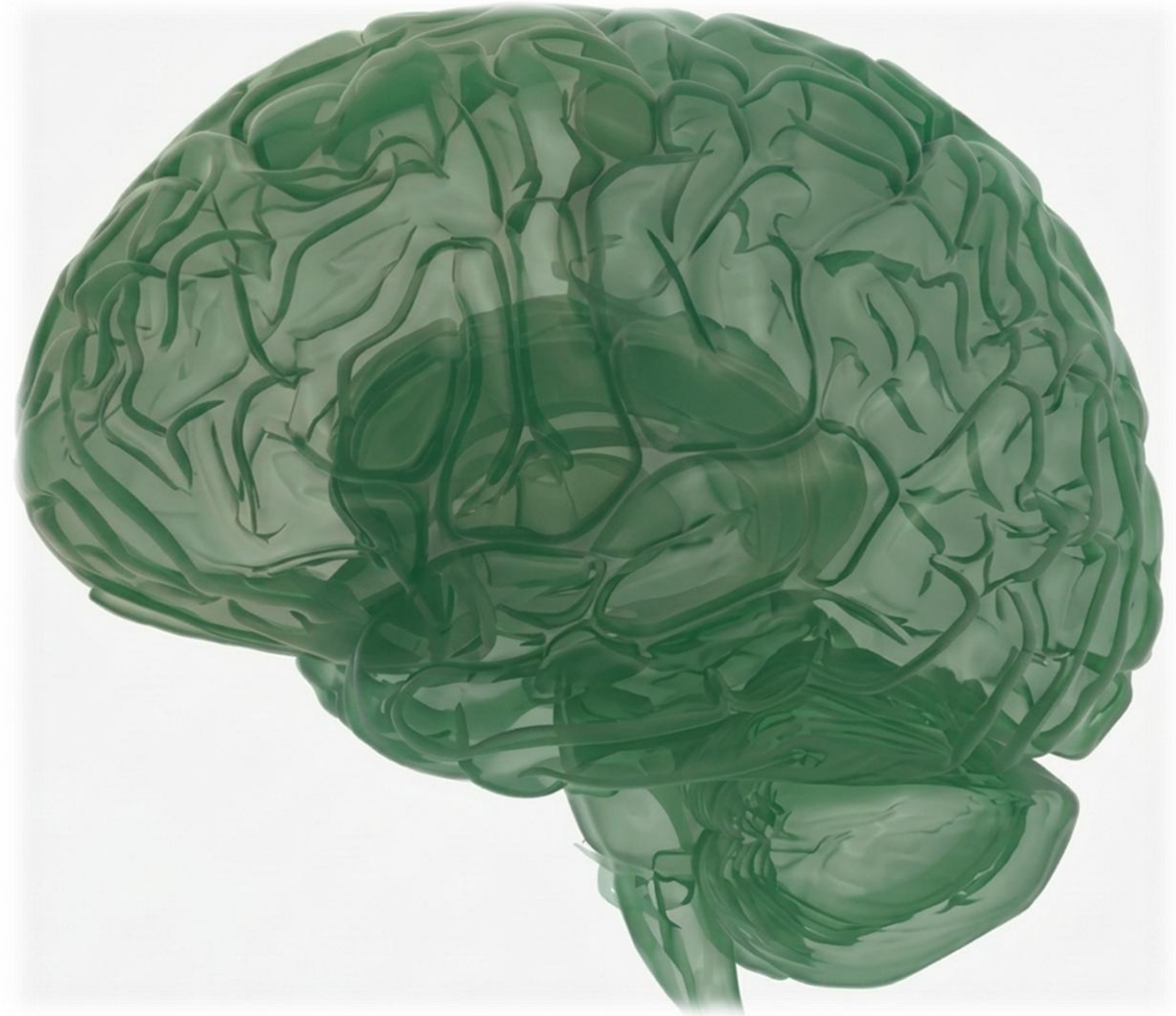
Unemployment
Housing instability

Low Exercise

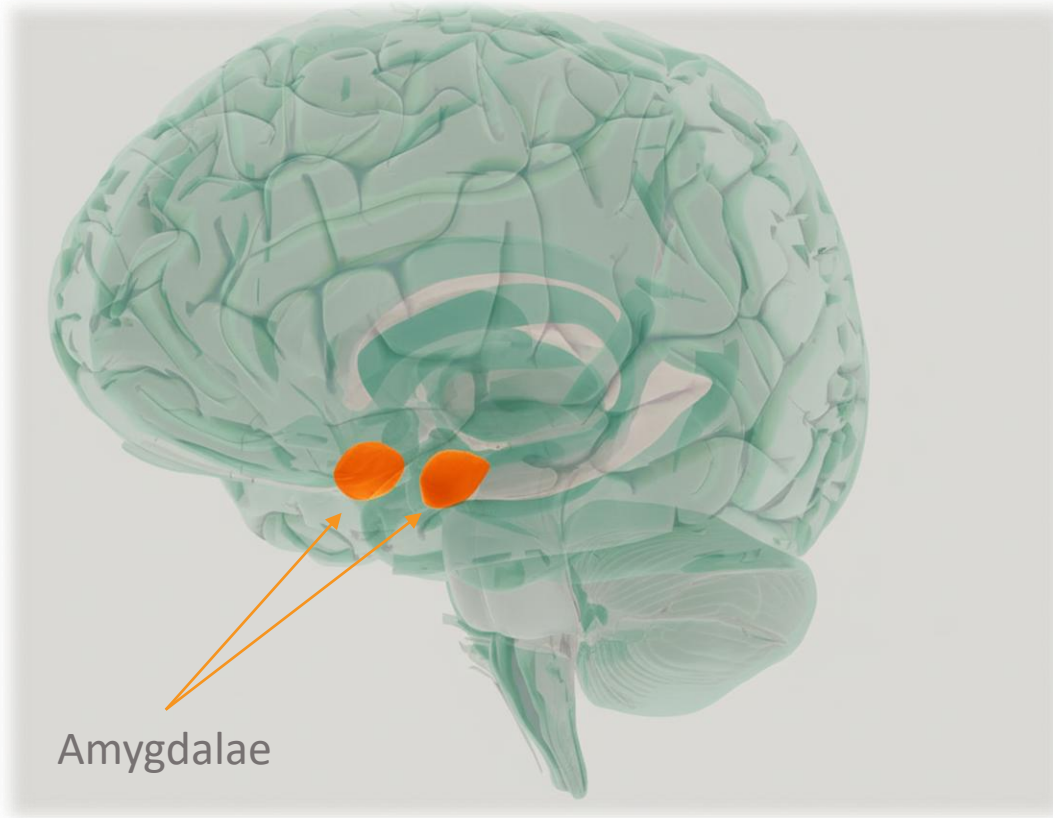
Diet and Toxins

Lead and other toxin exposure
Low omega-3 fatty acids
High intake of junk food

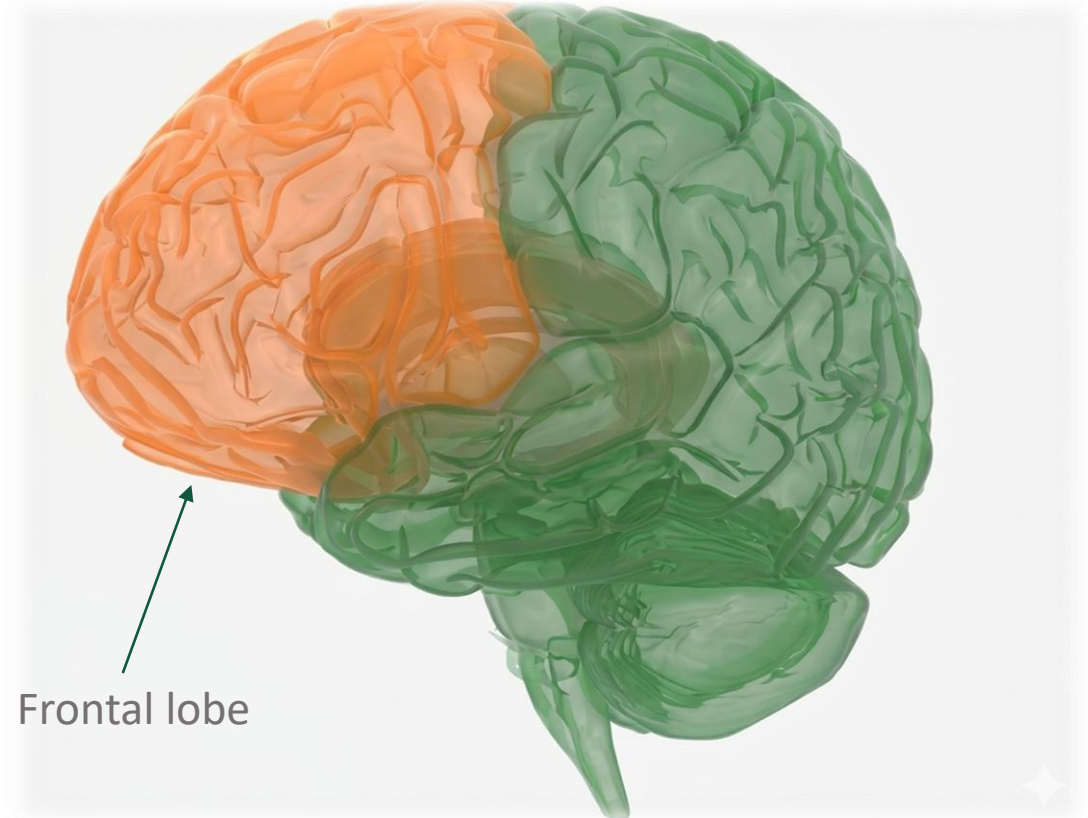
Negative
effects on
brain
development
and function



Damage to brain regions critical for the drive to violence and to inhibiting the drive to violence



Enhanced activity in the amygdala and related structures leads to increased response to threat and increased anger and aggression



Reduced function of frontal lobe leads to decreased ability to inhibit aggression

Update from Memphis Police Department and the Joint Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement



Cerelyn "CJ" Davis
Chief
Memphis Police Department



Tamika A. Williams
Deputy Director
Joint Office of
Neighborhood Safety and
Engagement