Prevention and Diversion Programs

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On completion of this chapter, students should be able to do the following:

- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of prevention and diversion programs
- Describe three major types of prevention
- List and discuss several specific prevention and diversion programs
- Discuss the concept of restorative justice
- Describe some specialty or therapeutic courts and their role in the prevention of juvenile crime
- Critique prevention and diversion programs

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You are the on-call officer at the juvenile probation office this week. A mother calls in one morning and says that she’s been having problems with her son, who is 13. She claims that he’s lying about where he’s going, where he’s been, and who he is with. He is smoking cigarettes (and possibly marijuana), he’s skipped school twice in the last couple of months, and he’s leaving the house even when told not to do so. The mother states that she’s tried grounding him and other types of punishments, just short of physical punishment, to no avail. She’s also taken his cellphone, computer, and other electronics away. Last night, she thinks he got into her purse and took $20.00 before storming out of the house. He didn’t come home until almost 3:00 a.m. She questioned him this morning about his whereabouts and the money. He told her he was at a friend’s but wouldn’t identify the friend and claimed he didn’t take the $20.00. The mother knows she has $20.00 missing from her wallet. She doesn’t want to call the police and report him because she doesn’t want him to get arrested or go to jail. She is afraid that this behavior will continue if she doesn’t do something. Exasperated, she says she’s at her rope’s end. The call to you is her last resort.

Questions to Consider

1. True or False: This child would be considered a status offender if brought before the juvenile court.
2. Multiple Choice: A potential diversion program for this child might include which of the following?
   a. Anger management classes
   b. Sex offender treatment
   c. Shoplifting diversion
   d. None of the above
3. What advice would you provide to the mother after hearing her story, if she continues to call the police and report the theft?
In 2010, McCollister, French, and Fang estimated the direct and indirect costs associated with adult and juvenile crime in the United States in 2007 at over $15 billion. This likely has not changed with the increase in technology crimes adding to the costs and estimated to reach billions of dollars in loss per year (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.). Greenwood (2008) speculated that the cost of apprehending, prosecuting, incarcerating, and treating delinquents has become the fastest growing part of state budgets in the United States, with billions of dollars spent annually. Although a number of these attempts prove to be more or less successful with some offenders, the results are not particularly impressive on the whole. It would seem logical, therefore, to explore the possibilities of concentrating resources on programs that might provide better returns. Although this trend may be changing slightly with the use of specialty/therapeutic courts, many authorities have come to believe that most of our money is spent at the wrong end of the juvenile justice process—on treatment after the crime has been committed instead of on prevention to stop a crime from ever occurring.

In most cases, we wait until a juvenile comes into official contact with the system before an attempt is made to modify the behavior that has, by the time contact becomes official, been more or less ingrained. Our legal system generally prevents intervention by justice authorities without probable cause, and we would have it no other way. Still, this makes it more difficult for corrections personnel, or personnel in related agencies, to modify offensive behavior after the fact either by intervening prior to adjudication (preadjudication intervention) or by intervening after the juvenile has been adjudicated (postadjudication intervention). A 2003 study by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (p. 9) pointed out that the earlier intervention can be introduced, the better the opportunity to change the behavior. Greenwood (2008) and others (Farrington & Welsh, 2007; Sherman et al., 1997) supported this approach, noting that most adult offenders begin their criminal careers as juveniles. It makes sense then that if we prevent juvenile offending, we can prevent the beginning of adult criminal offending as well as reduce juvenile drug use and dependency, school dropouts, and long-term financial costs for taxpayers and victims (Greenwood, 2008; McCollister

Wilderness camps are popular alternatives to incarceration. Youth at wilderness camps participate in a variety of activities such as hiking, swimming, and mountain climbing, as well as therapy and rehabilitation programs.
et al., 2010). For example, consider the difficulty of trying to rehabilitate a juvenile addicted to heroin. By the time the juvenile is addicted, apprehended, and processed, he or she has probably developed problems in the family, problems in school, and delinquent habits oriented toward ensuring his or her supply of heroin (e.g., burglary, mugging, pushing drugs). To rehabilitate the juvenile, we need to deal with all of these problems. If, however, we had effective programs to detect and help resolve problems that are likely to lead to heroin use—known as prevention—the necessity for solving all of these complicated and related problems would be eliminated. Suppose that we found the juvenile in question to be dissatisfied with traditional education but interested in pursuing a specific vocation, like welding or drafting. Suppose that we were to provide an alternative education that enabled the juvenile to pursue that vocation and heightened his or her interest in success within the system. We might, then, prevent the juvenile from dropping out of school, joining a heroin-abusing gang, and developing the undesirable behavior patterns just mentioned. Consequently, it would seem reasonable to bring as many resources as possible to bear so as to prevent the offender from engaging in illegal behavior in the first place (predelinquent intervention) or to try to divert the juvenile, as early as possible, when he or she does encounter the justice system (Lundman, 1993).

Prevention

There are three major types of prevention programs. **Primary prevention** is directed at preventing illegal acts among the juvenile population as a whole before they occur by alleviating social conditions related to the offenders. **Secondary prevention** seeks to identify juveniles who appear to be at high risk for delinquency and/or abuse and to intervene in their lives early. **Tertiary prevention** attempts to prevent further illegal acts among offenders once such acts have been committed (OJJDP, 2000). None of these programs are a cure-all, and there are a number of difficulties in attempting to develop and operate such programs (Mays & Winfree, 2000, p. 324). For example, there should be a good match between the program concept, host organization, and the targeted juvenile if the program is to change behavior or have an effect on the youth (Lipsey, Wilson, & Cothern, 2000).

During the 1930s, several projects addressed the issue of delinquency prevention. The Chicago Area Project involved churches, social clubs, and community committees that sponsored recreation programs for juveniles; addressed problems associated with law enforcement, health services, and education; targeted local gangs; and helped to reintegrate juveniles who had been adjudicated delinquent. In spite of these efforts, no solid evidence that delinquency was prevented or reduced resulted from the project (Lundman, 1993).

During the late 1960s, the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) recommended the establishment of alternatives to the juvenile justice system. According to the report, service agencies capable of dealing with certain categories of juveniles should have these juveniles diverted to them. The report further recommended the following:

1. The formal sanctioning system and pronouncement of delinquency should be used only as a last resort.
2. Instead of the formal system, dispositional alternatives to adjudication must be developed for dealing with juveniles, including agencies to provide and coordinate services and procedures to achieve necessary control without unnecessary stigma. Alternatives already available, such as those related to court intake, should be more fully exploited.
3. The range of conduct for which court intervention is authorized should be narrowed, with greater emphasis on consensual and informal means of meeting the problems of difficult children. (President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967, pp. 19–25)
During the early 1970s, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973) stated that “the highest attention must be given to preventing juvenile delinquency, minimizing the involvement of young offenders in the juvenile and criminal justice system, and reintegrating them into the community” (p. 36). The commission further recommended minimizing the involvement of the offender in the system. This does not mean that we should coddle the offender. It recognizes that the further the offender penetrates into the system, the more difficult it becomes to divert him or her from a criminal career. Minimizing a child’s involvement with the juvenile justice system does not mean abandoning the use of confinement for certain individuals or failing to protect victims of abuse or neglect. Until more effective means of treatment are found, chronic and dangerous delinquents should be incarcerated to protect society, and abused children must be made wards of the court and removed from unsafe conditions. However, the juvenile justice system must search for beneficial programs outside institutions for juveniles who do not need confinement or sheltered care. As discussed in Chapter 7, most state juvenile court acts make this clear in their discussions of the goals of juvenile court.

Both labeling and learning theories stress the desirability of prevention rather than correction. The basic premise of labeling theory is that juveniles find it difficult to escape the stigmatization of being known as delinquents or abuse victims. Once labeled, juveniles are often forced out of normal interaction patterns and into associations with others who have been labeled. From this perspective, the agencies of the juvenile justice system that are established to correct delinquent behavior often contribute to its occurrence even as they try to cope with it. Learning theory holds that individuals engage in delinquent behavior because they experience an overabundance of interactions, associations, and reinforcements with definitions favorable to delinquency. Therefore, if agencies cast potential or first-time delinquents into interaction with more experienced delinquents, the process of learning delinquent behavior is enhanced greatly. Alternatively, concentration on the problems of youth that tend to lead to delinquent behavior and abuse or neglect not only may result in preventing some juveniles from becoming involved in progressively more serious offenses but also might allow the justice network to concentrate efforts on hard-core delinquents and abusers whose labels and stigmatization have been earned.

Because delinquency and abuse or neglect are complex problems, no single program is likely to emerge as being effective in preventing all such behaviors. Delinquency prevention, for example, involves many variables, and no one program is likely to be foolproof. Inherent in the multifaceted problems of delinquency and child abuse prevention is the fact that these behaviors have roots in the basic social conditions of our society. Increasing urbanization with accompanying problems of poverty, inferior education, poor housing, health and sanitary problems, and unemployment are but a few social conditions that seem to be related to delinquency and abuse or neglect. Therefore, we should focus our attention on these problems if preventive efforts are to have a chance of success (Johnson, 1998; Kowaleski-Jones, 2000; Lane & Turner, 1999; Liddle & Hogue, 2000; Thornberry, Huizinga, & Locher, 2004; Yoshikawa, 1994). Although a number of programs are important for the prevention of delinquency and child abuse, we would be remiss if we focused only on programs directed specifically at preventing such behaviors and ignored these underlying conditions. Large-scale social change directed at these areas just discussed is clearly an important preventive measure and would enable more people to achieve culturally approved goals without needing to resort to illegal means.

