

**Crime Prevention Through Social  
Development:**

**A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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## Introduction

As good as the Kitty Hawk looked on the drawing board and as inevitable as mechanized flight was, Wilbur Wright may still have had his moments when he asked, "But will it fly?" Such may also be the case for government social policy planners, communities and members of the criminal justice system as they consider the possibilities offered by the social development approach to crime prevention. As promising as crime prevention strategies focusing on the root causes of crime may be, the challenges and intricacies involved in implementing them could raise the questions, "But will it work? The theory sounds good, but just how do we put it into practice?"

The purpose of this literature review is to illustrate, not how social development may lead to crime prevention, but how social development is crime prevention. The aim is to provide a comprehensive review of the theory and research with respect to CPSD, including the key definitions and concepts underlying CPSD. The aim is also to highlight specific programs which address the connections between crime and certain social and economic factors. In addition, where possible, the characteristics of social development programs with proven successes will be explored.

Because effective crime prevention through social development demands the implementation of programs which specifically address not just individual risk factors, but combinations of these factors, it is important to clearly identify these factors and to pinpoint what is meant by an "at-risk" population. This review will focus extensively on the research which explores not only the social and economic factors that can increase the risk of criminal behaviour, but the dynamics among these factors. The 1990s are witnessing a growing interest, especially by local governments, in pursuing crime prevention strategies aimed at creating safer communities; with this has come a growing awareness of how integral the CPSD approach

is to this process. The present challenge is to find ways of creating an integrated service delivery partnership which effectively combines the long term focus of CPSD with the tendency of political and administrative governing structures to give preference to relatively short term programs with measurable results. The intent of this review is to provide a useful reference point for those undertaking the challenge of transforming CPSD from a catch phrase into a workable, effective strategy.

### **CPSD: The Definition and the Concept**

A perceptible shift in the concept of and responsibility for crime prevention has taken place since 1970 (Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA), 1989). Until 1970, primary responsibility for crime prevention rested with the police, courts and corrections, and the focus of their strategy was primarily to reduce the opportunity to commit crime. The anti-crime efforts of the 1970s witnessed a move toward increased community involvement in crime prevention; Neighbourhood Watch is a well-known example of the popular opportunity reduction programs of the era. However, by the 1980s, reductions in crime rates proved negligible and the long term effectiveness of reduction-based strategies came into question. Indeed, during the 1980s in the United States, resources were poured into criminal justice; the rate of increase for criminal justice expenditures was four times that of education and double that of health care (Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). By 1989, the serious crime rate was only marginally lower than it had been at the start of the decade. Thus, there emerged an interest in prevention strategies which address the social and economic causes of crime. This approach is known as crime prevention through social development (CPSD) and, by the 1990s, CPSD was widely viewed as a vital component to any serious attempt at crime prevention.

Crime prevention can mean many things to many people, so it is important to clarify what is meant by "crime prevention" and "social development." Crime prevention in this review will be defined as "the reduction of the future risk of crime" (Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities, 1992, p. 7). However, crime prevention does not imply that all crime will be eradicated (Waller & Weiler, 1984). The definition of crime will be limited to certain offences against persons (homicide, assault, sexual assault, dangerous driving) and property (robbery, theft, break-and-enter and vandalism). Social development will refer to programs which address social factors in the environment and interpersonal or intergroup relations (Mayor's Task Force, 1992).

Crime prevention through social development operates from the premise that crime is linked to social and economic factors; this relationship suggests prevention programs which transcend traditional opportunity reduction approaches to crime prevention (Mayor's Task Force, 1992). Targeted social programs are key to the implementation of CPSD. Successful CPSD programs will include a variety of programs targeted at social problems such as ineffective parenting, unemployment, inadequate housing and domestic violence.

### **From "Getting Tough" to Decriminalization**

While there has been a perceptible shift in the concept of crime prevention, there are still two schools of thought regarding the best response to crime: "get tough" and more liberal approaches. "Get tough" proponents call for:

- ! increased use of incarceration;
- ! building more prisons;
- ! mandatory sentences;

- ! hiring more judges and prosecutors, and;
- ! a war on drugs (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984).

This orientation also favours reduced due process rights for offenders (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). "Get tough" advocates view "stop and frisk" procedures and the removal of exclusionary rules of evidence as necessary to the successful arrest, conviction and sentencing of offenders (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984, p. 25). However, implementing such recommendations has met with resistance from those concerned with maintaining the safeguards provided for under the constitution. In addition, critics oppose increased incarceration rates and attendant correctional costs.

