

# Examples of proven crime prevention programs

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## Strategic Overview

These selected examples illustrate the range of service sectors where programs have been proven to prevent crime more effectively than the traditional reactive police and criminal justice system.

Services for youth, such as the Youth Inclusion projects, outreach to the most vulnerable youth in high crime neighbourhoods and have reduced offending by 63% and crime in the area by 16%.

Services for parents and for early childhood, such as the Positive Parenting Program, have assisted parents to provide consistent and caring parenting that reduces child abuse and later teenage crime.

Modifications to school curricula, such as the 4th R, teaches adolescents about healthy relationships and so reduces sexual violence by 25%. The Life Skills Training curricula reduces drug abuse and violence.

Modifications in hospital emergency rooms, such as the epidemiological analysis in the Cardiff Violence Prevention Program, guided prevention efforts that reduced crime across the city by 40% and got a return of \$80 per \$1 invested.

Situational crime prevention, such as the Kirkholt (UK) Break-in Reduction initiative, reduced one time and repeat break-ins at the same address by 75% over a four year period.

Diverting cases from the police and criminal justice system, such as the Assisted Outpatient Treatment, diverted mentally ill offenders from the traditional criminal justice system to a treatment facility.

Proactive policing, such as operation ceasefire in Boston, contributed to a 67% reduction in homicides.

## Actions for Municipal Stakeholders

1. Municipalities can work with sectors providing youth and family services as well as school boards, and health authorities to reduce crime;
2. Municipalities can encourage their police services to use more of the effective proactive policing strategies and partnerships to reduce crime;
3. Municipalities can encourage other orders of government and the private sector to improve security in design of products.

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## Services for Youth

### Youth Inclusion Program

**Program:** The Youth Inclusion Program in the UK established a "Youth Inclusion Project" (YIP) in each of 72 priority neighborhoods.

Two youth street workers in each YIP outreached to the 50 most vulnerable youth aged 13 to 16 in the priority neighbourhoods to provide mentoring, homework help and skill-building activities for 10 hours a week. They also offered

assistance dealing with violence, drugs, gangs and personal health.

**Results:** Evaluation of the YIP showed a 65% reduction in youth arrests and 16% reduction in overall crime in the targeted neighborhoods. So the program was doubled.

**Cost (Canada):** Approximately \$8,000 per participant.



## Big Brothers Big Sisters Program (BBBS)

**Program:** The BBBS program helps at risk youth living ages 6 to 18 with a single parent, by pairing them with an adult mentor who can develop a healthy relationship with the young person. The program is aimed at early intervention for youth to lower the likelihood of future violence and criminality. Mentors will meet three times a month for four hours with the young person to be able to be available and develop a strong social bond.

**Cure Violence:** Cure Violence used an evidence-based public health approach to reduce shootings in Chicago by using trained outreach workers, public education campaigns, and community mobilization. Shootings went down 34%.

**SNAP (Stop Now and Plan):** An award-winning program targets at-risk families to increase life skills in dealing with emotions in social situations. Conviction rates were reduced by close to 50%.

**Results:** Research shows the programs can lead to a 46% reduction in drug use and 32% are less likely to engage in violence.

**Cost (Canada):** The program costs \$1,000 per match; every dollar invested gets an \$18 return to society.

## Family and Early Childhood Education

### Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)

**Program:** Originally developed in Australia, the Triple P programs are currently used in over 25 countries because they are some of the most effective and affordable programs aimed at improving consistency and care in parenting. Participation in the program provides parents with strategies to help them parent more effectively and consistently, prevent their children from developing problems and building healthy relationships. The program is offered to parents with infants (and up to 12 years old). By doing so it decreases child abuse and therefore breaks down the intergenerational cycle of violence.

The **Nurse Family Partnership** is a home-visitation program that links first time vulnerable mothers with a public health nurse, whose aim is to empower the mother to provide consistent parenting and thereby improve family functioning. The program cut rates of child abuse and later arrests for the teenagers by 50%.

The **Perry Preschool Project** provided high-quality education for disadvantaged children (3-4). Arrest rates were cut by 35% by the age of 40. For every \$1 invested, we see a return of almost \$8.

**Results:** 28% reduction in substantial cases of abuse.

**Cost:** This program costs \$23 per participating family. Triple P saved the Province of Alberta \$10.2 million in other social services (2011).

### School-Based Actions

There are many school based programs that have been shown to be effective in reducing crime and violence. For instance, programs that prevent bullying, teach peaceful conflict resolution and encourage respect are well known. 4th R and Life Skills just illustrate two of them.

### 4th R

**Program:** The Fourth R was developed in Ontario as a high-school based curriculum designed to prevent sexual and dating violence by boys, aiming to change their attitudes as adults by adding a relationship dimension to the traditional three Rs of school programming: Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic. This interactive curriculum integrates dating violence prevention with lessons on consent, healthy relationships, sexual health, and substance use. It is delivered in grade 9 health classes by teachers who have been trained in the dynamics of dating violence and healthy relationships.