In June 1970, a group was invited by the Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to meet in Scituate, Massachusetts, to consider the problem of youth development and delinquency prevention. The document produced at that meeting stated the following:

We believe that our social institutions [e.g., school, family, church] are programmed in such a way as to deny large numbers of young people socially acceptable, responsible, and personally gratifying roles. These institutions should seek ways of becoming more responsible to youth needs. (Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration, 1971, p. 2)
The group further stated that any strategy for youth development and delinquency prevention should give priority to “programs which assist institutions to change in ways that provide young people with socially acceptable, responsible, personally gratifying roles and assist young people to assume such roles” (p. 2).

It follows from this premise that the development of viable strategies for the prevention and reduction of delinquency and abuse or neglect rests on the identification, assessment, and alteration of those features of institutional functioning that impede development of juveniles—particularly those whose social situations make them most prone to developing delinquent careers, becoming victims of abusive behavior, or participating in collective forms of withdrawal and deviancy. This approach does not deny the occurrence of individual deviance, but it does assert that in many cases the deviance is traceable to the damaging experiences of juveniles in institutional encounters.

Katkin, Hyman, and Kramer (1976) pointed the following out some time ago:

It is social institutions in the broader community—families, churches, schools, social welfare agencies, etc.—which have the primary mandate to control and care for young people who commit delinquent acts. It is only when individuals or institutions in the community fail to divert (or decide not to divert) that the formal processes of the juvenile justice system are called into action. (p. 404)

In this respect, Yoshikawa (1994) found that comprehensive family support combined with early childhood education may well be successful in bringing about long-term prevention. Similarly, Johnson (1998) noted that the actions of parents and teachers may reduce juvenile crime more effectively than do those of the police. Lane and Turner (1999) discussed the importance of interagency cooperation in preventing delinquency, and Liddell and Hogue (2000) found that family-based intervention in the form of the multidimensional family prevention model can help to build resilient family ties and strong connections with prosocial agencies among adolescents. Kowaleski-Jones (2000) found that residential stability and schools perceived as high quality by mothers were factors related to preventing juveniles from getting into trouble. Mihalic, Fagan, Irwin, Ballard, and Elliot (2004) stated that limiting opportunities for bullying and other school victimization reduces delinquency in schools (and perhaps in communities as well). Roman, Kane, Baer, and Turner (2009) found that neighborhoods with more local organizations nearby had lower rates of aggravated assault.

During the past 15 years or so, the OJJDP has evaluated model programs that identify exemplary, effective, and promising programs in preventing or reducing juvenile offending. As suggested in the previous paragraph, the research is most supportive of programs in schools and in the community, prior to residential placement of the offender. According to the OJJDP (2012), programs focused on gender-specific issues, academics, job training, and conflict resolution are promising in preventing delinquency. Greenwood (2008) has also found that nurse home visits reduced instances of child abuse and neglect and subsequent births for mothers who were young and/or unmarried; preschool education for at-risk youth and other programs offered in educational settings prevented child abuse and neglect as well as delinquent and status-offending behaviors, such as smoking and the use of alcohol; and programs in the community that emphasized family interactions were successful. For youth on probation, both Greenwood (2008) and the OJJDP (2012) recommend programs like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), family counseling, and drug and alcohol therapy as well as mentoring, tutoring, and interpersonal skills and parenting training (Greenwood, 2008). With regard to youth placed in institutions, Greenwood (2008, p. 199) and the OJJDP (2012) have found that programs that focused “on dynamic and changeable risk factors—low skills, substance abuse, defiant behavior, relationships with delinquent peers”; those that tailored themselves to individual client needs using evidence-based methods; and those that focused on higher-risk youth with the most room to improve or the
greatest consequences to suffer were most successful. “Generally, programs that focus on specific skills such as behavior management, interpersonal skills training, family counseling, group counseling, or individual counseling have all demonstrated positive effects in institutional settings” (Greenwood, 2008, p. 200). The OJJDP even recommends the use of day reporting centers (DRCs) and group homes to treat those who need residential supervision. Even though this offers a baseline for promising and/or proven prevention or diversion strategies, the juvenile justice system cannot do it alone. Unfortunately, the responsibility for dealing with juveniles who have problems has been placed too frequently solely on juvenile justice practitioners. The public has been more than willing to place the blame for failures in preventing delinquency and abuse or neglect on these practitioners and has been quick to criticize their efforts. These practitioners are often faced with the task of attempting to modify undesirable behavior that has become habitual and deep-rooted and that a variety of other agencies have failed to modify. In addition, the period available for rehabilitation is usually short. As noted in Greenwood’s (2008) study, other social institutions play a vital role in crime prevention and are significant to the overall lowering of delinquency and abuse/neglect. The OJJDP (2012) suggested wraparound services in almost all of their approaches to prevention and diversion. This includes a comprehensive combination of individual and social services that support the child and his or her family in order to keep the delinquent youth at home and out of institutions whenever possible. In our society, there are a number of agencies with which juveniles come into contact earlier, more consistently, and with less stigmatization than the juvenile justice system. Some of these agencies or institutions are functionally related to the juvenile justice system and are, thus, able to build on the goals of crime prevention. The term functionally related agencies is used to describe those agencies having goals similar to those of the juvenile justice system—improving the quality of life for juveniles by preventing offensive behavior, providing opportunities for success, and correcting undesirable behavior. However, it is not always the case that functionally related agencies work in conjunction with the juvenile justice system. When this does not occur, delinquency prevention is undermined.

### Diversion Programs

One form of prevention is diversion, which has carried many different, and sometimes conflicting, meanings. Diversion is often used to describe prejuvenile justice, as well as postjuvenile justice, activities. Some diversion programs are designed to suspend or terminate juvenile justice processing of juveniles in favor of release or referral to alternate services—known as secondary diversion. Secondary diversion programs may include formal or informal processing by the police, perhaps through stationhouse adjustments, or limiting the youth’s penetration into the justice system by expunging records or using restorative justice programs. On the other hand, other diversionary activities involve referrals to programs outside of the justice system prior to juveniles entering the system—often referred to as pure diversion programs. In this case the youth may be channeled to a noncourt institution such as an afterschool outreach program or community service. Most diversion programs occur after an arrest so they involve both a justice and a service component (Dembo, Wareham, & Schmeidler, 2005).

Past research on diversion programs has shown positive results (Dembo et al., 2005). Those programs that provide direct services have reported less penetration into the justice system by youth (Roberts, 1989) and lowered recidivism rates (Baron, Feeney, & Thornton, 1973; Bohnstedt, 1978; McCord, Widom, & Crowell, 2001; Palmer, Bohnstedt, & Lewis, 1978) when compared to youth processed through the juvenile court system. Diversion programming has also shown a reduction in costs related to juvenile justice (Baron et al., 1973). McCord et al. (2001) have reported that diversion programs providing intensive in-home family intervention have consistently shown positive results. Vincent, Guy, and Grisso (2013) reported that diversion
from the formal system is the best choice because youth involved in even minor juvenile justice sanctions were twice as likely to reoffend than those who were diverted.

Diversion programming is not without pitfalls. It sometimes permits intervention into juveniles’ lives and their families with little or no formal processes and inadequate safeguards of individual liberties. One of the major concerns with diversion programs is that they result in net widening or bringing to the attention of juvenile authorities children who otherwise would not be labeled, thereby increasing rather than decreasing stigmatization. A second issue relates to the coordinating of diversion programs and the agencies sponsoring them. The problem is one of territorial jealousy, which refers to a belief commonly held by agency personnel that attempts to coordinate efforts are actually attempts to invade the territory they have staked out for themselves. Agency staff members have a tendency to view themselves as experts in their particular field, to resent suggestions for change made by outsiders, and to fear that they will be found to be lacking in competence. As a result, these staff members tend to keep agency operations secret and reject attempts by personnel from other agencies to provide services or suggest improvements. Changes in policy and an increased focus on get-tough philosophies have also shifted attention and funding away from diversion programs. As a result, more youth are being referred to juvenile court, processed and committed to institutions (Dembo et al., 2005; Greenwood, Model, Rydell, & Chiesa, 1998; Puzzanchera et al., 2000), and fewer resources or youth are available for diversion services. Those agencies that are able to secure funding may be even more territorial than they were in the past for fear of losing the funding and the clientele.

The consequences of territorial jealousy can be extremely serious for both juveniles and taxpayers. Duplication of services is a costly enterprise in a time of budgetary cutbacks and financial restraints; however, denial of available services to juveniles with problems can be disastrous. Lack of cooperation, understanding, and confidence among agency personnel greatly hampers attempts to provide for the welfare of juveniles.

Examples of Prevention and Diversion Programs

In Chapter 3, the importance of school personnel in shaping the behavior of children was discussed. No other institution in our society, with the possible exception of the family, has as much opportunity to observe, mold, and modify youthful behavior as does the school. The importance of education as a stepping-stone to future opportunities for success cannot be stressed too much. In today’s economy, education is vital to employment and future earnings. Take a look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics chart that follows in Figure 10.1. In 2016, those without high school diplomas had an 8.0% unemployment rate, whereas someone with a high school diploma or GED had only a 5.4% unemployment rate and earned approximately $185.00 more a week when working. The provision of meaningful educational opportunities for children who have been labeled as delinquent or in need of supervision is of great importance in attempts to keep these children in society as productive future workers and in keeping them involved in the school environment.