The more liberal school of thought has also pushed for major reforms of criminal codes and penal policies to reduce crime (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). However, liberals aim to reduce crime through the decriminalization of certain offences. Liberals assert that certain offences are victimless or are mere status offences, such as prostitution and promiscuity respectively. They assert that the criminalization of such behaviours has negative consequences, such as driving certain goods and services into a dangerous criminal underground. Further, some decriminalization advocates assert that the enforcement of status offences and victimless crimes currently exhausts almost half of justice resources. Decriminalization would allow these resources to be used to address more serious offences. However, the notion of decriminalization has not been widely embraced. Many justice officials and private citizens alike maintain that the legalization of certain offences would not reduce the criminal activity around them and that it would, in effect, legitimize activities which many find reprehensible.

Despite advocating very different crime prevention policies, Kornblum and Boggs (1984) assert that the two schools of thought share a common misconception; namely, that criminal justice reform will

reduce violent crime. It is suggested that the criminal justice system is not the most effective venue for crime prevention. However, it is not suggested that criminal justice reform be abandoned; the recent trend is to adopt policies from both of the traditional schools of thought (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). For example, modern policymakers support increased help for the police not only in carrying out their primary responsibilities, but also with finding alternatives to the court system for certain offenders. However, modern policymakers recognize that crime prevention initiatives need to look beyond criminal justice. They emphasize the vitally important roles that community development and community empowerment play in crime prevention strategies. It is in the context of this emerging school of thought that the crime prevention through social development approach is garnering increased interest. By 1990, there was a growing movement throughout Canada, the United States and elsewhere toward developing crime prevention strategies based on community initiatives that target the specific needs of the local community.

### **The Role Of Community Development and Empowerment**

If a community development program is to have any chance of success, those in charge must understand that the controls that lead to reduced crime cannot be imposed from the outside; they must emerge from changes in the community itself, and in the people who compose it. (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984, pp. 26 -27)

This statement reflects not only the nature and purpose of community development and empowerment, but the roles they play in crime prevention through social development. A recurring theme in the research literature emphasizes the importance of making community development an integral part of social development oriented crime prevention strategies. Assessments of programs which have had the most positive effects on neighbourhood crime repeatedly attribute their success to the fact that "they

approach the crime issue within a framework of community development" (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984, p. 27).

### **What is Community Development and Empowerment?**

Community development is an approach to social development which promotes the rebuilding and strengthening of a community by the people who live in it, rather than by those from outside the community. In terms of the three main preventive orientations--primary, secondary and tertiary--community development operates mostly within the framework of primary prevention. "As a framework, it is concerned with strengthening human resources, creative problem-solving, restructuring, and alternative models of organization and action" (Van Rees, 1991, p. 97).

Also referred to as community action, community organization or collective intervention, community development addresses the needs of the whole community rather than simply the needs of known offenders (Berger & Berger, 1985). In Berger and Berger's study of youth crime prevention programs involving widespread intervention and emphasizing social change, community development is defined as "intervention at the community level oriented towards improving or changing community institutions and solving community problems" (Cox et al., 1979, quoted in Berger & Berger, 1985, p. 131).

One of the more successful examples of a community development program is Centro Sister Isolina Ferre. The program was started in 1968 in the poorest community in Ponce, Puerto Rico (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). Centro's strategy is based on the fundamental idea that addressing crime and violence requires addressing the development of the community as a whole. Central to the approach of Centro Sister Isolina Ferre is the assumption that despite the poverty of the target community, the community had

strengths which could be nurtured in order to improve the community's ability to address its own needs (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990).

Centro is a particularly clear example of how community action strategies are inherently crime prevention. Several programs were established for adults and youth that are regarded as having impacted upon the very fabric of the community (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). Further, one study found that youth crime rates in Centro have dropped by 50% (Silberman, cited in Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). The success of Centro has been attributed to its broad scope, addressing everything from health care to employment opportunities.

The Centro project also embodies the concept of community empowerment. Often inextricably connected with community development, citizen empowerment through participation in anti-crime activities is a fast-developing model. Such empowerment is seen to facilitate the development of community-based models for crime prevention (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). Community empowerment programs feature a wide range of anti-crime strategies, ranging from community dispute resolution and victim-offender reconciliation to community crime-stop programs. Community crime-stop programs are local efforts at situational crime prevention such as citizen patrols which decrease the opportunity for crime in their neighbourhood. However, as effective as these programs are, they are only partial solutions to the problem; citizens must also get involved in the more difficult aspects of dispute resolution and crime prevention.

