

# The Future of Crime Prevention: Developmental and Situational Strategies

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# Introduction

- Crime prevention can mean many different things
- More often it refers to efforts to prevent crime or criminal offending in the first instance - before the act has been committed
- What distinguishes crime prevention from crime control is that prevention typically operates outside the confines of the formal justice system
- Prevention is considered the 4th pillar of crime reduction, alongside police, courts, and corrections (Waller 2006)

# Classifying Crime Prevention

- Many possible ways of classifying crime prevention programs
- One scheme distinguishes 4 major prevention strategies
  - Developmental
  - Situational
  - Community
  - Criminal Justice

# Developmental crime prevention

- Interventions designed to prevent the development of criminal potential in individuals, especially those targeting risk and protective factors discovered in studies of human development
- Focus on most important, scientifically established risk factors; these are known as causes

# Situational crime prevention

- Interventions designed to prevent the occurrence of crimes by reducing opportunities and increasing risk and difficulty of offending
- Focus on the setting or place in which criminal acts take place as well as crime-specific focus

# Community crime prevention

- Interventions designed to change the social conditions and institutions (e.g., families, peers, social norms) that influence offending in communities

# Criminal justice crime prevention

- Traditional deterrent, incapacitative, and rehabilitative strategies operated by criminal justice system agencies

# Scope

- Focus exclusively on developmental and situational prevention
- Interest in crime prevention that takes place outside of the CJS
- Community prevention not covered in any extensive fashion
  - Community prevention often overlaps with developmental and situational prevention
  - Much less is known about effective community programs that target the social processes that influence offending



# Key Questions

- What do we know?
  - Effectiveness of the 2 strategies
- What do we need to know?
  - Gaps in knowledge on effectiveness and related key issues
- How can we find out?
  - Research strategies to address the gaps in knowledge and priorities for research

# What do we know?

- Focus on highest quality research studies (experiments and quasi-experiments) and most rigorous reviews of evidence
- Ensures that conclusions are based on the best available evidence

# Developmental Crime Prevention

- Individual and Family
  - 4 types of programs are particularly effective
    - Parent education (in the context of home visiting)
    - Parent management training
    - Child skills training
    - Preschool intellectual enrichment programs

# Developmental Crime Prevention (cont.)

- Generally the programs are targeted on the risk factors of
  - Poor parental child-rearing, supervision, or discipline (general parent education or PMT)
  - High impulsivity, low empathy, self-centeredness (skills training)
  - Low intelligence and attainment (preschool)

# Home Visiting Program

- Nurse-Family Partnership (Elmira, NY) by David Olds
- Enrolled 400 first-time mothers
- Randomly assigned to receive home visits up to age 2 or no visits
- Each visit lasted about 1.25 hours and the mothers were visited on average every 2 weeks
- Home visitors gave advice about prenatal and postnatal care of the child, about infant development, and about the importance of proper nutrition and avoiding smoking and drinking during pregnancy

# Home Visiting Program - Results

- Home visits caused a significant decrease in:
  - Recorded child physical abuse and neglect by mothers (2 years later)
  - Alcohol or substance abuse problems and arrests by mothers (15 years later)
  - Arrests by children (15 years later)
- BCAs: home visits produced value for money
- Replications in Memphis and Denver

# Peer, School, and Community Programs

- Number of effective programs
- Peer programs
  - No outstanding examples of effective programs based on peer risk factors

# School Programs

- Meta-analyses by Wilson *et al.* (2001) and Gottfredson *et al.* (2006) identified 4 effective school interventions
  - School and discipline management
  - Classroom or instructional management
  - Reorganization of grades or classes
  - Increasing self-control or social competency with cognitive behavioral or behavioral instructional methods
- Systematic review by Ttofi and Farrington (2010) found anti-bullying programs in schools to be effective
  - Review included 89 high-quality evaluations of 53 different programs
  - Bullying and victimization were reduced by about 17-23%



# Community Programs

- A couple types of community-based programs are effective
  - Mentoring
  - MST

# MST

- Multi-component program
- Type of treatment is chosen according to the particular needs of the youth
- Treatment may include individual, family, peer, school, community interventions (including parent training and skills training)
- Treatment delivered in the youth's home, school, or community settings
- Typically used with juvenile offenders
- A number of sites (but not all) report significant reductions in re-arrests, reconvictions

# Situational Crime Prevention

- Most comprehensive review done by Eck (2006)
  - Focused on full range of situational measures implemented in public and private settings
  - Included both published and unpublished studies
  - Included only highest quality evaluations

# Effectiveness

- A number of situational measures are effective
  - Nuisance abatement
  - Improved street lighting
  - CCTV
  - Preventing repeat residential burglary victimization
  - Neighborhood watch

## Effectiveness (cont.)

- Many more are promising, including:
  - Multiple clerks and store redesign at commercial stores
  - Server training
  - Security guards in car parks

# Nuisance Abatement

- Involves use of civil law to curtail drug dealing and related crime problems in private residential premises
- Considered a situational measure because of its place-specific focus, as well as its use of the threat of civil action to curtail the problem
- Falls under the strategy of decreasing excuses for committing a crime in Cornish and Clarke's (2003) taxonomy
- 4 high quality evaluations, including 2 randomized experiments, were identified
- Each showed evidence of reduced drug-related crime

# CCTV

- Systematic review of 44 high-quality evaluations from the US, UK, and other Western countries found that CCTV is:
  - Most effective in reducing crime in car parks
  - Most effective in reducing vehicle crimes
  - More effective in reducing crime in the UK than in other countries
- Success of CCTV schemes in car parks:
  - Mostly limited to a reduction in vehicle crimes
  - Camera coverage was high
  - All 6 car park schemes included other interventions (e.g., improved lighting, security officers)