Although it was once possible, and fairly common, for educators to deal with “problem youth” by pushing them out of the educational system, recent court decisions indicate that all children have the right to an education. Therefore, children who have been found delinquent and status offenders can no longer be dismissed from school legally without due process. School counselors who formerly concerned themselves with academic and career counseling, advising, and scheduling also face the reality of coping with behavioral and emotional problems. It is hoped that teachers who in the past simply passed juveniles with such problems on to their colleagues by refusing to fail problem youth (giving them social promotion) will begin to seek other more desirable alternatives. Illinois, for example, has created the Regional Safe Schools program, which
targets 6th through 12th graders. This program allows children who were traditionally expelled or suspended to transfer into an alternative learning environment to continue with academic work, counseling, community service, and vocational activities. The primary focus of the program is academic instruction, although the staff also deal with social and emotional needs, “such as behavior modification training, life skills training, and counseling” (Illinois State Board of Education, 2012). In 2012, the program serviced over 4,500 students who would have traditionally been suspended or expelled from school permanently. The program’s notable outcomes included the facts that 77.3% of high school students earned academic credits, incidents of behavior problems for which the students were referred to the program (i.e., drugs, fighting, weapons) were reduced for 76% of the students, and 53.2% of Grade 12 students graduated from high school (Illinois State Board of Education, 2012, p. 9).

In north Georgia there is another program that focuses on youth who drop out (or are pushed out) of high school for a variety of reasons but want to complete a high school education. This program is offered as a night school for youth from 15 to 21 years of age where students can complete their high school degree, repeat courses that they may have failed in the traditional school, and/or continue getting high school credits so they can transfer back to a traditional state high school. This program has seen an increase in graduation rates from 89 in 2005 to over 315 in the 2015–2016 school year (Mountain Education Center High School, 2017). The program is completely voluntary and demonstrates that, if given the choice and opportunity, young people will make the effort to complete high school and conform to customary social norms. It is clear that educational personnel and programming play an important role in preventing and correcting delinquent behavior by providing appropriate referrals and instruction.

Schools, juvenile courts, and police departments have worked together in recent years to reduce the school-to-prison pipeline, a term used to describe children who have trouble at school (i.e., out-of-school suspensions) ending up in the juvenile justice system. The school-to-prison pipeline encourages police presence at schools, physical restraints, and automatic suspensions and out-of-class time. Additionally, when combined with zero-tolerance policies, minority children and children with disabilities are more often than
others pushed out of the classroom and into the criminal justice system by arrests for nonviolent acts such as disorderly conduct, willful defiance, and insubordination (Elias, n.d.; Nelson & Lind, 2015). The U.S. Department of Education for Civil Rights (2014, p. 1) found that the school-to-prison pipeline can begin in preschool with black children representing 18% of the total preschool population but representing 43% of students who are suspended more than once. Additionally, “black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students. On average, 4.6% of white students are suspended, compared to 16.4% of black students” (p. 3). Civil rights data collection showed that black boys and girls have higher suspension rates than any of their peers: “Twenty percent (20%) of black boys and more than 12% of black girls receive an out-of-school suspension” (U.S. Department of Education for Civil Rights, 2014, p. 3). The problem is even greater for children with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Education for Civil Rights (2014) found students with disabilities represented 12% of the total population of students enrolled in public schools but 75% of the students who were subjected to physical restraint during school, 58% of those secluded in school, and one-quarter of all students referred to law enforcement or subjected to a school-based arrest. These statistics prompted the Obama administration to urge schools to rethink their discipline policies and to investigate potential civil rights violations in schools. Consequently, schools are making changes to their zero-tolerance policies, to their discipline policies, and to how they use school resource officers. Clayton County, Georgia, for example, made an agreement with the police force and school district to restrict the school cases where police made an arrest. The results have included a high school graduation increase of 24% from 2004 to 2010. Broward County, Florida, schools decided to handle their own disciplinary actions when nonviolent misdemeanants were involved, and the Chicago public schools have been attempting to reduce the number of suspensions for children younger than second grade, among other approaches (Nelson & Lind, 2015).

School Programs

Along with the changes mentioned, there are numerous school programs designed to prevent juveniles from engaging in delinquent activities or to divert them from such activities once they become involved. In Chapter 8, we mentioned the police officer school resource or liaison programs. To prevent the distraction of delinquency activities from the educational environment, school districts such as that in Camdenton City, Missouri, have hired police officers to handle the public safety issues on campus. In 2007, school resource officers (SROs) in Camdenton met with 1,500 students and discussed safety-related issues, prepared a new safety plan for the high school, and used cameras to decrease campus crime and for investigations. They also handled 178 incidents of violence on campus in that year. Officers met with numerous kids on the dangers of drug and alcohol use and did drug sweeps through the school district (City of Camdenton Police Department, 2007). This program is not uncommon, with SROs being a mainstay in most schools in the United States since the school shootings of the 1990s (Garry, 1996). As noted, efforts to refine what types of behaviors SROs handle in schools are currently underway and changes to their roles in schools may be forthcoming.

As noted in Chapter 8, another program presented in the schools by police officers is the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program. Originally developed in California in 1983, the program spread rapidly to other states. The goal of the semester-long program aimed at fifth and sixth graders is to equip juveniles with the skills to resist peer pressure to use drugs. Trained police officers present the program as a part of the regular school curriculum in an attempt to provide accurate information about drugs and alcohol, teach students decision-making skills, help students to resist peer pressure, and provide alternatives to drug abuse.

Unfortunately, research has shown that participation in the D.A.R.E. program during elementary school has no effect on later alcohol use, cigarette smoking, or marijuana use in the 12th grade, although it may deter a small amount of the use of illegal and more deviant drugs such as inhalants, cocaine, and LSD among
teenage males (Dukes, Stein, & Ullman, 1997). Other research has shown that the impact of D.A.R.E. on
drug-related behavior of children who have been through the program is minimal (Cauchon, 1993; Walker,
reported that D.A.R.E. had no statistically significant effect on long-term drug use. Proponents argue, perhaps
with some justification, that at a minimum the program introduces police officers and children to one another as
real people at an early age and that the effects of classroom interaction may have beneficial outcomes for both.

In response to the criticisms of the D.A.R.E. program, a new research-based curriculum that focused on
prevention science and drug use was created and implemented in 2001. The University of Akron and the
D.A.R.E. program combined to execute the curriculum in six U.S. cities (Carnevale Associates, 2006). The new
program targets children in seventh grade with a 10-week curriculum and provides another short program to
those same children as they enter the ninth grade. “To date, University of Akron researchers have preliminary
results that the Take Charge of Your Life program may be effective in reaching those adolescents who are at
elevated risk for substance abuse” (p. 4). These results seem promising, although the study has had a number
of methodological problems (e.g., Hurricane Katrina causing the closure of some test schools, declining rates
of drug use in the general population, implementation of similar programs in the schools). Additionally, a
Minnesota study from 1999 to 2001 used an enhanced D.A.R.E. Plus curriculum with 6,237 seventh graders.
The curriculum relied more heavily than the traditional approach on peer-led classroom instruction, parent
involvement and education, adult community action teams (CATs), and youth planned and facilitated activities
(Perry et al., 2003). The researchers found significant differences among males in the D.A.R.E. Plus program
as compared to those in the traditional program or in no program at all. The findings show that seventh-
grade boys in the D.A.R.E. Plus schools were less likely than those in the control schools to show increases in
alcohol use, tobacco use, multidrug use, and victimization in past year and past month measures. The only
effect recorded for females was a tendency to report fewer cases of ever having been drunk. There were no
other differences in girls in the D.A.R.E. Plus program versus girls in the traditional program or in no program
at all (Perry et al., 2003). D.A.R.E. has also implemented a curriculum that focuses on prescription drugs and
over-the-counter medications. In a 2008 study of this curriculum, Darnell and Emshoff found that of the
381 fifth, seventh, and ninth graders that participated in the curriculum, there were statistically significant
differences in the following:

1. Fifth graders understood the definition of a medicine, the distinction between Rx and OTC medicines,
   that Rx drugs are prescribed for use by only one person, that there is proper disposal of Rx drugs, and
   accurate measurement of dosages
2. Seventh graders understood the distinction between Rx and OTC medicines, that Rx drugs are
   prescribed for use by only one person, how to carefully read drug facts labels, and that the abuse of Rx
   and OTC is as dangerous as other drugs
3. Ninth graders understood that people use Rx and OTC drugs to get high, that it is unsafe to share Rx
   and OTC drugs, it is harmful to abuse OTC drugs, it is illegal to use Rx drugs not prescribed for you, the
   negative health effects of Rx and OTC abuse, the risk of addiction to Rx drugs, and refusal of an offer to
   use Rx and OTC drugs

This appears promising even as the overall funding for the D.A.R.E. program has decreased as policy
focus has shifted with both national and state legislators, and some D.A.R.E. programs have ceased existence
in schools over the last 8 to 10 years. D.A.R.E. proponents are hopeful that states will again adopt D.A.R.E.
programs in schools since medical and recreational marijuana has become legal in some states and efforts
to curb use among youth in those states is more important than ever. In Colorado, a state known for early
adoption of recreational and medical marijuana legalization, youth marijuana use rates in the past 2 years (2013–2014) since legalization have increased more than 20% compared to the 2-year average use rate prior to legalization (2011–2012) (Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, 2016). Additionally, Colorado youth ranked #1 in the nation for past-month marijuana use in 2013–2014 and had a use rate 74% higher than the national average (Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, 2016). If this is not enough cause for concern, there may be some evidence that marijuana distributors in Colorado are marketing to youth, as noted in In Practice 10.1.

IN PRACTICE 10.1

DRUG INFORMATION BRIEF: MARIJUANA PIXY STIX

Details

This powdered, edible sugar substance has a high THC content, can be discreetly consumed, and the packaging can appeal to a younger audience. Marijuana infused Pixy Stix are similar to the original candy product in size, packaging, and appearance. In Colorado, they were originally called Wizzie Stix, made by We Be Infused and are now called Stixx, made by At Home Baked. Each stick contains 50mg THC and 25mg CBD, although an individual dose is listed at 10mg. They come in two different formulas: A.M. for Morning/Day use and P.M. for “relaxation and sleep aid.” Consumption can be very discreet in that they easily fit into a pocket or purse. They are available throughout Colorado in various dispensaries and prices range from around $6 to $22 per stick. Also, a similar product is now available in some Washington dispensaries called Legit Sticks.