One example of a program that took on the challenge of community empowerment through crime prevention activities is the Community Boards Program (Kornblum & Boggs, 1984). Currently operating in six San Francisco inner-city communities, this community-run program takes on a variety of local

mediations. The types of disputes dealt with by the Community Boards Program include everything from minor disputes to gang clashes.

Theorists have identified three different models of community development practice: locality development, social planning and social action (Rothman, cited in Berger & Berger, 1985). Locality development involves the identification of local needs and goals as well as determining approaches to solving local problems. These tasks are accomplished by a large group of community members. The main goal of locality development is the establishment of solid working partnerships as well as community interest and involvement in the affairs of the community. The social planning model, on the other hand, involves change through policymakers and planners with expertise; community members are not involved in the development or delivery of programs and services. Finally, the social action approach involves the mobilization of disadvantaged community members in order to effectively press for fair distribution of community resources. The aim is to create a strong community group with the ability to secure power to further its own interests.

Whatever the approach used, the importance of incorporating community development strategies into social development oriented crime prevention is emphasized throughout anti-crime research literature. Researchers emphasize the necessity of delivering services at the local level, regardless of who holds responsibility for service delivery (Steel, 1987). The development of more effective social controls in poor communities is believed to provide greater benefits such as reduced crime and improved order than the development of more effective, efficient and improved policing, courts and corrections. Community development programs such as Centro and the Community Boards Program are pointed to as vivid examples of how it is possible to instill a sense of community purpose in neighbourhoods, which promotes

the development of "internal controls" that help prevent crime. These "internal controls" are seen to be emerging from two related initiatives: employment programs for young people and local-level problem solving programs (Silberman, cited in Kornblum & Boggs, 1984).

### **Programs that Work--the Prototypes**

The community development approach is not new. The more recent interest in community development represents more of a re-emergence of a good idea than the beginnings of one. Community development in the United States took hold in the wake of the urban riots of the 1960s, when the federal government was forced by the Kerner Commission to acknowledge that the problems of violent crime and civil disorder were deeply rooted in the conditions of urban life. It was suggested that urban violence must be addressed through a "process of community development;" this process would "begin on an economic base; a foundation of individual and community self-support" (Kennedy, 1967, quoted in Eisenhower Foundation, 1990, p. 7).

Proponents of the community development approach to urban violence were confident that it would benefit the entire community, both socially and economically (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). The community development corporations were regarded as models of community rejuvenation. However, this hopeful and enlightened vision was overshadowed by the pessimistic views of the 1970s and 1980s that nothing much could be done about the urban crime problem. As a result, many urban programs were slashed--the innovative and promising along with the ineffective. Some of the successful programs survived the pessimistic purge and continued to operate, while others did not. However, the promise indicated by their earlier success made them models for the creation of new programs in the 1980s.

One of the most valuable aspects of community development is its capacity to provide a variety of solutions to a variety of problems. Programs can take a variety of approaches. Some may provide a wide range of services to at-risk youth, while others may focus on community rejuvenation (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). Yet, whatever the program emphasis, a common denominator to almost all of the established community development programs is that they are proactive rather than reactive. Some of these early "prototype" community development programs include: Head Start, Job Corps, Centro Sister Isolina Ferre, Fairview Homes, the Argus Community and the House of Umoja. Given the extent to which these programs have influenced the design of many past, present and, quite possibly, future community development programs in the United States and elsewhere, it is worth including a brief description of these programs.

### **Head Start.**

The Head Start program offers enriching preschool programs to economically and socially disadvantaged children. Head Start believes that disadvantaged children have multiple needs, including the need for intellectual stimulation and improved diet, health care and support (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). Home visits supplement the preschool program (Child Poverty Action Group, 1993). Parents are actively involved in Head Start programs in both an advisory and support capacity (Child Poverty Action Group, 1993). According to the Eisenhower Foundation (1990), long term studies of children in the Perry Preschool program in Michigan, which is based on the Head Start model, show that Perry Preschool children:

! were significantly less likely to drop out of school and receive social assistance compared with a control group; and,

! were significantly more likely to be literate, employed and attend college or vocational school at age 19.

Most importantly, these outcomes appear to be interrelated, indicating that the success of preschool is not solely early intervention; rather, preschool programs are successful if they address a variety of problems experienced by disadvantaged children (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990).

