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School and Community Interventions To Prevent Serious and Violent Offending

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Recent research indicates that children exposed to certain risk factors in their families, at school, among their peers, and in their communities are at greater risk of becoming serious violent juvenile (SVJ) offenders. Multiple rather than single factors place children at risk of becoming SVJ offenders. Therefore, intervention efforts directed toward any single source of influence (e.g., family, school, or peers) are unlikely to be successful. Rather, to be effective, programs must target several risk factors in a variety of settings.

According to the Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders—a group of 22 researchers convened by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to study the population of SVJ offenders—implementing family, school, and community interventions is the best way to prevent children from developing into SVJ offenders. Interventions include strategies that prevent problem behavior or that intervene to reduce future problem behavior. The Study Group also concluded that programs similar in philosophy to public health approaches (i.e., those that both address risk factors and introduce protective factors) are the most promising prevention and early intervention programs for SVJ offenders.

Many schools and communities have designed interventions to prevent or reduce risk factors for SVJ offending and

drug abuse. The Study Group reviewed a number of such programs that have shown promising results in preventing adolescent antisocial behavior. Its findings, summarized in this Bulletin, are set forth in greater detail in the group's final report, *Never Too Early, Never Too Late: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions for Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders* (Loeber and Farrington, 1997).[1] The chapter of the final report summarized in this Bulletin, which focuses on comprehensive school and community interventions to prevent serious and violent juvenile offending, was researched and written by Richard F. Catalano, Michael W. Arthur, J. David Hawkins, Lisa Berglund, and Jeffrey J. Olson. While few of the interventions described in this Bulletin have been evaluated to measure their impact on SVJ offending, all address multiple risk factors in a variety of settings, an approach that may be one of the most effective at preventing problem behaviors from developing.

The Study Group examined five types of school interventions: structured playground activities, behavioral consultation, behavioral monitoring and reinforcement,

[1] The conclusions of the Study Group were subsequently set forth in a book entitled *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions,* edited by the Group's cochairs, Rolf Loeber and David P. Farrington, and published by Sage Publications, Inc., in 1998.

From the Administrator

Although youth who commit serious violent crimes are small in number, they account for a disproportionate amount of juvenile crime. How then can we best intervene with this difficult—even dangerous—population? A major study, funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and conducted by its Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders, sheds new light on promising strategies to prevent and control serious violent juvenile offending.

The study concludes that timely comprehensive school- and community-based interventions hold the greatest potential for preventing such delinquency and finds that programs involving a juvenile's family, school, and community are most effective in minimizing factors that contribute to serious violent juvenile offending and maximizing those that prevent delinquency. A number of such interventions are described in this Bulletin.

I hope that school administrators and community leaders will be able to use the information that this Bulletin provides to help youth develop into law-abiding and productive citizens. Only by focusing on programs and strategies that work will we be able to succeed in preventing serious violent juvenile offending and ensuring public safety.

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Administrator

metal detectors, and schoolwide reorganization. These interventions varied in effectiveness. Programs that monitored student behavior and reinforced attendance and academic progress increased positive school behavior and academic achievement and decreased delinquency. While metal detectors reduced the number of weapons brought into schools, they did not seem to decrease weapon carrying or violence outside schools.

The Study Group also examined eight types of community interventions: citizen mobilization, situational prevention, comprehensive citizen intervention, mentoring, afterschool recreation programs, policing strategies, policy changes, and mass media interventions. Several of these interventions showed positive results in reducing risk and enhancing protective factors, and in studies with long-term followup, certain programs were effective in reducing juvenile crime and substance abuse.

School Interventions

Academic failure is often associated with the beginning of delinquency and the escalation of serious offending, and interventions that improve a child's academic performance have been shown to reduce delinquency (Maguin and Loeber, 1996). To assess the effectiveness of schoolwide interventions, the Study Group examined five types of school interventions, which targeted a variety of risk factors (including academic failure, social alienation, low commitment to school, association with violent and delinquent peers, and aggressive behavior) and introduced a number of protective factors (such as bonding to school, social and cognitive competencies,

recognition of positive behavior, and positive norms regarding behavior).

Structured Playground Activities

A school playground program for boys and girls in kindergarten through second grade in Tallahassee, FL, significantly reduced aggressive behavior on the playground (Murphy, Hutchinson, and Bailey, 1983). The program offered organized games, such as jump rope and races, to 344 children who arrived at the playground before school began. Three aides supervised the activities and used a timeout procedure for students who were particularly unruly. Most of the disruptive incidents involved aggression, and the program showed a 53-percent reduction in aggression as a result of the structured activities.