Significance

Use rate among youth in Colorado is a major concern and this product may be very appealing to them. Also, Stixx were a part of an edibles recall from At Home Baked in July of 2014 because an ingredient in the edibles, bubble hash—a concentrated form of THC—was prepared using a dirty washing machine. Further, forty minutes after consuming half a tube, a new user to marijuana self-reported he “could barely speak, felt sick to his stomach, couldn’t see, had a raging headache, felt extreme nausea” and essentially “knocked out of reality.”


Questions for Consideration

1. True or False: Pixy Stix are only appealing to adults, and these are clearly being marketed to an adult population.

2. Multiple Choice: Students in schools may be able to hide Stixx or Wizzles in which of the following?
   a. Bookbags
   b. Computer bags
   c. Coat pockets
   d. All of the above

3. As a school resource officer, what action would you take with a youth who tells you he feels “knocked out of reality”?
Yet another program involving police and school cooperation is the GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Awareness Training) program. Unlike D.A.R.E., the GREAT program is a 13-week curriculum offered in middle schools, elementary schools, during the summer, and to families (GREAT, 2013). Its focus is on reducing the number of children joining gangs. It is taught by uniformed police officers and has been evaluated. Esbensen and Osgood (1999) found that students who participated in the program were less likely to join gangs and had an increase in gang-related knowledge. They also held higher prosocial attitudes and had fewer delinquent associations than those students who had not participated in the program (Esbensen & Osgood, 1999). In 2004, Esbensen also found that students who had completed the program gained more education on the “consequences of gang involvement, and they develop[ed] favorable attitudes toward the police. . . . However, the program did not reduce gang membership or future delinquent behavior” (p. 4). In 2012, Esbensen again studied the GREAT program with Peterson, Taylor, and Osgood. They reported that results 1 year post-GREAT program showed a 39% reduction in odds of gang joining among students who received the program compared to those who did not and an average of 24% reduction in odds of gang joining across the 4 years postprogram (p. 5). Ramsey, Rust, and Sobel (2003) found little change in their analysis of participant attitudes from the GREAT program.

Other approaches used by schools include antibullying programs, mentoring programs, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), truancy reduction programs, and alternative education programs. Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan, and Scheidt (2003) reported that bullying victimization affects approximately 15% to 20% of the American student population. It is important to note though that even those students not directly bullied may be affected by the bullying incident (Adams & Connor, 2008, p. 212). Beale and Hall (2007) claimed that in bullying there is a perpetrator, a victim, and a bystander. This assertion is supported by Silvernail (2000), who found that 88% of students in the fourth through eighth grades had
observed bullying at school even though only 20% of 9th to 12th graders report experiencing bullying in school (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). The 2014 Bullying in U.S. Schools Status Report found that 14% of students included in the sample reported being bullied, whereas 5% reported bullying others. Additionally, bullying decreases with increasing grade level. "While 22 percent of third graders report being bullied two to three times a month or more, by eighth grade this decreases to 15 percent, and by twelfth grade to 7 percent. On the other hand, the percentage of students who report bullying others is more stable over grade levels, remaining between 4 and 6 percent between third and twelfth grade" (Luxenburg, Limber, & Olweus, 2013, p. 5). These findings confirm that the increased attention and research on bullying is warranted. To combat this issue, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, implemented primarily by school staff members, involves school-based intervention for the reduction of bullying. Research has shown that the program results in significant reductions in reports of students being bullied or bullying others and of antisocial behaviors. It also shows improvements in the overall "social climate" of the school (American Psychological Association, 2004, par. 11). The OJJDP (2011a) also suggests the following strategies for schools to deter bullying: mentoring programs, opportunities for community service, addressing the transition between elementary and middle school, and the introduction of intervention and prevention programs early in the school career.

Another area of concern in bullying is cyberbullying. As we move to quickly embrace the Internet and other communication devices, we open the door for those with cruel intentions to more easily attack us in our homes and in our private lives. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that relies on technological programs such as e-mail; instant messaging; websites; and chat or bash boards to intimidate, shame, and inflict "unwarranted hurt and embarrassment on its unsuspecting victims" (Beale & Hall, 2007, p. 9). Data available on cyberbullying show an increase in recent years. Hinduja and Patchin found that 32% of boys and more than 36% of girls reported being victims of cyberbullying in an online survey of 1,378 adolescent Internet users in 2008. Of these, 18% of the boys and 16% of the girls also reported acting as perpetrators of cyberbullying. In nationally representative surveys of 10- to 17-year-olds, twice as many children and youth indicated that they had been victims and perpetrators of online harassment in 2005 compared with data from 1999 and 2000 (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006). Research has also shown that 18% of 3,700 middle school children surveyed in the United States had been victims of cyberbullying (Chu, 2005). In another study, Shariff and Johnny (2007) reported the following:

In Britain, the National Children's Home and Tesco Mobile (2002), found that approximately 16 per cent of British children and adolescents reported receiving threatening text messages or being bullied over the Internet; one in four young people between the ages of eleven and nineteen were threatened via personal cell phones or personal computers; and, approximately 29 percent of those surveyed had not reported the cyber-bullying. Forty-two percent had confided to a friend and 32 percent had reported to parents. Moreover, caregivers' knowledge of cyber-bullying was disclosed as minimal. The survey found that 56 percent of parents surveyed were not concerned about their children being bullied electronically and many were in denial as to the impact of such behavior. Nineteen percent believed such incidents were rare. (p. 313)

Research on cyberbullying has led to some interesting insights. For example, 18% of students in Grades 6 through 8 indicated they had been cyberbullied at least once, and 6% said it had happened to them two or more times. Further, some 11% of students in Grades 6 through 8 said they had recently cyberbullied another person, and 2% said they had done it two or more times (Kowalski et al., 2005). According to Ybarra and Mitchell (2004), 19% of regular Internet users ages 10 to 17 reported being involved in online aggression—15% had been aggressors, and 7% had been targets. Further, 3% identified themselves as both
aggressors and targets. A study by Kowalski and colleagues (2005) found that girls were about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying. Wolak et al. (2006) found the most common way that middle and high school children and youth reported being cyberbullied was through instant messaging. “As with traditional bullying, cyber bullying seems to increase through the elementary school years, peak during middle school years, and decline in high school” (Beale & Hall, 2007, p. 9). The 2014 U.S. Bullying in Schools Status Report suggested that, even though there has been much media and research attention on cyberbullying, cyberbullying actually was the least common reported form of bullying among their sample, 4% for boys and 6% for girls (Luxenburg et al., 2015). Although still a serious problem, it may well be that cyberbullying is exaggerated in the media.

Research in cyberbullying constantly suggests that parents turn to school authorities and Internet providers for help when cyberbullying occurs (Beale & Hall, 2007; WiredKids, 2005). Perhaps this is because most cyberbullying statutes have relied on schools to enforce bullying policies. In Delaware, for example, the School Bullying Prevention Act passed in 2007 calls for school administrators to take action against technologically based actions that occur off campus. Idaho’s 2006 law also allows schools to suspend students for disrupting school by bullying on campus or through communication devices (“State Action on Cyber-bullying,” 2008). The lines between enforcement and cyberbullying may continue to blur, but the evidence is clear that schools are viewed by the legislatures to bear some responsibility in deterring bullying through the use of technology. Regardless of how states choose to handle bullying and cyberbullying, it is important that they address the issue because students who are bullied, who bully, and who both bully and are bullied are twice as likely than other students to dislike school. This number increases with rising grade levels, with students involved in bullying having the potential to have a negative school experience and drop out of school prior to graduation (Luxenburg et al., 2015).

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America provides adult mentoring programs for children. They have two essential programs—(1) community mentoring and (2) school-based mentoring. The community-based program is the traditional program where community members spend a few hours a month with a child in a one-on-one relationship doing something they both enjoy. The school-based program is one-to-one mentoring that takes place a few hours a month in the school environment. This can include homework help, reading, or class discussions but may also include involvement in lunch or physical education activities. Big Brothers Big Sisters also sponsors a Bigs in Blue program for at-risk youth to be mentored by police officers. Research has shown that children with mentors are 46% less likely to initiate drug use, 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use, and 52% less likely to be truant. They are more confident in their school performance and have better relationships with their families (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995).

The PATHS curriculum is primarily school based but also includes activities for parents. It is aimed at promoting emotional and social competencies by acknowledging that children may experience and react to strong emotions long before they can verbalize their feelings effectively. In 1- and 2-year follow-up matched studies of youth in the PATHS program and youth not exposed to the PATHS program, researchers have found that teachers reported reduced instances of aggressive behavior, reduced behavioral and conduct problems, reduced depression and sadness among students with special needs, decreased frustration levels, and increased self-control and vocabulary among students exposed to the PATHS curriculum (Arda & Ocak, 2012; Riggs, Greenberg, Kusché, & Pentz, 2006).