Another tribute to the effectiveness of the Head Start model is the extent to which it has been implemented across North America. Edmonton alone has Head Start programs in four different locations and is able to offer Head Start to 130 disadvantaged Edmonton preschoolers (Child Poverty Action Group, 1993).

Preschool programming is heralded as a cost-effective approach to the problems of urban crime and drug abuse:

'It would be hard to imagine that society could find a higher yield for a dollar of investment than that found in preschool programs for its at-risk children. Every \$1.00 spent on early prevention and intervention can save \$4.75 in the cost of remedial education, welfare, and crime further down the road.' (Committee for Economic Development, quoted in Eisenhower Foundation, 1990, p. 11)

### **Job Corps.**

Job Corps is an intensive program which offers counselling, job skills training and courses to older youth at risk (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). Programs are offered in both urban and rural settings and originally involved residency in Job Corps' home-like environment. More recent Job Corps programs have eliminated the residential component. However, the nonresidential programs continue to foster a home-like environment at Job Corps.

United States Labor Department statistics show that during the first year after participation, Job Corps members are one third less likely to be arrested than nonparticipants. Evaluations found that 75 percent of Job Corps enrollers move on to a job or to fulltime study, that graduates retain jobs longer and earn about 15 percent more than if they had not participated in the program. For every \$1.00 spent on the Job Corps, there resulted a \$1.45 saving to society in the form of reduced crime, substance abuse and welfare dependency, and increased job productivity, income and taxes (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990, p. 13).

### **Centro Sister Isolina Ferre.**

As mentioned earlier in this review, the Centro program is aimed at disadvantaged communities. A key assumption in the Centro approach was that the main resources and strengths needed were to be found within the community itself (Ferre, cited in Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). With this vision in mind, Sister Isolina put several programs into place designed to develop this inherent competence. For example, Ferre implemented a system of "intercesores" (youth advocates) who served as mentors for youth in conflict with the law (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). These "intercesores" were responsible for familiarizing themselves with the lifestyle of their charges and getting them involved in the various programs offered by Centro, such as tutoring programs, job skills training and recreational activities. A particularly extensive program offered by Centro is its job skills training program; Centro believes that "building a community without jobs is like trying to build a brick wall without cement" (Ferre, quoted in Eisenhower Foundation, 1990, p. 14).

### **Fairview Homes.**

Like Centro, the Fairview Homes Crime Prevention Program was based on the assumption that the residents of a large public housing project in Charlotte, North Carolina possessed the competency to address their community needs (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). A total of \$450,000 was given to the Charlotte Public Housing Authority by the federal government; this initiative was in concert with a national Urban Initiative Anti-Crime Program. Most of the money was used to hire staff for various Fairview Homes programs. While some professionals were employed, the programs were also staffed by project youth identified as high risk and adult leaders in the project. The programs offered project residents job skills training, ombudsman and advocacy skills training, and employment opportunities in health services, anti-drug programs and managerial positions.

An evaluation of the Fairview Homes program between 1979 and 1981 showed that crime rates in Fairview Homes decreased; the city of Charlotte experienced an increase in crime rates for the same period (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). The crimes which experienced the greatest decrease were burglary, robbery and serious assault. Meanwhile, of the 48 at-risk youth employed by the program between the early and late 1980s, only three were arrested for serious crimes (assault and drug dealing). The evaluation also noted that success was closely related to the level of involvement of project residents; when residents were partners in developing and implementing programs, the programs experienced great success. Programs with limited resident involvement were not as successful.

### **The Argus Community.**

A South Bronx community centre established in the late 1960s for at-risk youth (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). The Argus Community offers both residential and drop-in programs. Argus aims to create a home-like atmosphere in which to teach young people values. Schooling and job skills training are also provided. Graduates of the Argus Community program are placed with local employers. Some new additions to the Argus Community programs include child care, birth control and parenting skills programs.

Several studies of the Argus Community have found notable successes. For example, studies have shown that Argus youth were much more likely to find job placements which were not subsidized by government than other youth at risk who did not receive Argus programming (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). Another evaluation of the Argus Community found that Argus graduates were better paid, had more work benefits and paid higher taxes than comparable young people who did not attend Argus.