Behavioral Consultation

Two comprehensive school intervention programs designed to reduce school vandalism illustrated that changing student behavior is one way to prevent delinquent behavior. In a 1-year program, graduate students trained in applied behavioral analysis and behavioral consultation helped Los Angeles County elementary schools develop classroom and schoolwide antivandalism programs (Mayer and Butterworth, 1979). Interventions included matching academic materials to students' skill levels, increasing positive reinforcement for appropriate classroom behavior and academic progress, reducing the use of punishment, applying learning and behavioral management principles, and educating school counselors and psychologists about behavioral consultation methods. Vandalism

costs and disruptive behavior at the elementary schools where the program was implemented decreased, and on-task classroom behavior increased following implementation of the program.

A similar multiyear behavioral consultation program for elementary and junior high school students in Los Angeles County was found effective at reducing vandalism (Mayer et al.,1983). Vandalism costs and disruptive behavior decreased significantly in participating schools, and the effects were maintained for several years following the project (Mayer et al., 1983).

Behavioral Monitoring

Closely supervising student behavior and rewarding positive conduct also appear to be effective interventions, according to an evaluation of a behavioral intervention program that focused on low-achieving, disruptive seventh-grade students who had trouble bonding with their families (Bry, 1982). As part of the 2-year program, intervention staff and teachers met weekly to discuss students' tardiness, class preparedness, performance, and behavior. Staff also met with students in small group sessions and reviewed their school behavior. Students earned points (later redeemed for a special trip) for positive ratings from the teacher interviews, good attendance, lack of disciplinary referrals, and lack of inappropriate behavior during the weekly meetings. As part of the program, staff also routinely informed parents of their children's progress and continued to interview teachers and hold small "booster" review sessions for the students every 2 weeks for 1 year after the intervention.

Monitored students had significantly higher grades, better attendance, and far fewer problem behaviors at school than students in a nonintervention comparison group (Bry and George, 1980). The behavior changes continued after the program ended. One-and-a-half years later, students who had participated in the program were found to report less illegal drug use and criminal behavior than youth who did not receive the intervention. The impact on delinquency was long-term: 5 years after the program ended, youth in the program were 66 percent less likely to have a juvenile record with the county probation office than youth who had not been in the program (Bry, 1982).

Metal Detectors in Schools

Many schools use metal detectors to reduce violence by making firearms unavailable within school buildings. One

survey of a representative sample of New York City high school students found that juveniles who attended schools with metal detectors were half as likely to carry a gun, knife, or other weapon to or from school or inside a school building, as students who attended schools without metal detectors (Ginsberg and Loffredo, 1993). Both groups of students, however, reported similar experiences in terms of being threatened or involved in fights at or away from school, and both were equally likely to report carrying a gun, knife, or other weapon during the 30-day period prior to the survey. Although these results imply that metal detector programs may have an impact on specific sites (especially with respect to the number of weapons brought to school), the Study Group cautions that metal detectors do not appear to reduce the number of weapons carried outside school.

Schoolwide Reorganization

School organization interventions (i.e., those that change or improve the way that schools operate) are noteworthy for their comprehensive and systematic prevention approach. The Study Group's review of many such programs found that several appear to reduce risk factors—including academic failure, dropping out of school, and rebelliousness—and increase protective factors—such as commitment to school and good attendance. Certain school reorganization programs also have significantly reduced violence and delinquent behavior. However, the fact that none of the programs reviewed by the Study Group used a true experimental design and that several evaluations did not completely analyze outcome data prevents a clear interpretation of evaluation results. Individual programs are described below.

◆ **School development program, New Haven, CT.** One intervention program in New Haven, CT, which included parental involvement and a multidisciplinary mental health team, helped students in two inner-city public elementary schools improve academically (Cauce, Comer, and Schwartz, 1987; Comer, 1988). Ninety-nine percent of the students receiving the intervention were African American, and most came from low-income families. The program included a social calendar that integrated arts and athletic programs into school activities; a parent program that supported academic and extracurricular activities; a multidisciplinary mental

health team that helped staff manage student behavior problems; and a team of school administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents who oversaw program implementation.