As pointed out in In Practice 10.2, truancy can lead to criminal behavior. Research also indicates that students who become truant often eventually drop out of school completely (OJJDP, 1996, p. 49). Schools and the police have become more actively involved in reducing truancy, in some cases working in collaboration with specialized truancy courts. In Milwaukee, local police officers pick up truants and take them for
counseling while the school works with parents to support regular school attendance. The prosecuting
attorney can get involved when efforts fail. In a community in California, the police issue citations for truants
and return students to school for meetings with school officials and the student’s parents. In Connecticut, a
truancy court is used to identify why the student is missing school and to work to resolve the issues. In other
areas of the country, probation officers and civil court fines are used to reduce missed school days (OJJDP,
1996). Research on truancy courts has been mixed. One study in 2010 found the following:

The [truancy court] was most successful in increasing attendance for students with severe truancy, but
had limited impact on students with moderate truancy, and no impact on mild truancy. The intervention
did not result in improved school attachment or grade point averages, nor did it significantly reduce
discipline offenses. Furthermore, the aftercare intervention, consisting of regular meetings with an
authority figure (e.g., a juvenile officer), was only effective at maintaining truancy court attendance gains
for students with severe truancy at baseline, although it was associated with a substantial decrease in
discipline offenses for all groups. These results suggest that truancy courts . . . may have an impact on
truancy for severely truant students, but may have a limited effect on students with mild or moderate
[truancy]. (Hendricks, Sale, Evans, McKinley, & DeLozier, p. 173)

Conversely, a 2006 study reported that a Truancy Court Diversion Program (TCDP) did the following:

[It] significantly impacted unexcused absences, unexcused tardies, and academic performance of the
elementary and junior high students participating in the program. Elementary participants were more
likely to maintain their improved attendance following participation than were junior high participants.
Nonetheless, junior high participant grade point averages increased during TCDP and were maintained
subsequent to TCDP. TCDP was an effective intervention for improving attendance and academic
performance and helping preclude future delinquency. (Shoenfelt & Huddleston, 2006, p. 383)

Whether these types of courts and school interventions are effective long-term is yet to be determined.
Some are also being challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union as unlawful and discriminatory, namely
school resource officers, truancy courts, zero-tolerance policies, and out-of-school suspensions. The courts
and school intervention programs are likely to continue and to transition and change to better meet the needs
of the schools and the students involved.

**IN PRACTICE 10.2**

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY’S FIRST TRUANCY COURT GOES AFTER PARENTS**

MARTINEZ—One by one, they approached the
bench to answer to the judge.

“He’s afraid—he doesn’t want to go. I don’t
know what his issue with school is,” Mt. Diablo
Unified parent Maria Martinez said through an
interpreter when asked why her fifth-grader had
missed 51 days of classes the previous academic
year and was late for 23 more.

Contra Costa Superior Court Judge Rebecca
Hardie’s response was swift and emphatic.

“It is your obligation under state law to be sure
he’s at school every day and on time,” she told
Martinez and her husband. “You must get your
child to school.”

For two hours every other Friday, Hardie
hears cases that school districts have referred
to the District Attorney’s Office after exhausting attempts to convince parents that they need to get their child to class. Known as the parent truancy calendar, it’s the latest effort among Contra Costa County officials to curtail chronic truancy, which they say costs area schools millions of dollars and leads to crime.

Inspired by a similar undertaking in Alameda County, the court and the District Attorney’s Office this fall took a different tactic: Instead of the district attorney charging parents with a misdemeanor in extreme cases as it has done a handful of times in recent years, that office and the courts for the first time are trying to intervene before situations deteriorate.

The truancy court focuses on children ages 12 and below, those too young to be held responsible for their attendance record. Similar courts have been held in San Francisco and Solano counties.

“We’re trying to intervene in situations where the parents are the ones who are essentially at fault,” said Deputy District Attorney Laura Delehunt, noting that students typically don’t start deciding to skip school until they’re in their teens, when they have more control over their schedule.

A third-grader, by contrast, doesn’t have that measure of independence or ability to get to school on his or her own, she said.

“That’s on the parent,” Delehunt said, adding that the reasons for truancy among younger students are all over the map—the parent might be using drugs, working two jobs, lack transportation or be distracted by a relationship.

“But what they all have in common is that (lack of) prioritization—most other things come first,” she said.

Families’ involvement with the legal system begins when Delehunt receives the files of students the law considers chronically truant or absent because they missed 10 percent or more of the school year.

She reviews the facts of each case in deciding whether to charge the parents with an infraction. Akin to a traffic ticket, the offense doesn’t carry any jail time, but parents still must appear in court. Those who plead guilty are placed on probation for one year and face $175 in fines and court fees.

During that period, the judge might require them to attend parenting classes, undergo family counseling or get help for other needs such as kicking a drug habit.

The idea is to identify the factors that are getting in the way of parents fulfilling their legal responsibility to keep their kids in school.

“The attendance problems are a symptom,” Delehunt said. “Truancy is typically the tip of the iceberg. There are a whole host of issues that the child and parents are struggling with.”

Delehunt and Hardie emphasize that their goal is to help, not harm.

“We want to work with you,” Delehunt told the group of defendants who appeared on a summons in mid-October, the first of 17 who have been charged with infractions to date. “This isn’t something where we want to . . . punish you.”

As such, if a child’s attendance shows a dramatic improvement over the next 12 months—Delehunt’s looking for a near-perfect record—the court will dismiss the case and waive the monetary penalties.

If parents don’t cooperate, however, they’ll be charged with a misdemeanor and could end up spending one year in jail and with fines of up to $2,000.

By enforcing the state’s Education Code, the hope is to reduce the number of young people who cause—and suffer from—the raft of social ills linked to chronic truancy.

For starters, kids who miss out on school don’t master the three R’s, can’t keep up with their peers and consequently often quit school in frustration and embarrassment.

“Every single day missed is a day behind,” Hardie told Pittsburg Unified parent Jamila Al-Malik, whose fifth-grader’s spotty attendance history dates back to 2011, when she racked up 47 absences and 30 tardies.

(Continued)
Regardless of whether parents notify school officials that they’re keeping their child home, that student is still passing up an opportunity to learn, Hardie added.

Hardie reiterated her point to Pittsburg parents Gary Brown and Stephanie Butler: Their fifth-grade daughter skipped 31 days of school last year and was late to class 41 times.

“The goal is simply to get her to school and get her caught up,” Hardie said, adding that showing up for class is a habit that can be developed with practice. Since the hearing, their daughter has had no unexcused absences. “Children learn to read up to the third grade, but then they have to read to learn thereafter,” she said, explaining that those who don’t master the basics of English and math by then will have trouble in other subjects.

“If there’s a history of not going to school . . . by the time they’re her age, it does become more of a mountain to climb.”

Delehunt also tries to disabuse parents of the notions that elementary school absences aren’t as important as those in high school and that a child suffers only if he or she is gone for days at a time.

Truancy not only has a direct bearing on the dropout rate but also costs schools huge sums of attendance-based revenue.

In Contra Costa County, 30.4 percent of children in grades K–5 met the Education Code’s mildest definition of truancy during the 2013–14 academic year, according to state Attorney General Kamala Harris’ 2015 report on elementary school attendance.

By missing at least three days of school or arriving late that many times without a valid reason, they cost schools just over $36 million in state funding, the analysis revealed.

And the financial drain on society as a whole runs into the billions. Studies confirm the connection between a lack of education, low wages and unemployment, which equates to lost tax revenue—earning even a high school diploma can make a significant difference, said Contra Costa District Attorney Mark Peterson.

And plenty of research has concluded that high school dropouts are also more likely to get involved in drugs and gangs, driving up the bill that taxpayers are footing for incarcerating offenders.

“If one kid stays out of prison, it saves all of us $50,000 a year,” Peterson said.

Hardie routinely sees the nexus between truancy and crime in the juvenile delinquency cases she hears twice a week.

But statistics aren’t deterring her or others working on behalf of the county’s youths from tackling these sweeping problems one family at a time.

“If you think about preventing crime, any time that you can do it, you can imagine there’s one less jail cell that’s filled, one less victim,” Delehunt said. “I feel like it’s such important work.”

Source: “Contra Costa County’s Truancy Court Goes After Parents” (2016).

Questions to Consider

1. True or False: Truancy is a delinquent offense that should result in a 48-hour lock-up in a detention facility.

2. Multiple Choice: In cases of truancy,
   a. parents are solely responsible and should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.
   b. the child is solely responsible and should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.
   c. the child should be treated as a status offender.
   d. schools have a responsibility to go to a home and physically bring a child to school.

3. If you were a judge in a truancy court and a 12-year-old claimed to be afraid to go to school, what action would you take? What alternatives would you provide to the child and family? Would you use fines and jail?
Alternative education programs for expelled students have also become more widespread as school districts report increases in the number of students expelled and the length of the expulsion (OJJDP, 1996, p. 65). Such programs include enhanced skills training, community internship programs, and more general attempts to integrate the school and the community in the interests of serving the needs of marginal students and those who do not anticipate attending college. LifeSkills Training programs, implemented by teachers in the classroom, are directed at sixth and seventh graders and are designed to prevent or alleviate tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use (Mihalic, Irwin, Elliot, Fagan, & Hansen, 2001). Research on alternative education programs shows an increase in graduation rates, attendance, and motivation and a decrease in the negative behaviors that brought the student to the alternative school in the first place (OJJDP, 1996). Illinois's Regional Safe Schools program and Georgia's Mountain Education Center program, both discussed earlier in this chapter, are prime examples of alternative education environments at work.

Wilderness Programs

Wilderness programs had their origins in the forestry camps of the 1930s. These programs involve small, closely supervised groups of juveniles who are confronted with difficult physical challenges that require teamwork and cooperation to overcome them. The intent of the programs is to improve the self-esteem of the juveniles involved while teaching them the value of cooperative interaction. Wilderness programs, which last from roughly 1 month to 1 year or longer, do not typically accept violent juveniles. Some provide counseling and follow-up services, whereas others do not. Juveniles may be sent directly to these programs as an alternative to detention or may participate in the programs after more traditional dispositions have been imposed.

Evaluations of wilderness programs have been fraught with methodological difficulties. Much of the information concerning the success of the programs has been provided by program developers and staff and is anecdotal in nature. Most of the evidence provided under these less-than-ideal conditions shows that the programs lead to somewhat lower recidivism rates than no programs at all, but the effectiveness of the programs is in question.