### **The House of Umoja.**

Also started in the late 1960s, the House of Umoja was established in response to high levels of gang violence among minority youth in Philadelphia (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). The House of Umoja was initiated by Falaka and David Fattah, who attributed gang violence to low self-esteem and feelings of isolation among minority youth. Like Argus, Umoja offers the support of an "extended family." Besides offering a homelike setting and a safe, secure environment, the program offers counselling and household management training and provides assistance with finding jobs and job skills training opportunities. The program also monitors the school performance of Umoja youth and addresses their health, nutrition and

recreation needs. Fostering a sense of group unity by teaching the cooperative values of African culture is a major element of Umoja.

Although no scientific study of trends in gang violence has been conducted, Umoja has been credited with contributing to a reduction in gang deaths in Philadelphia in the mid-1970s (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). During the 1960s, 39 black youths were killed, on average, each year in Philadelphia due to gang violence. In 1976, there were only six gang-related killings, and only one gang-related death in 1977. These dramatic reductions in gang deaths have been attributed, in part, to the gang truce negotiated by Falaka and David Fattah. While a control group study of the House of Umoja has not yet been conducted, an informal study of 15 Umoja graduates was undertaken. Of the 15 youths studied, all of whom were justice system diversions, only 1 was subsequently incarcerated for a serious offence. Further, all 15 youths found employment, primarily as labourers, machinists, community workers and retail salespeople, with a few going on to pursue post-secondary training. The successes of the House of Umoja suggest that the principles of the program warrant further study.

Although the details of all these programs are different, they have several key principles in common. All of the programs emphasize delinquency prevention; each program addresses the causes of crime in a different way, such as by providing services and opportunities to at-risk youth or through community empowerment (Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). Many of the programs offer a home-like environment for at-risk youth in which proper values can be instilled. Finally, many of the programs seek to raise the self-esteem of youth at risk.

The "nothing works" pessimism that descended over crime prevention policies of the 1970s and 1980s maintained that the prognosis for inner city youth beyond their preschool years was bleak

(Eisenhower Foundation, 1990). However, the "prototype" community development programs cited above hold promise that multiple solutions can benefit older at-risk youth. The potential of these programs emphasizes the need to find out more about how such programs work to prevent inner city crime. This also indicates that a research priority for sociologists and criminologists in the 1990s may well be to devise the theoretical and methodological framework required to answer the questions about what programs work and why.

### **CPSD and the "Safer Communities" Approach**

Many of the basic principles and strategies of community development are echoed in the CPSD approach to crime prevention. The move to create safer communities is one of the fastest developing responses to crime problems. The "safer communities" approach relies substantially on the basic concepts of crime prevention through social development. It advocates strategies that involve targeted social programs directed at the multiple underlying social and economic factors related to persistent offending. Details of various municipal "safer communities" plans may vary, but the basic principles of CPSD are common to most of them. For instance, the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General report on a crime prevention strategy for Canada identified the following principles of the safer communities approach to crime prevention:

- ! the community is the focal point of effective crime prevention;
- ! the community needs to identify and respond to short- and long-term needs;
- ! crime prevention efforts should bring together individuals from a range of sectors to tackle crime;
- ! strategies for preventing crime should be supported by the whole community. (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1993, p. 12)

These statements echo the major conclusions agreed upon by representatives to an international conference on crime prevention in 1989. The European and North-American Conference on Urban Safety

and Crime Prevention drew mayors, city leaders, police executives, judges, urban planners, criminologists, and representatives of government and national organizations from 31 countries in Europe, North America and other parts of the world (European and North-American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention, 1989). They met in Montreal to develop an agenda for action to improve quality of life by making communities safer from crime. Three additional conclusions were reached at the Montreal conference which also reflect some of the basic objectives of CPSD:

- ! crime prevention efforts must go beyond the criminal justice system;
- ! the response to crime must be long-term, yet able to address current needs, and;
- ! elected officials at all levels must exert political leadership and assume responsibility for the prevention of urban crime (European and North-American Conference, 1989).

### **Challenges and Changes Involved in Implementing CPSD**

Any serious attempt at developing crime prevention programs that address the underlying social and economic factors associated with crime will probably involve some significant shifts in attitude and changes in approach to crime and crime prevention. More recent criminological research is characterized by an increased emphasis on the need for policymakers, administrators, researchers and the public to adjust their thinking and expectations connected with such factors as:

- ! the definitions and perceptions of crime, criminality and prevention;
- ! the advantages and limitations of crime statistics;
- ! the methodology used in crime prevention research, and;
- ! the criteria and methods used to evaluate prevention programs.