Students from the two schools receiving the intervention performed significantly better in middle school than a comparison group of students from nonintervention elementary schools. Students receiving the intervention had significantly higher grades, academic achievement test scores, and self-perceived social competence.

◆ **Norwegian intervention targeting bullying.** A large-scale school intervention program that targeted bullying in Norwegian schools appears to have prevented violence by reducing aggressive behavior and general delinquency (Olweus, 1991). The program provided an information and advice packet about bullying and ways to combat it to all families in Norway with school-age children. In addition, it distributed a booklet for school personnel to all Norwegian comprehensive schools (grades 1 through 9). The booklet described bullying problems, provided suggestions on what teachers and schools could do to counteract and prevent bullying problems, and dispelled myths about the nature and causes of bullying. The program also made a video about bullying available at a highly subsidized price.

Results of this program were encouraging. Significantly fewer students—almost 50 percent less—reported being victims of bullies when surveyed 8 and 20 months after the program began. Students also reported significant decreases in their own delinquent behavior (vandalism, theft, and truancy) 8 and 20 months after the program started. Because bullying often involves repeated assaults on victimized students, this program appears to have directly reduced the risk factors of early and persistent antisocial behavior and violent, assaultive behavior.

◆ **PATHE program.** A comprehensive school organization intervention for secondary school students in Charleston County, SC, the Positive Action Through Holistic Education (PATHE) program, similarly resulted in significant decreases in delinquent behavior (Gottfredson, 1986). The PATHE program included six components: (1) teams of teachers, school staff, students, and community members who planned and implemented school improvement programs; (2) curriculum and discipline policies that were continually reviewed and revised, involved students, and provided ongoing inservice teacher training in instructional and classroom management practices; (3) academic innovations, such as study skills programs and cooperative learning; (4) school climate innovations, such as expanded extracurricular activities and peer counseling; (5) career-oriented innovations, including job skills and career exploration programs; and (6) special academic and counseling services for low-achieving and disruptive students.

High school students in the PATHE program reported significant decreases in delinquency and drug involvement and fewer school suspensions and punishment than the control group. Students in the program who received special academic and counseling services reported significantly higher grades and were less likely to repeat a grade than students who did not receive these services. High school seniors who received these services were also more likely to graduate than those who did not receive the services. For middle school students in the intervention, there were declines in suspensions.

◆ **Project CARE.** Project CARE, a school intervention program in Baltimore, MD, used classroom management

techniques and cooperative learning to decrease delinquent behavior among junior high school students (Gottfredson, 1987). The program, planned and implemented by a team of teachers, administrators, and other school staff, also included a parent volunteer component and a community support and advocacy program. Over the course of the 2-year program, students' self-reports of delinquency decreased significantly. Teachers also reported significant improvement in classroom orderliness.

◆ **Charleston, SC, middle school program.** Two evaluations of a program to improve the classroom environment and student behavior in several middle schools with high levels of student misbehavior in Charleston County, SC, showed mixed results. The intervention included a revised school discipline policy, a behavior tracking system, consistent classroom organization and management, and behavior modification techniques. The first evaluation of this program found that students in participating schools perceived significant increases in classroom order, organization, and rule clarity (Gottfredson, Karweit, and Gottfredson, 1989). The second evaluation—which examined the program's impact on the classroom environment and student behavior—found that the program generally had a positive effect on student behavior only in schools where the intervention had been fully implemented (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and Hybl, 1993). Rule clarity, however, improved in high- and medium-implementation schools. Teachers in high-implementation schools reported that on-task behavior increased significantly and disruptive behavior decreased significantly. Teachers in schools with medium and low implementation, on the other hand, noted little or negative change in students' on-task behavior.

◆ **Multimodal School-Based Prevention Demonstration program.** Another Charleston, SC, middle school intervention, the Multimodal School-Based Prevention Demonstration program, was designed to reduce problem behaviors by improving academic achievement, social competency, and social bonding (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and Skroban, 1996). Academic interventions included cooperative learning techniques, a career and educational decision skills program, and one-on-one tutoring. The program addressed social competency with a life skills training course for sixth graders, a cognitive self-management course for seventh graders, and a cognitive self-instruction course and a violence prevention curriculum for all students. The program tried to increase social bonding through a mentoring program and through adult models who taught appropriate skills and behaviors. It also included organizational development strategies designed to strengthen the quality of program implementation. Evaluation results indicate that the program improved students' grade point averages and decreased their susceptibility to peer pressure to use drugs.