Restorative Justice Programs

The philosophy of restorative justice centers on the assertion that crime and delinquency affect persons instead of the traditional assertion that crime affects the state. Howard Zehr (2002), viewed as the leading visionary in restorative justice, defined restorative justice as "a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible" (pp. 19–20). Umbreit, Vos, Coates, and Lightfoot (2005) claim that restorative justice "is grounded in the belief that those most affected by crime should have the opportunity to become actively involved in resolving the conflict" (p. 255). Table 10.1 contains a summary of the principles involved in restorative justice.

Restorative justice advocates programs such as victim–offender mediation, victim-impact panels, community service, and community sentencing. Schools have even adopted a variety of programs and approaches commonly used in restorative justice. These programs include restorative dialogue techniques between teachers and students and restorative conferencing that involves students, staff, family, and community members (Fronius, Persson, Guckenburg, Hurley, & Petrokino, 2016). Restorative justice programs are being used in place of punitive approaches to school misbehavior in some states, in response to the school-to-prison pipeline arguments. Research on restorative justice's effectiveness in schools is still unclear, but exploratory studies have shown some promising results in deterring negative student behaviors (Fronius et al., 2016). Traditionally, restorative justice
Crime is injury.
Crime hurts individual victims, communities, and juvenile offenders and creates an obligation to make things right.
All parties should be a part of the response to the crime, including the victim if he or she wishes, the community, and the juvenile offender.
The victim’s perspective is central to deciding how to repair the harm caused by the crime.
Accountability for the juvenile offender means accepting responsibility and acting to repair the harm done.
The community is responsible for the well-being of all its members, including both victim and offender.
All human beings have dignity and worth.
Restoration—repairing the harm and rebuilding relationships in the community—is the primary goal of restorative juvenile justice.
Results are measured by how much repair was done rather than by how much punishment was inflicted.
Crime control cannot be achieved without active involvement of the community.
The juvenile justice process is respectful of age, abilities, sexual orientation, family status, and diverse cultures and backgrounds—whether racial, ethnic, geographic, religious, economic, or other—and all are given equal protection and due process.

Table 10.1 Principles of Restorative Justice

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<td>Crime is injury.</td>
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<td>racial, ethnic, geographic, religious, economic, or other—and all are</td>
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<td>given equal protection and due process.</td>
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Source: OJJDP (n.d.).

approaches are designed to hold youth accountable, take responsibility for the needs of the victim, and involve the community in support of the offending youth and victim (McGarrell, 2001).

The question is, how well does restorative justice work in practice? Most studies on restorative justice have focused on satisfaction rates of the participants, not recidivism. Feelings of satisfaction and fairness have consistently been high among the participants (Bradshaw & Roseborough, 2005). But what about recidivism? Walker (1998) indicated the following:

Evaluations of experimental programs have tended to find slightly lower recidivism rates for offenders receiving restorative justice than for those given traditional sentences of prison or probation. The differences are not always consistent, however, and many questions remain regarding the implementation and outcomes of such programs. (p. 224)

Bradshaw and Roseborough (2005) found in their study that victim–offender mediation and family group conferencing were two restorative programs that showed the most promise in reducing recidivism. De Beus and Rodriguez (2007) found that status offenders and property offenders who participated in restorative justice programs were less likely to recidivate. Other researchers (Hayes, 2005; Rodriguez, 2005) have suggested that the type of offense may make a difference in participant recidivism, with violent offenders responding differently to the programs from property or nonviolent offenders. It has even been suggested that prior offending history is more indicative of recidivism after completing a restorative justice program than type of offense (Hayes & Daly, 2003). Needless to say, there is a necessity for additional research in this area.

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Although it is likely that the informal sanctions imposed by family and community are more effective than threats of formal punishment, what happens when there is no sense of family or community? The sense of family and community may well be lacking in drug-ridden and economically ravaged neighborhoods. The concept of restorative justice may make sense for young middle-class offenders involved in minor first offenses but may be totally irrelevant for those living in the most crime-ridden areas of America (Walker, 1998, p. 225). In fact, the failure of these institutions is largely responsible for the development of our current criminal justice system. Although we see some movement toward a social justice approach, there is still little evidence of the rebirth or strengthening of these institutions today (Cox & Wade, 1996, pp. 48–50; Walker, 1998).

Other faith-based initiatives have developed under former president George W. Bush’s established Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Through this office, faith-based organizations apply for grants and funding to support programs aimed at drug prevention, violence prevention, at-risk youth, gang behaviors, and so on. Research on these programs is scarce; however, Ericson (2001) reported that faith-based groups are usually open to developing relationships with other agencies, have poor administrative or organizational structures (e.g., hiring practices, bookkeeping skills), and avoid preaching to the children about religion. Instead, they rely on relationship building and support. Under President Obama, the Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships had a focus on grassroots initiatives to reduce poverty and teen pregnancy, while increasing the role of fathers in families (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). Under the new initiatives, faith-based organizations may not play as big a role in restorative justice approaches or crime control as originally thought.

Figure 10.2 is a graphic representation of the balanced approach mission.

![Figure 10.2 The Balanced Approach](image)

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<tr>
<th>Clients/Customers</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>When an individual commits an offense, the offender incurs an obligation to individual victims and the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Competency development</td>
<td>Offenders who enter the juvenile justice system should be more capable when they leave than when they entered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Community safety</td>
<td>Juvenile justice has a responsibility to protect the public from juveniles in the system.</td>
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Children and Family Services

As noted in Chapter 8, child protective services (CPS) (children and family services) agencies have goals similar to those of the juvenile justice system. These agencies provide, among other services, day care programs, foster care programs, youth advocacy programs, and advice to unwed mothers. In addition, they investigate reported cases of child abuse and neglect. Children and family services agencies deal with all categories of juveniles covered by most juvenile court acts, provide individual and family counseling services, and are empowered to refer suitable cases to appropriate private agencies. In addition, they can provide financial aid to children and families in need.

Like most state offices, children and family services agencies are often caught up in political change. Although many of these agencies require a bachelor’s or master’s degree for employment and emphasize the need for professionalism among staff members, skillful and competent administrative personnel are often replaced when the political party in power changes. As a result, the continuity of policies implemented by these agencies frequently leaves much to be desired. Nonetheless, state agencies concerned with providing services to children and families often have considerable power and, when administered appropriately, can provide multiple services to children in trouble. When not administered in the proper way, results can be disastrous.

Federal Programs

The federal government has sponsored many programs that, although not designed specifically as delinquency prevention programs, did encourage children to accept and attain lawful objectives through institutionalized means of education and employment. Examples of some of the varied federal programs

Early childhood education programs may help to prevent later delinquency.
provide some insight into the value of these programs in preventing delinquency and crime, illustrate the focal points of these programs, and show how they attempt to improve the social ills that result in delinquency (Yablonsky & Haskell, 1988).

There have been a number of federally funded programs aimed at improving educational and occupational opportunities for disadvantaged children. A secondary benefit of many of these programs was believed to be a decrease in the likelihood of delinquency among the children involved. The projects Head Start and Follow Through were designed to help culturally deprived children catch up or keep pace during their preschool and early school years. Previously, many children from culturally and/or economically deprived parents lagged behind other children in verbal and reading skills. Starting far behind in basic skills, many of these children never caught up, and school too often became an experience characterized by failure and rejection. As a result, many dropped out of school as soon as possible, often during their first or second year of high school. Of those who did drop out, many went on to become delinquent. Head Start and Follow Through have shown that children who are socioeconomically disadvantaged can, and do, make progress when parents, teachers, and volunteers focus their efforts on these children (Eitzen & Zinn, 1992, p. 399). Perhaps the most successful federally funded school program to prevent delinquency is the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan. This program focused on a group of 123 African American 3- and 4-year-olds identified as being at risk for school failure in 1962. Of these children, 58 were assigned to the preschool program, and 65 were assigned to a control group. Data concerning these children was collected periodically for some 40 years. The results of the research showed that children who had participated in the preschool program for 2 and a half hours per day, Monday through Friday, for 2 years (1) had lower rates of delinquency than did the control group, (2) had lower teen pregnancy rates than did the control group, (3) were less likely to be dependent on welfare than were the control group members, and (4) were more likely to graduate from high school than were the control group members (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2002). Demonstrating a trickle-down effect, some states have picked up on this trend by funding prekindergarten programs in public schools and in private day care centers (as done in Georgia). In 2014–2015, more than 1.4 million children attended state-funded pre-K programs. Although funding for pre-K programs had declined during the economic downturn, “state spending topped $6.2 billion, an increase of over $553 million, although two-thirds of this increase can be attributed to New York” (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2015, p. 5).

Along slightly different lines, a number of federal laws providing assistance to the hard-core unemployed were passed. For example, the Manpower Development and Training Act, the Vocational Education Act, the Economic Opportunity Act, the Rehabilitation Program for Selective Service Rejectees, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, the Job Training Partnership Act, and the President’s Youth Opportunities Campaign had objectives of aiding young people in finding employment by helping them to become more readily employable. The basic assumption underlying these programs has been that employment is an important key to solving the problems of many young people.

The emphasis of youth opportunity centers is to increase employability through counseling or to provide vocational and prevocational training and work training programs. This approach recognizes that if young people, handicapped by inadequate education and lack of occupational skills, are to become employable, they must somehow be provided with additional training. It is hoped that these young people will then be absorbed into the labor market once their performance capabilities are improved.

Similarly, the Job Corps program was directed at individuals 16 to 21 years of age with the principal objective of providing training in basic skills and a constructive work experience. The Job Training Partnership Act of 1981 also promised new hope for young people seeking their first jobs when it replaced the scandal-ridden Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.
All of these programs have been geared toward providing youth with employment opportunities that, it is hoped, will lead them to a better life. The basic underlying assumption seems to be that young people employed in jobs for which they are suited are less likely to engage in delinquent or criminal activity than are young people who are not employed and have little hope of finding any worthwhile employment.