The extent of the will to initiate and support these changes politically and administratively will determine the ultimate effectiveness of the safer communities approach to crime prevention. "While there is a great deal of interest in prevention among municipal governments, it is clear that progress will be slow without an infusion of leadership, ideas and resources" (Hastings & Melchers, 1990, p. 107). However, the House of Commons Standing Committee responsible for recommending a national crime prevention strategy for Canada, pointed out that "a major limitation, noted by a number of witnesses, is a lack of awareness among politicians and bureaucrats that responsibility for crime problems goes beyond the criminal justice system" (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 12).

### **Defining Crime and Criminal Justice Policy**

In our panic, we tend to think of crime as something alien. It isn't. Crime is simply a form of behaviour that reflects myriad intersecting forces. Crime occurs when there is conflict in social norms and/or a breakdown in social controls. It provides a mirror in which we can view how our society functions. (Bennett, 1989, pp. xiv-xv)

Criminological research shows that the definition of what acts are criminal has changed over time. There is little indication that this will be any different in the future. The law and the public are often at odds over which acts to label as criminal. Crimes are defined relative to the social, economic and political climate of the times, and are susceptible to slipping into and out of existence. Prohibition and abortion are but two examples of this tendency. Besides varying over time, legal definitions of criminal behaviour can also change from place to place.

Defining a criminal act involves making decisions about which acts are to be regarded as criminal. The principles underlying such decisions can be complex and controversial. For example, some laws, such as those dealing with under-age drinking, are designed primarily to compel people to act in their own best

interests, rather than because society needs to be protected. Countries vary greatly on the age when drinking is permissible. Within the United States and Canada, the law varies from state to state and province to province.

The more theoretical definitions of crime are also widely diverse. Bennett describes criminal behaviour as "a mirror in which we can view how our society functions" (1989, p. xiv). This appears to favour the social development approach in that it acknowledges that the roots of crime lie with systemic, social and economic factors, not just the individual person. This contrasts starkly with Williams' definition that crime is simply "an act that is capable of being followed by criminal proceedings" (Williams, 1955, quoted in Rutter & Giller, 1983, p. 15). Both of these theoretical definitions differ yet again from the leftist perspective which describes crime as being "a result of economic discontent without political alternatives" (Lea & Young, 1986, p. 362). This tendency to change could suggest that, just as public and legal perceptions and definitions of crime change, so too can the expectations and definitions of what constitutes effective crime prevention.

If the definitions of crime are not static, then neither are crime patterns nor the salient characteristics of who gets called the criminal population. Existing crime patterns get displaced by new ones. One of the recommendations of the 1989 international conference on urban safety and crime prevention was that the "evolution of crime must be anticipated" (European and North-American Conference, 1989, p. 10).

### **Public Opinion and Crime**

There are several factors that determine the effect public opinion has on defining and preventing crime. They include how well the public understands crime and the criminal justice system and the extent of public fear and feelings of insecurity about crime. Where and how the public gets its information about

crime becomes crucial. Yet, public knowledge of crime has been researched far less than public opinion about crime. This imbalance is seen as a curious one by some researchers because they assume that the ability to respond to criminal justice issues requires a basic knowledge about crime (Roberts, 1992). Understanding the dynamics and limitations of public opinion can provide some insights into what is needed to increase public knowledge and understanding of crime and criminal behaviour. This, in turn, is essential to any process of getting public support for alternative crime prevention policies and programs, such as CPSD.

### **Public understanding of crime.**

The media continue to be the general public's major source of information about crime. A 1986 survey of Metropolitan Toronto residents revealed that the news media was the primary source of crime prevention information for most respondents (Roberts & Grossman, 1990). Public perceptions of criminals and criminal activity are largely dictated by the type of information about crime provided by the media. However, content analyses of the news media have demonstrated that violent offences, compared with their actual occurrence, are over-represented in news stories (Doob, 1985; Dussuyer, 1979; Gabor & Weimann, 1987; Graber, 1980; Sherizen, 1978; all cited in Roberts & Grossman, 1990, p. 79). In the United States, for example, homicide makes up only .02 percent of serious offences. However, homicides are the topic of 30 percent of American news stories (Liska & Baccaglioni, 1990, cited in Roberts, 1992, p. 117). Violent crimes account for only five percent of reported crimes in Canada, but one study found that over 50 percent of Canadian newspaper articles are about violent incidents (Doob, 1984, cited in Roberts, 1992, p. 117). The over-representation of violent crime in the news media is not unique to North America; one European study found that violent crime stories exceeded the actual occurrence of violent

crime by 10 times (van Dijk, 1978, cited in Roberts, 1992, p. 117). Given the public's reliance on the media for information, the media's approach to crime coverage can have a considerable effect on how powerless the public feels about crime. This can have an insidious effect on the public's ability to appreciate and support the more proactive crime prevention approaches such as CPSD.