Community Interventions

Many recent community interventions—particularly those that target risk factors and introduce protective factors to prevent antisocial behavior—have been heavily influenced by public health approaches (Hyndman et al., 1992; Perry, Klepp, and Sillers, 1989). While many of the programs reviewed by the Study Group did not specifically target SVJ offenders, they nonetheless suggest that comprehensive prevention strategies that involve more than one entity (e.g., police and neighborhoods), take place in a variety of settings (e.g., home and school), and are maintained for several years have the potential to positively affect that population. This is especially true for communitywide programs targeting risk and protective factors for alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. Examples of the following eight types of community interventions are described below: citizen mobilization, situational prevention, comprehensive community interventions, mentoring, afterschool recreation programs, policing strategies, policy change interventions, and media interventions.

The eight types of communitywide interventions examined by the Study Group focused on several risk factors, including easy access to firearms and drugs, community disorganization, and community norms or attitudes favoring antisocial behavior. The interventions also focused on such protective factors as social bonding and clear community norms against antisocial behavior. According to the studies and evaluations of these interventions examined by the Study Group, prevention strategies that cross multiple domains and that are mutually reinforcing and maintained for several years produce the greatest impact.

Citizen Mobilization

Programs that mobilize citizens to prevent crime and violence have the potential to reduce serious juvenile crime because they often address risk factors and offer the protective factors necessary to deter or intervene with serious juvenile offenders. The most common citizen mobilization programs are neighborhood block watch programs and citizen patrols.

Neighborhood block watch programs are based on the premise that residents are in the best position to monitor suspicious activities and individuals in their neighborhoods. Evaluations of three such programs, however, found little evidence that the programs have a significant effect on neighborhood crime. An evaluation of a citizen patrol program similarly found no significant effect on crime. Specific community mobilization programs are described below.

◆ **Seattle, WA, and Chicago, IL, neighborhood watch programs.** A neighborhood watch program in Seattle, initiated by professional community organizers affiliated with the city police department, focused on neighborhood burglary problems (Lindsay and McGillis, 1986). Following recruitment, organizers of the program held planning meetings in which they discussed prevention techniques, distributed information about home security, inspected participating residents' homes for security, and had residents select block watch

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Protective Factors

◆ Peer groups, schools, and communities that emphasize positive social norms.

◆ Warm, supportive relationships and bonding with adults.

◆ Opportunities to become involved in positive activities.

◆ Recognition and support for participating in positive activities.

◆ Cognitive, social, and emotional competence.

captains and exchange phone numbers. While the number of burglaries in the program area declined, the reductions were not statistically significant. A similar neighborhood watch program in middle-class and lower middle-class neighborhoods in Chicago did not produce any consistent changes in residents' crime prevention activities or neighborhood social cohesion, according to evaluators (Rosenbaum, Lewis, and Grant, 1986). Nor did the program have an effect on victimization or perceived disorder.

◆ **Police-initiated program in Houston, TX.** Evaluation findings were similar for a program in Houston that was initiated by police (Wycoff et al., 1985b). Assisted by local police officers and an urban planner who organized community meetings, a neighborhood task force sponsored a drug information seminar, designated "safe houses" where children could go for assistance, organized a trash and junk cleanup effort, and promoted property marking and resident ride-alongs with police officers. Although a survey found that residents in the program area perceived a decrease in crime and social disorder and an increase in police service, actual victimization did not decrease and satisfaction among residents in the program area did not improve (Wycoff et al., 1985b).

◆ **Guardian Angels.** Another popular community mobilization strategy uses citizens who are not sworn law enforcement officers to patrol neighborhoods. One of the most well-known programs using this strategy is the Guardian Angels, a racially diverse group of unarmed individuals who patrol neighborhoods by foot. The group, which operates in cities across the Nation, specifically seeks to prevent crimes involving force or personal injury. Evaluators who compared two areas in San Diego, CA, one that was patrolled by Guardian Angels and one that was not, found that crime rates in the two areas did not differ (Pennell et al., 1989).

Situational Prevention

Many police agencies and communities attempt to reduce antisocial and criminal behavior by making it more difficult for an offense to occur and easier for an offender to get caught. Such situational prevention efforts, which may include a variety of different strategies, have been shown to be effective (Clarke, 1995; Farrington, 1995).