During recent years, the federal government has given attention to the concept of mentoring. In 1992, Congress amended the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to include the **Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)** because of a growing belief that positive bonds between children and adults can forge actions or behaviors essential to a healthy life (Bilchik, 1998b). The 1998 JUMP report to Congress said the following:

Historically, the notion of one individual providing caring support and guidance to another individual has been reflected in a variety of arenas. In the clinical mental health field, we talk about bonding and the importance of a child feeling connected to a nurturing adult in the early years of life. In the adoption field, we talk about the need for attachment. In schools, tutors help support successful educational experiences. In juvenile and family court, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) provide support and advocacy for children in need of assistance. In the substance abuse field, we make use of sponsors to support sobriety. In the business field, we create teams to ensure that new employees have the support they need to be successful in the corporate organizational system. Currently, there are many types of formal mentoring programs generally distinguishable by the goals of their sponsoring organization. Most youth oriented programs recognize the importance of ensuring that each child they serve has at least one significant adult in his/her own life that can be friend, role model, guide, and teacher of values. If that person is not available in the child's family, mentors can help fill the critical gap. (p. 5)

By using JUMP, the federal government helped modify behaviors committed by children that can lead to juvenile delinquency, gang participation, and increased school dropout rates and to enhance the academic performance of the children participating in the program. All JUMP programs have been sponsored by local community organizations with the help of federal grants. Findings indicate that both children and their mentors found the relationship to be rewarding (Novotney, Mertinko, Lange, & Baker, 2000, p. 5). The federal government continues to offer grants that sponsor mentoring programs throughout the United States.

The role of the federal government in programs designed specifically to prevent delinquency has been somewhat limited as a result of the belief that the primary responsibility for these programs rests with the states. Although there have been scattered efforts in the field of juvenile justice by the federal government (e.g., the development of the Children's Bureau in 1912, the development of various federal commissions and programs in 1948, 1950, and 1961), the ones most relevant to prevention occurred in 1968 with the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act and in 1974 with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act permits allocation of federal funds to the states for delinquency prevention programs, and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act attempts to create a coordinated national program to prevent and control delinquency (OJJDP, 1979). The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Control Act also called for an evaluation of all federally assisted delinquency programs, a centralized research effort on problems of juvenile delinquency, and training programs for persons who work with delinquents. This law directs spending of funds on diverting juveniles from the juvenile justice system through the use of community-based programs such as group homes, foster care, and homemaker services. In addition, community-based programs and services that work with parents and other family members to maintain and strengthen the family unit are recommended.
The Juvenile Justice Amendments of 1977 made it clear that, in the opinion of Congress, the evolution of juvenile justice in the United States had resulted in excessive and abusive use of incarceration under the rubric of “in the best interests of the child” and that the prohibitions of contact with adult offenders and incarceration of status offenders and nonoffenders (e.g., dependent or neglected children) were to be taken seriously (OJJDP, 1980).

A wide variety of community and state agencies have become involved in delinquency prevention. Most efforts have been independent and uncoordinated. By the 1950s, the delinquency prevention effort in virtually every state and large city was like a jigsaw puzzle of services operating independently. The agencies concerned with delinquency prevention included the schools, recreation departments, public housing authorities, public welfare departments, private social agencies, health departments, and medical facilities. Davidson, Redner, and Amdur (1990) came to the conclusion that although diversion programs can provide positive results, territorial jealousies remain difficult to overcome.

Other Diversion and Prevention Programs/Therapeutic Courts

Although it would be impossible to list and discuss all prevention and diversion programs, we mention a few more here. The concept of teen courts has originated as a way to keep first-time juvenile offenders who commit minor offenses and are willing to admit guilt from being processed in the formal juvenile justice system. Local civic agencies or schools, in conjunction with the police department and the juvenile court, sponsor most of these programs. The courts use four models of design ranging from limited adult involvement to youth tribunals. In the most common teen court model—adult judge model—teens under 17 years of age process the cases by acting as prosecutor, defense counsel, bailiff, and clerk and determine the punishment for the cases by acting as the jury. An adult attorney acts as the judge to ensure the fairness and legality of the sentencing (Butts & Buck, 2000). The offender is required to complete the sentence handed down by the teen jury. If the offender does not abide by the sentencing guidelines, he or she is referred to the juvenile court for formal processing. The goal of these programs is to hold juveniles accountable for their actions and attempt to divert them from further delinquency but not to stigmatize them by formally processing them in the juvenile justice system. Research on teen courts’ ability to reduce recidivism has shown few positive results (Forgays, 2008; Hissong, 1991; North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, 1995; Seyfrit, Reichel, & Stutts, 1987). Studies on participant satisfaction (Colydas & McLeod, 1997; McLeod, 1999; Reichel & Seyfrit, 1984; Wells, Minor, & Fox, 1998) have been positive as have studies on perceived procedural fairness (Butler-Mejia, 1998) and attitudes toward authority (LoGalbo, 1998; Wells et al., 1998).

Drug courts, a form of therapeutic court, are another attempt to prevent children and adults from continuing deviant behaviors. Drug courts aim to stop the abuse of alcohol and other drugs (AODs) through the use of intensive therapeutic supervision. According to Huddleston, Marlowe, and Casebolt (2008), there were 2,147 drug courts in operation as of the end of 2007 and approximately 70,000 individuals being served by such courts. Recent research has raised some issues regarding drug courts, particularly with regard to graduation rates and offender characteristics. In a review of drug court literature, Stein, Deberard, and Homan (2013) found the following:

One clear trend in the available studies was the dramatic difference in recidivism rates for adolescents who succeed in graduating from drug court, relative to those who do not. In addition, the review revealed that behavior patterns evidenced during drug court participation were most strongly associated with both
the probability of graduating successfully from drug court and recidivism (e.g., few in-program arrests, citations, detentions, and referrals; greater length of time in program or amount of treatment; lower use of drug and alcohol use, few positive urine screens, greater school attendance). Unfortunately, non-white participants tend to have a lower probability of graduation from drug court and experience higher recidivism during and following the program. Available juvenile drug treatment court studies confirm a number of reputed adolescent risk factors associated with substance abuse, criminality, treatment failure, and recidivism among adolescents (e.g., higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems, higher levels and severity of pre-program substance abuse, male gender). (p. 159)

Other research has shown that drug courts are effective because they improve substance abuse treatment outcomes, reduce crime, and show greater cost benefits than other strategies. Additionally, the U.S. Government Accountability Office stated in 2005 that adult drug court programs reduce crime by lowering rearrest and conviction rates among graduates of the court (Huddleston et al., 2008, p. 2). The programs have been expanded, with positive results, to youth identified as having drug and alcohol problems. Following the lead of teen and drug courts, other specialty courts have come into existence. Known as problem-solving or therapeutic courts, these courts focus on social issues that emerge in the traditional court system but that cannot be adequately dealt with through traditional court means and sanctions. Problem-solving courts geared primarily at common youth issues include community courts (which focus on quality-of-life offenses), domestic violence courts, family dependency courts (which address the needs of youth who are abused or neglected as a result of parental substance abuse), and mental health courts.

In addition to the prevention and diversion programs already mentioned, there have been a number of attempts to scare juveniles away from delinquent behavior. The best known, although not the earliest, of these programs was publicized nationally through a television film called Scared Straight. The film recorded a confrontation between juveniles brought into Rahway State Prison in New Jersey and inmates housed in the prison. Such confrontation was based on the theory that inmates could frighten juveniles to the extent that they would be deterred from committing further delinquent acts. Scared Straight reported that of the 8,000 juveniles participating in such sessions through 1978, about 90% had not been in trouble with the law again. Nationwide attention was focused on attempts to frighten juveniles out of delinquency, and such programs were viewed by some as a panacea for delinquency problems (Finkenauer, 1982). However, more objective evaluations of this and other such programs have yielded, at best, mixed results. It is certain that such programs are not a panacea for delinquency, and some appear to increase rather than decrease the frequency of recidivism. In fact, even though this type of program has again gained popularity among television audiences because of A&E’s Beyond Scared Straight reality series, Lundman (1993) recommended the permanent abandonment of efforts to scare and inform juveniles “straight.”

Yet another attempt at preventing delinquency and diverting delinquent children involves the use of community policing models oriented toward juveniles. These programs operate on the assumption that community policing officers are more likely to favor problem-solving and peacekeeping roles with children than are their traditional counterparts (see Chapter 8). Officers who view their roles in these terms may be more likely to try to help children before they get into trouble or to divert them away from the juvenile justice network (Bazemore & Senjo, 1997; Belknap, Morash, & Trojanowicz, 1987).

There are a host of other agencies providing services that complement those of the juvenile justice system. These include YMCAs and YWCAs, both of which often provide counseling and recreation programs. One alarming trend among these agencies is that membership fees have tended to eliminate the opportunity for some children to use the services available. Some YMCA and YWCA programs seem to discourage rather than
encourage the participation of children whom we would consider to be most at risk because they have little interaction with adults and few resources.

In many areas, community mental health clinics provide services based on a sliding-fee scale. Other agencies, such as Catholic Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Boy and Girl Scouts of America, also use a sliding scale to determine fees for counseling, membership, testing, and employment referrals. Still other agencies provide essentially the same services free of charge. These agencies typically include community centers, Big Brother Big Sister volunteer programs, alcohol and drug clinics, and hotline programs. In addition, many colleges and universities offer counseling services free of charge or based on a sliding scale.