Concern about crime also carries corresponding politics. The so-called "law and order" approach to criminal justice, usually promoted by the more right wing, conservative elements, relies heavily on fear generation and reacting punitively after the fact (Lea & Young, 1986, p. 359). Despite having a proven track record of ineffectiveness in terms of crime prevention, this approach continues to find more immediate public support if, for no other reason, than it seems to be better than nothing. As Fairweather (1982) puts it, "strong-arm solutions appeal when you are powerless and nobody seems to be offering anything else" (quoted in Lea & Young, 1986, p. 363).

There is also evidence emerging that challenges what may be "the myth of the neo-conservative public" (Roberts & Grossman, 1990, p. 82). A 1987 survey by the Canadian Sentencing Commission asked respondents to name the one thing which would have the greatest impact on crime control. 'Reducing unemployment rates' was cited by 47% of respondents, while 'harsher sentences' was chosen by only 27% of those polled. This same survey also asked respondents who they thought bears the most responsibility for crime prevention. The most common response (47%) was 'society generally;' 'the courts' ranked second, with only 24% favouring that option (Canadian Sentencing Commission, 1987, cited in Roberts & Grossman, 1990, p. 82). Such Canadian Sentencing Commission survey results indicate that the Canadian public does not see crime as solely the responsibility of the criminal justice system, nor does it seem to believe that crime control will result simply by making the justice system more repressive.

The beliefs that public officials hold about the criminal justice policies supported by the majority come from three main sources: "shared conventional wisdom, the perception of an association between electoral success and support for repressive criminal justice policies, and the publication of survey findings that seem to demonstrate public support for harsher sentencing" (Roberts, 1992, p. 101). Public officials' understanding of public opinion affects the kinds of criminal justice policies adopted. However, it is unclear whether public officials correctly interpret public opinion surveys on criminal justice issues. Public opinion polls are used by legislators as evidence of public approval of their policies, by criminal justice professionals who seek to protect aspects of the system against calls for change, by the news media and by many advocacy groups. However, there is growing evidence that conventional wisdom about public opinion is incorrect or, at the very least, misleading, due to problems with the way public opinion polls are conducted. For example, there is increasing evidence that the public is not as punitive as surveys suggest; recent studies have revealed that the public underestimates the punitiveness of sentences and, therefore, calls for tougher sanctions may be misleading.

Another problem is that polls must pose simple questions and, not surprisingly, get simple answers (Roberts, 1992). For example, people tend to think of violent offenders when responding to poll questions about crime. In consequence, alternative programs such as house arrest are often emphatically rejected. However, such rejection may not be encountered if the target population was identified as property offenders.

More research and increased public education are important elements in overcoming the tendency to keep reactive, punitive approaches as the mainstays of criminal justice policy. Research will need to focus specifically on the discrepancies between public attitudes and behaviour, on how to more accurately

measure public opinion of criminal justice policies and on how to change attitudes of a negative or neutral nature towards specific issues (Roberts & Grossman, 1990). Systematic survey research in Canada and the United States has shown that the public is aware of and has positive attitudes towards a broader concept of crime prevention. However, it also shows that this support does not automatically translate into active participation in crime prevention activities. Reasons for the public's failure to participate in crime prevention need to be identified if participation rates are to be improved.

Research conducted in the United States into the motivation of people who are actively involved in crime prevention has indicated that people do not get involved due to heightened fear or increased likelihood of victimization (Shernock, 1986; Lavrakas & Herz, 1982; Washnis, 1976; all cited in Roberts & Grossman, 1990). These findings have implications for behaviour-change prevention campaigns that rely on generating fear (Roberts & Grossman, 1990). It suggests that the public might be more receptive to crime prevention programs and how they unite the community. However, public education on the intricacies of crime prevention through social development is needed. This will assist the public in broadening its concept of a successful program, transcending the short term, measurable results of opportunity reduction programs such as Neighbourhood Watch.

### **Public fear/insecurity about crime.**

One of the subjects of common interest at the 1989 European and North-American Conference was the effects of public fear or feelings of insecurity. The conference made several observations about fear of crime:

! Fear of crime often exceeds the reality of crime suggested by official crime statistics, even in communities with very low crime rates.