One such strategy, target hardening, reduces the opportunity for crime to occur by implementing physical barriers such as steering locks. Studies in West Germany found that the country's rate of car thefts declined substantially after the locks were introduced there (Webb, 1994; Webb and Laycock, 1992).

Another situational prevention strategy, access control, uses sophisticated computer technology, such as electronic personal identification numbers (PIN's), to control and limit access to buildings or other areas. Vandalism and thefts decreased significantly in a London public housing project when a combination of access controls, including entry phones, strategic fencing, and electronic garage access, was introduced (Poyner and Webb, 1987).

Another effective situational prevention strategy attempts to deter offenders by channeling their behavior in socially appropriate directions, thereby minimizing the potential for violent behavior. Examples of this technique include separating rival soccer fans into different enclosures in sports stadiums (Clarke, 1983) and controlling crowds in amusement parks through pavement markings, signs, physical barriers, or vocal directions from park staff (Shearing and Stenning, 1984).

Programs that screen or track individuals' entry and exit from buildings are another type of situational prevention intervention used to prevent crime. Retail stores use numerous surveillance techniques, such as merchandise tagging, that prevent shoppers from leaving without paying for merchandise (Hope, 1991). Other screening techniques include formal surveillance by police or security personnel, surveillance by employees in specific business settings, and natural surveillance in which an area is designed to have few isolated spots where crimes could be committed without detection by people going about their daily business (Meredith and Paquette, 1992).

Making crime targets less accessible is another effective situational prevention technique. When locked safes, for example, were installed in Australian betting shops, the number of robberies dropped substantially (Clarke and McGrath, 1990). The New York Transit Authority has found that its policy of immediately removing graffiti from subway cars is an effective prevention tool because it removes the

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| **Risk Factors for Health and Behavior Problems** |

Community

◆ Availability of drugs.

◆ Availability of firearms.

◆ Community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, firearms, and crime.

◆ Media portrayals of violence.

◆ Transitions and mobility.

◆ Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization.

◆ Extreme economic deprivation.

Family

◆ Family history of problem behavior.

◆ Family management problems.

◆ Family conflict.

◆ Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior.

School

◆ Early and persistent antisocial behavior.

◆ Academic failure beginning in late elementary school.

◆ Lack of commitment to school.

Individual/Peer

◆ Alienation and rebelliousness.

◆ Friends who engage in the problem behavior.

◆ Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior.

◆ Early initiation of the problem behavior.

◆ Constitutional factors.

Source: Catalano, R., and J.D. Hawkins. 1995. *Communities That Care: Risk-Focused Prevention Using the Social Development Strategy.* Seattle, WA: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., p. 10. Reprinted with the permission of the authors and of Developmental Research and Programs, Inc.

inducement for further illegal activity (Sloan-Howitt and Kelling, 1990).

While researchers found that some of these strategies work well in certain conditions, they still need to determine which measures work best, in which combination, against which kind of crime, and under what conditions. Although altering features of the physical environment has been the major focus of situational prevention strategies, a number of researchers are emphasizing the need to focus on "resident dynamics" (i.e., individual characteristics and social interaction) as the key mediator of the environment-crime link.

Comprehensive Community Interventions

Comprehensive community interventions hold promise for preventing SVJ offending because they address multiple risk factors in the community, schools, family, and the media by mounting a coordinated set of mutually reinforcing preventive interventions throughout the community. Given the scarcity of evaluations completed in this area, the only comprehensive community programs summarized in the Study Group's report are ones that have focused on reducing alcohol and substance abuse, including smoking. Three of them are described below.

◆ **Midwestern Prevention Project.** The Midwestern Prevention Project was a community intervention program designed to prevent substance abuse in 42 public middle and junior high schools in the Kansas City area (in both Kansas and Missouri) (Pentz et al., 1989c). The project included a media campaign, education curriculums, parent education, community organization, and changes in local health policy to support the goals of the intervention. These components were introduced sequentially into communities over a period of 4 years (Pentz et al., 1989a). For evaluation purposes, researchers introduced both the media campaign and the school-based intervention in some schools the first year, and only the media intervention in other schools that year. Results indicate that the comprehensive approach was more effective than the media intervention alone at preventing the onset of substance abuse among both high-risk and general population students (Pentz et al., 1989b; Johnson et al., 1990).