This program has been effectively adapted to aid Indigenous youths by implementing within its framework principles similar to traditional Aboriginal practices.

**Results:** A random control trial in 22 schools and over 1,700 students concluded that there was a 25% reduction of boys reported use of dating violence which was matched by survey results from girls.

**Cost:** \$16 per student

### **Life Skills Training Program**

**Program:** Life Skills is a school curriculum based program. The training program focuses on children ages 12 to 14 and aims to prevent violence as well as abuse of alcohol and drugs. Taught in the classroom by teachers over the course of three years, it incorporates self-management skills, social skills, and information and resistance skills in relation to alcohol and other drugs. As the name suggests, the program teaches youth positive coping mechanisms they can use in a variety of situations.

**Results:** Life Skills Training has received an extensive set of evaluations. These conclusively show that life skills training programs are the most cost-effective at reducing drug use and its consequences.

**Cost:** \$34 per individual student; has a payoff of \$251 in reduced reactive crime control (more than \$7 saved) or a return of \$785 in reduction of other costs that incorporate harm to victims (\$23 savings).

## **Actions in the Health and Housing Sector**

### **Cardiff Violence Prevention Programme (CVPP)**

**Program:** This multiagency information sharing strategy uses information collected by hospital staff to identify violence problem areas or "hot spots". Under this strategy, hospital staff collect data anonymously on the circumstances that lead injured patients to being admitted to hospital. The information gathered by front line staff is then used to facilitate prevention. The original example led to smart policing and law enforcement in the problem areas identified, particularly by addressing risk factors such as access to excessive sources of alcohol. The hospital setting of this strategy is essential as many violent incidents that require hospital treatment are not otherwise known to the

police. This strategy has been replicated successfully in Milwaukee and Amsterdam.

**Results:** Implementation of this strategy has been shown to bring about a 40% reduction in violence in problem places identified within a year.

**Cost:** Analyses suggest that every \$1 spent on this strategy resulted in a savings of \$19 in criminal justice costs. Overall the CDCP cost benefit analysis shows a return of more than \$80 per \$1.

**Victim-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy:** Programs that feature cognitive behaviour therapy to reduce the long-term harm associated with victimization. This technique focuses on addressing problematic thought patterns and emotions and providing coping mechanisms to support victims of crime.

## **Actions in the Health and Housing Sector**

### **Kirkholt (UK) Neighborhood Watch**

**Program:** This multi-sectoral approach brought together public sector agencies with community members to implement a strategy for the reduction of residential burglary, focusing on repeat victimization. After diagnosing the burglary problem, Kirkholt implemented situational crime prevention initiatives, such as improved public lighting, target hardening and removal, and the creation of an active and engaged community watch program. These initiatives were implemented in conjunction with initiatives focused on reducing the motivation to commit crime through the provision of work programs, school-based crime prevention programs, better information for probation officers and courts and the establishment of a credit union. While this program was highly successful, subsequent programs modeled on this approach lacked the analysis of the problem before taking action and so achieved much less success.

**Design of consumer products:** An important explanation for the reductions in car thefts, bank robberies and residential burglaries are technological innovations in the design of products. Changes in car ignitions and household alarms are just two examples. Greater attention to security in design of products may lead to further reductions.

**Prince Albert, Canada:** A multi-agency team identified risk factors and focused on systemic solutions, using a hub to divert and a responsibility centre. Prince Albert had a 37% reduction in violent crime (McFee & Taylor, 2014). The hub is being replicated in Ontario and other parts of Canada.

**Results:** This program resulted in a 75% reduction in residential break-ins over a four year period.

**Cost:** Estimates show savings due to the reduction of burglary of \$4 for every \$1 of the project.

## Diversion Initiatives

### Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)

**Program:** Under this diversion strategy a judge may produce a legal order for an individual with a serious mental illness to follow a court-ordered treatment plan in the community. The goal of this program is to improve access and adherence to intensive behavioural health services while avoiding arrest, incarceration or hospitalization. In some instances, statutes permitting AOT also provide stipulations requiring mental health authorities to provide adequate resources and oversight.

**Results:** Assessments indicate that AOT can result in a two-thirds reduction in the probability of arrest or arrest for violent offences for individuals receiving the program.

**Cost:** A 2011 assessment in Nevada estimates a savings of \$1.81 for every \$1.00 invested in the program due to decreased hospitalizations and jail time.

## Police and Criminal Justice Sanctions

### Operation Ceasefire

**Program:** As a comprehensive strategy, Operation Ceasefire sought to reduce gun-related homicides through problem oriented policing and collaboration with community agencies.

The police focused deterrence component targeted youths in gangs with the threat of heavy and predictable punishment if caught with a firearm. This comprehensive and targeted strategy worked because of the policing – community partnership; when the funding was reduced and the community services diminished, Boston began to see an increase in gun violence once again.

**Results:** 63% drop in homicide rates.

**Cost:** not available.



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