Some Criticisms

As indicated previously, delinquency prevention programs usually employ one of two strategies: either (1) reform of society or (2) individual treatment. Both strategies, as generally employed, have had difficulties. Programs oriented toward reforming society have been quite costly in terms of the results produced, depending on whether results are measured in terms of alleviating educational, occupational, and economic difficulties or in terms of reducing delinquency. Lack of coordination among various programs, inter-program jealousy, considerable duplication, and mismanagement have seriously hampered the effectiveness of these programs. As a result, much of the money intended for juveniles with problems ends up in staff salaries, and many of the personnel hired to help supervise, train, and educate these juveniles are tied up in dealing with administrative red tape. In addition, programs attempting to improve societal conditions may take a long time to show results. The extent to which any results can be attributed to a specific program is extremely difficult to measure. As a result, the public is frequently hesitant to finance prevention programs because they have no immediately visible payoffs. In fact, it may be that diversion programs simply do not work either because the concept is flawed or because the current system does not provide an opportunity for them to work. Some see diversion as an interesting concept with “unanticipated negative consequences” (Mays & Winfree, 2000, p. 116).

There are those prevention programs directed at providing individual treatment. These deal with children who have already come into contact with the juvenile justice system and attempt to prevent further contact. As noted previously, there are inherent difficulties in attempting to reform or rehabilitate juveniles after they have become delinquent. Many of the basic assumptions about programs directed at preventing future delinquent acts by those already labeled as delinquent are highly questionable. For example, it is doubtful whether individual therapy will be successful if the juvenile’s problems involve family, school, and/or peers. Similarly, the belief that recreational or activity programs, in and of themselves, are beneficial in reducing delinquency seems to be more a matter of faith than a matter of fact at this time.

Another type of individual treatment program attempts to identify juveniles who are likely to become delinquent before a delinquent act is committed. These programs may be called early identification programs or predelinquency detection programs. Although these programs are clearly intended to nip the problem in the bud, they may be criticized for creating the very delinquency they propose to reduce; that is, identifying a juvenile as predelinquent focuses attention on the juvenile as a potential problem child and, therefore, labels him or her in much the same way as official juvenile justice agencies label juveniles as delinquent. In one sense, then, the juvenile is being treated (and sometimes punished) for something that he or she has not yet done. Programs directed toward pure prevention may, unintentionally, lead juveniles to be labeled earlier by identifying them at an earlier stage. This phenomenon is often referred to as net widening (discussed earlier in this chapter).
Some time ago, Edwin M. Schur encouraged the development of an approach to delinquency prevention. We believe (and have suggested at other points in this book) that it has considerable merit. His approach is called **radical nonintervention**. According to Schur (1973), “The primary target for delinquency policy should be neither the individual nor the local community setting, but rather the delinquency-defining processes themselves” (p. 154). Rather than consistently increasing the number of behaviors society refuses to tolerate, we should develop policies that encourage society to tolerate the “widest possible diversity of behaviors and attitudes” (Schur, 1973, p. 154). Much of the behavior currently considered delinquent is characteristic of adolescence, is nonpredatory in nature, and is offensive only because it is engaged in by juveniles. Because in one sense it is rules that produce delinquents, it might make more sense to change the rules (as we have done at the adult level in terms of alcohol consumption, abortion, and homosexuality) than to attempt to change juveniles or the entire society overnight. One approach, then, would be to make fewer activities delinquent and to concentrate on enforcing rules for violations that may actually be harmful to the juvenile, society, or both. In other cases, our best strategy may be simply to “leave kids alone wherever possible” (Schur, 1973, p. 154).

Supporting Schur’s (1973) contention is the fact that the OJJDP (1979) found that a number of programs have no defensible basis whatsoever (e.g., those based on presumed personality differences or biological differences), others are poorly implemented (e.g., behavior modification programs in treatment settings without community follow-up), and still others of questionable merit are based only on preliminary evidence (e.g., most predelinquency identification programs).

Finally, Sherman and colleagues (1997), in a systematic review of literature on crime prevention, concluded that some programs seem to work but that many do not. More important, perhaps, the authors concluded that the programs that work best are those in communities that need them least and that true prevention probably lies outside the realm of criminal justice. Indeed, many programs seem to work where schools and families are stable, but few appear to be successful where schools and families are torn apart by drugs, crime, and violence. Walker (1998), in reviewing this and other studies, concluded the following:

> We found that most current crime [delinquency] policies and proposed alternatives are not effective. We found that both conservatives and liberals are guilty of peddling nonsense with respect to crime policy. . . . The truth about crime policy seems to be that most criminal justice-related policies will not make any significant reduction in crime. (p. 279)

Thus, as we indicated earlier in the book, if we wish to prevent at least some crime and delinquency, we must seek solutions in the broader social structure by focusing on unemployment, poverty, and discrimination; maintaining stable families (whatever their structure); and providing meaningful education for all children.

### Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Programs

Many of the specific programs we have discussed are oriented toward diverting delinquents and preventing delinquency. There are also numerous programs aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect. The majority of these programs are offered by state CPS agencies and, in most cases, are in collaboration with schools, the police, day cares, and community-based agencies. These programs include clothing drives, food pantries, parenting classes, money management classes, anger management classes, and day care cost assistance, just to name a few.

As is the case with delinquency prevention programs, none of them are foolproof—none are a panacea.
CAREER OPPORTUNITY: BIG BROTHER BIG SISTER PROGRAM DIRECTOR


Employment requirements: Must have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in social work, counseling, guidance, psychology, or a related field. Must have experience in working directly with children within a social-service agency or similar surroundings, excellent oral and written communication skills, assessment and counseling skills, problem-solving skills, experience with diverse populations, and (usually) some experience in public speaking. Required to work some evenings and, on occasion, weekends.

Beginning salary: Salary ranges from $20,000 to $40,000, depending on the location of the position. Benefits vary by geographical location but typically include paid medical, dental, and vacation as well as a 401(k) plan.

Summary

All practitioners interested in the welfare of juveniles with problems should be familiar with the wide range of programs available in most communities. Teachers should not hesitate to consult personnel from children and family services agencies or law enforcement officials when appropriate or to enter into long-term agreements about sharing information in the interests of intervening appropriately with children in trouble. It is important to remember that the goal of each of these agencies is the same—to provide for the best interests of children. Territorial jealousy must be eliminated, and practitioners must learn to share their expertise with those outside their agency. It is not a sign of failure or weakness to recognize and admit that a particular problem could be dealt with more beneficially by personnel from an agency other than one’s own. Concerned practitioners should provide direct services when it is possible and should not hesitate to make referrals when doing so is necessary or desirable.

Probably the best way to combat delinquency and child abuse is to prevent them from occurring in the first place. There are at least three ways to accomplish some form of prevention: (1) changing juvenile behavior, (2) changing the rules governing that behavior, and (3) changing societal conditions leading to that behavior. Although the last named probably holds the most promise for success, it is also the least likely to occur.

By establishing good working relationships among schools, families, and juvenile justice practitioners, early detection of serious juvenile problems may be facilitated, and proper referrals may be made. Clearly, if the old adage that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is true, early detection and the support of the family as the primary institution influencing juvenile behavior are crucial to prevention programs. It is true that educational and vocational projects, community treatment programs, family involvement in intervention, and the use of volunteers and nonprofessionals show some effectiveness. Recreation, individual and group counseling, social casework, and the use of detached workers (gang workers) may also be effective under some conditions.

At the same time, it is clear that many juvenile offenses are of a nonserious nature and that the statutes creating these offenses could be changed. We need to assess the necessity or desirability of many statutes and move to change those that serve no useful purpose and those that do more harm than good.
Practitioners are also in an excellent position to detect and report types of behavior that, in their experience, frequently lead to the commission of serious delinquent acts. Use of their experiences in combination with well-designed research projects will, it is hoped, lead to modified, more satisfactory theories of causation. Recognizing the variety of factors involved, the range of alternative programs available, and the strengths and weaknesses of prevention programs should lead to greater success in dealing with juveniles.

Preventing delinquency and child abuse is more desirable than attempting to rehabilitate delinquents or salvage battered and neglected juveniles from an economic viewpoint, from the viewpoint of the juveniles involved, and from society’s viewpoint. It is hoped that commitment by both government and the private sector will facilitate more effective prevention and lead to the abandonment of ineffective programs. Examination of some of the basic assumptions of current prevention programs is essential as is the incorporation of evidence-based practices in those programs that exist or those being developed.

There are a number of agencies operating programs that complement or supplement juvenile justice programs. Coordinating and organizing these programs to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency has been shown to be difficult as the result of territorial jealousy. Nonetheless, the best way to ensure the welfare of juveniles with problems is to share knowledge through interagency cooperation and referral, and budgetary restraints are currently dictating that this be accomplished.

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**Critical Thinking Questions**

1. What are the major approaches to delinquency prevention? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Discuss some contemporary attempts to prevent delinquency or divert delinquents, and tell why you believe they are effective or ineffective.

2. List some of the assumptions you believe are basic to delinquency prevention and diversion programs. To what extent do you feel each of these assumptions is justified? Why is the public often unwilling to finance prevention programs, and what are the consequences of this unwillingness?

3. What is territorial jealousy? Why does it occur, and what are some of its consequences?

4. Statistics point to the fact that the use of drugs contributes to criminal behavior. Do you think drug courts (and other types of therapeutic courts) can adequately address the causes of drug use and result in reduced juvenile offending? Why or why not?
5. Discuss at least two agencies or programs with goals similar to those of the juvenile justice system. In your opinion, how successful are these agencies in achieving their goals?

6. Discuss some of the attempts currently being made to prevent child abuse and neglect. Are such programs operating in your community?

Suggested Readings


SAGE edge

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at edge.sagepub.com/coxj9e. SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment. You’ll find action plans, mobile-friendly eFlashcards, and quizzes as well as video and web resources and links to SAGE journal articles to support and expand on the concepts presented in this chapter.