◆ **Class of 1989 study.** A comprehensive community intervention to prevent adolescent smoking and alcohol use in Minnesota also was successful (Perry et al., 1992, 1993, 1996; Williams et al., in press). The Class of 1989 study was part of the Minnesota Heart Health Program (MHHP), a research and demonstration project carried out between 1980 and 1993 that was designed to reduce cardiovascular disease in three communities. A study examining this intervention evaluated the combined impact of a classroom-based smoking prevention curriculum delivered to the students in the class of 1989 during sixth, seventh, and eighth grades and the communitywide heart health activities of MHHP (Luepker et al., 1994; Perry et al., 1992). At the end of the 7-year period, when the students were high school seniors, 14.6 percent of those in the intervention program smoked, compared with 24.1 percent of the students in the reference community (who received neither the classroom-based nor the communitywide intervention) (Perry et al., 1992). The finding suggests that the combined school and community interventions produced a significant reduction in smoking among middle and high school youth.

◆ **Project Northland.** Project Northland used a similar combination of community-based and classroom interventions, along with a parent intervention component, to prevent alcohol use among adolescents in six northeastern Minnesota counties (Perry et al., 1993). The program, which began when students were in sixth grade, included a social-behavioral classroom-based curriculum, peer leadership, parent involvement, and communitywide task force activities. After 3 years, students who received the intervention scored lower on a tendency-to-use-alcohol scale and showed a considerably lower rate of monthly and weekly alcohol use. Significant differences in risk factors for drug use also were found. Survey measures of peer influences to use alcohol, perceived norms regarding teen alcohol use, parents' communication of sanctions for alcohol use, and reasons for teens not to use alcohol also demonstrated a lower likelihood of using alcohol among Project Northland students. These positive effects on alcohol-related attitudes and behaviors

are noteworthy given the prevalence of alcohol use among adolescents.

Mentoring

Many communities have initiated mentoring programs in which adult mentors spend time with and act as role models for individual youth. Mentoring interventions may address several risk factors (including alienation, academic failure, low commitment to school, and association with delinquent and violent peers), while introducing protective factors (including opportunities for prosocial involvement and development of skills for and recognition of prosocial involvement, bonds with adults, healthy beliefs, and clear standards for behavior).

Evidence from 10 evaluations of mentoring programs consistently indicates that noncontingent, supportive mentoring relationships have not had the desired effect on academic achievement, school attendance, decisions to drop out, various aspects of child behavior (including misconduct), and employment (Dicken, Bryson, and Kass, 1977; Goodman, 1972; Green, 1980; McPartland and Nettles, 1991; Poorkaj and Bockelman, 1973; Rowland, 1991; Slicker and Palmer, 1993; Stanwyck and Anson, 1989). The outcome of these programs is the same, evaluations have found, regardless of whether mentors are paid or unpaid and regardless of whether mentors are college students, community volunteers, members of the business community, or school personnel.[2]

Notwithstanding these evaluations, one study found that when mentors used behavior management techniques, students' school attendance improved (Fo and O'Donnell, 1975). The Buddy System mentoring program implemented in two Hawaiian cities, for example, assigned ethnically and socioeconomically diverse mentors from a different socioeconomic level to work with youth who had behavior management problems. The mentors were paid to make weekly contact with youth, submit data about the youth's behavior, complete weekly assignments with the youth, submit weekly log sheets, and attend biweekly meetings. Buddy System mentors received 18 hours of

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[2] OJJDP's *1998 Report to Congress: Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)* indicates that youth involved in mentoring programs are less likely to experiment with drugs, less likely to be physically aggressive, and less likely to skip school than those not involved in such programs (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998).

training before the program began and biweekly training sessions on behavior management throughout the program. The evaluation showed a reduction in truancy when mentoring relationships included several different types of reinforcement based on appropriate behavior, but no such reduction when mentoring relationships did not reward good behavior (Fo and O'Donnell, 1975).

Afterschool Recreation Programs

Programs that provide supervised recreation after school address the SVJ risk factors of alienation and association with delinquent or violent peers and introduce several protective factors, including skills for leisure activities and opportunities to become involved with prosocial youth and adults.

An evaluation of an afterschool recreation program in Ottawa, Ontario, indicated that this type of program may be a promising intervention for preventing delinquency and violence (Jones and Offord, 1989). The program actively recruited children ages 5 to 15 from low-income families who lived in an Ontario public housing project to participate in structured afterschool courses designed to improve students' skills in sports and in music, dance, scouting, and other non-athletic areas. After the children reached a certain skill level, they were encouraged to participate in ongoing leagues or other competitive activities in the community. The number of arrests for juveniles participating in the program was significantly lower than the number of arrests for the same number of juveniles 2 years before the intervention and for the same number of juveniles in a different housing project. The number of security reports on juveniles in the program also declined significantly after the intervention began. However, when the program was discontinued, these positive changes in neighborhood rates of crime diminished significantly, demonstrating that some prevention programs may require continuous operation to remain effective.

Policing Strategies

Police departments around the country are trying innovative new policies to reduce crime. Many address the risk factors of community disorganization, low neighborhood attachment, and neighborhood tolerance of crime and violence. Others introduce protective factors,

including healthy beliefs, clear behavior standards, and citizen involvement with police. Evaluations of three policing strategies show mixed results.

One strategy, intensifying the use of marked police cars, appears to prevent certain types of serious crime in high-crime areas during high-crime periods (Kelling et al., 1974). Some jurisdictions use another technique known as field interrogation in which police officers stop persons they believe to be suspicious based on "reasonable cause," question them about their activities, and sometimes search the individuals and their vehicles. These tactics often are considered controversial because it is hard to define "reasonable cause" and sometimes have been challenged as unconstitutional (Skolnick and Bayley, 1988). An evaluation of a program in San Diego, CA, however, indicates that field interrogation is a potentially promising crime prevention tactic, especially when carried out in a respectful manner (Boydstun, 1975). The evaluation found that reported crime increased significantly when police discontinued field interrogation and decreased significantly when the tactic was reintroduced.

Evaluations of these two strategies suggest that increased police presence must be directed judiciously (in terms of times, areas, and people targeted) to deter crime. Simply increasing the number of police is not likely to prevent crime (Wycoff, 1982).

Community policing is a third popular policing strategy. In this approach, police departments, other government agencies, and members of the community work together to solve crime issues. Three

studies of community policing have shown a reduction in physical and social disorder; two of these reported positive effects on resident satisfaction in areas using community policing (Pate et al., 1985; Skogan and Wycoff, 1986; Wycoff et al., 1985a). Only one of the three studies, however, showed a reduction in victimization rates as a result of community policing. In general, community policing programs result in a decrease in residents' perceptions of and fear of crime and, in many cases, result in more positive evaluations of police by residents. Crime reductions reported in these studies are based on differences in all reported crime, and the portion of crime reductions that is due to juveniles is unknown.

Policy Change Interventions

Many communities and States have changed policies and laws governing the sale and use of alcohol, cigarettes, and firearms. Although certain policy changes have shown evidence of preventing antisocial behavior by juveniles, results have been uneven.

Policies governing the availability and legal use of tobacco and alcohol have had an impact on juveniles' use of these substances. Prevalence of alcohol use, for example, appears to decline when States raise their minimum drinking age to 21 (O'Malley and Wagenaar, 1991). Studies (Cook and Tauchen, 1982; Grossman, Coate, and Arluck, 1987; Levy and Sheflin, 1985) of taxes on alcohol and the licensing of establishments that sell alcohol (Holder and Blose, 1987; Wagenaar and Holder, 1991) also indicate that policies limiting the availability of alcohol reduce

the consumption of alcohol and problems associated with alcohol use (George et al., 1989; O'Malley and Wagenaar, 1991). None of these studies, however, has examined the impact of policy changes on SVJ offending.

Studies (Brewer et al., 1995) of laws regulating the purchase and sale of firearms have similarly revealed some positive results. Two studies comparing rates of violent crime (Sloan et al., 1988; Loftin et al., 1991), for example, suggest that laws restricting the sale and purchase of handguns prevent gun-related crime. Another study (McDowall, Lizotte, and Wiersema, 1991) reports no change in assault rates, but a significant decrease

in the number of reported burglaries, as a result of these laws. A fourth study (Jung and Jason, 1988) found that firearm assaults decreased significantly in the days before new regulations went into effect but showed no change after the law became effective. The results of that study were attributed to intensive media coverage of the new law prior to enactment. Findings are similar for studies of laws governing where and in what manner firearms may be carried. These mixed findings suggest that local community support and enforcement of laws influence their effectiveness (Brewer et al., 1995).

In contrast, mandatory sentencing laws for felonies involving firearms appear to prevent homicides involving firearms (McDowall, Loftin, and Wiersema, 1992; Loftin, McDowall, and Wiersema, 1993). Such laws may also prevent other types of violent crime involving firearms, but evaluations on this issue are not yet available.

A study of the effects of New Jersey's 1981 Graves Act, which mandated a minimum prison sentence for anyone convicted of one of several serious crimes while using or carrying a firearm, found that the proportion of New Jersey homicides involving firearms decreased significantly between 1980 and 1986 (Fife and Abrams, 1989). Another study examined the impact of sentencing laws on homicides, aggravated assaults, and robberies in six cities (Loftin, Heumann, and McDowall, 1983; Loftin and McDowall, 1984). Gun homicides, the study found, decreased significantly in all six cities after mandatory sentencing laws were enacted. Assaults and armed robberies decreased somewhat in certain cities.

Media Interventions

A final community-based prevention strategy that has shown positive effects is the use of media campaigns that attempt to change public attitudes and standards, educate community residents, or support other community interventions. One of the best known media interventions is the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, a national advertising campaign against drugs. One survey revealed the effectiveness of this campaign, showing that markets where the Partnership campaign was intensively waged saw significant increases in knowledge about the effects of marijuana and cocaine use, compared with other markets (Black, 1989).

Media interventions have been used primarily (either alone or in combination with other strategies) to prevent and reduce the use of cigarettes and alcohol. Evaluations show that media interventions are especially effective when used in conjunction with school intervention curriculums to prevent smoking or other substance abuse (Flynn et al., 1992; Flynn et al., 1995; Goodstadt, 1989; Pentz et al., 1989a; Perry et al., 1992; Vartiainen et al., 1986, 1990). Although few evaluations of media interventions targeting delinquency or violence have been conducted, such interventions provide a promising direction for future research related to changing community antiviolence norms and behaviors.

Summary

The Study Group's review of school- and community-based interventions offers viable examples of the types of programs necessary to tackle the troubling issue of SVJ offending. Results of many of the interventions are encouraging. Programs adapted from the public health model— one that has traditionally addressed risk factors while also enhancing protective factors—can make a difference.

According to the Study Group, the following interventions have shown positive effects in reducing risk and enhancing protection against adolescent antisocial behavior:

◆ Behavioral consultation for schools.

◆ Schoolwide mentoring.

◆ Behavioral modification and reinforcement of prosocial behavior, good attendance, and strong academic performance.

◆ School organization interventions.

◆ Situational crime prevention.

◆ Comprehensive community intervention that incorporates community mobilization, parent involvement and education, and classroom-based social and behavioral skills curriculums.

◆ Policing strategies including community policing and intensive police patrolling, especially in "hot spots."

◆ Policy and law changes that affect the availability and use of guns, tobacco, and alcoholic beverages.

◆ Mandatory sentencing laws for crimes involving firearms.

◆ Media interventions to change public attitudes and enhance the effects of other community- and school-based prevention strategies.

However, in order to be more useful to communities, intervention research needs to focus less on "what works" and more on determining "what works for whom" and "under what circumstances and in what settings." As discussed above, multiple risk factors—rather than any single factor—place children at risk of becoming SVJ offenders. Given the multitude of risk factors, the differential impacts of these factors at different developmental stages, and the widely varying social contexts that children are exposed to, it is difficult to identify the specific effects of interventions. Effects, in fact, are highly likely to be the result of interactions among a variety of factors and conditions—rather than a single isolated change. It is now up to school and community leaders, policymakers, and concerned citizens to design and implement their own interventions targeting SVJ offending. The most effective way to reduce SVJ offending is to begin prevention efforts as early as possible

with high-risk youth and to intervene aggressively with those who are already SVJ offenders, regardless of how old they are or how long they have been offending.

For Further Information

The following publications are available from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC). For more information or to order a copy, contact JJC, 800–638–8736 (phone), 301–519–5212 (fax), puborder@ncjrs.org (e-mail), www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org (Internet).

◆ **Summary of Study Group's Final Report.** To help communities and practitioners learn more about serious and violent juvenile offenders, OJJDP released a Bulletin that summarizes the Study Group's final report. The 8-page Bulletin, *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders* (May 1998), is available (free of charge) from JJC.

◆ **Final Study Group Report.** The Study Group's final report, *Never Too Early, Never Too Late: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions for Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders* (Loeber and Farrington, 1997), is also available (for a fee) from JJC.

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