! The groups most at risk of victimization are not necessarily the ones to have the greatest fear of crime (European and North-American Conference, 1989).

Whether it is real or perceived, public fear of crime can be a powerful force in defining criminal justice policy (Lea & Young, 1986). As already indicated, the media's disproportionate focus on violent crime makes it easier for the public to believe that the crime situation is worse than it is. Public officials, in turn, conclude that the public wants harsher sentences and more prisons. Feelings of insecurity or lack of safety are also nurtured by perceived inadequacies in police and justice responses to crime (European and North-American Conference, 1989). The responses of criminal justice officials may be perceived as inadequate due to a lack of follow-up on complaints or because information about follow-ups which are conducted is withheld. This lack of information tends to leave the public with more negative feelings towards the criminal justice system.

A survey carried out in the United States, Great Britain, Canada and Australia revealed that people in all four countries had feelings of hostility towards the criminal justice system (Roberts, 1992). Part of this was attributed by researchers to public misconceptions about crime and criminals. Public legal education, therefore, has been identified as a priority. Increased public knowledge about and understanding of criminal justice is expected to increase public satisfaction with the criminal justice system (Stalans & Diamond, 1990, cited in Roberts, 1992). The 1989 international conference on urban safety also recommended that the public be provided with more information, both specific and general, in order to reduce fear of crime (European and North-American Conference, 1989).

### **The Uses and Limitations of Crime Statistics**

The point at issue...is not whether we should trust the statistics which are generated, but rather to what use we put our scepticism (Rutter and Giller, 1983, p. 15).

Statistics play a paradoxical role in criminological research. They are expected to serve as primary sources of validation for theories about crime patterns and behaviour, but at the same time, cautions about the dangers of accepting crime statistics at face value are increasing. Official statistics are increasingly criticized for their likelihood to underestimate the extent of crime, simply because not every offender is caught. This reason alone is considered enough to prompt a careful examination of the value of crime statistics and to determine what biases they can introduce (Rutter & Giller, 1983). Knowledge about the bias in statistics is important because such bias can colour what we know about the relationship between crime rates and such factors as age, social status, ethnic origin, educational attainment and gender (Ouston, 1984).

### **Official statistics.**

Most of the limitations inherent in official statistics, which are usually compiled by law enforcement agencies, stem from two main problems. One is that police measures of crime are based only on those crimes which are reported to police by victims and that the police record (van Dijk, Mayhew & Killias, 1991). The other main problem is that the way crime statistics are compiled and categorized does not always reflect the complex and multi-faceted nature of crime and criminal justice. As Rutter and Giller point out, "it is now well documented that the criminal justice system constitutes a multi-stage, multi-faceted process involving a sequence of interactions between the community, the offender and social control agents" (Rutter & Giller, 1983, p. 15).

Rutter and Giller identified five stages in the process by which a criminal act gets translated into an official statistic: 1) definition of criminal behaviour; 2) recognition that a crime has been committed; 3) decision to respond to the crime by notifying police; 4) recording of the offence by police; and, 5) identifying a suspect (Rutter & Giller, 1983). Because official statistics are compiled at all of these stages, any limitations within each stage of the process could suggest the nature of the biases statistics introduce. In terms of bias and official police statistics, the main implications arising from Rutter and Giller's (1983) stage-by-stage examination are that:

- ! the majority of minor crime incidents are not reported to the police;
- ! seriousness of the offence and whether the accused has previous convictions are the two most important factors associated with decisions to take official police action;
- ! most of the variations in reporting crime are the result of differences in the actions of the general public in recognizing and reporting offences and not the result of police decisions;
- ! the police have considerable discretionary power at several stages of the processing of offences;
- ! there are unexplained variations in processing offences between areas and between responses to different types of suspects within areas;
- ! because the police have to decide how to distribute their time and attention, there may be different focusses on what is thought to be a problem area, a problem group or a problem crime, and;
- ! people develop stereotypes of which sorts of individuals are "delinquent" and these stereotypes may influence the processing of offences.

This work raises questions about whether routine statistics or research findings dealing with rates of convictions or convicted offenders provide any sort of valid picture of the extent or the characteristics of crime. It is suggested that official statistics do not provide a measure of the true level of criminal activity in the community.

### **Self-report statistics.**

Self-report studies try to avoid the problems inherent in official statistics by asking a sample of people to answer questions about their own criminal behaviour, usually in the form of a questionnaire (Gregory, 1986). Self-report studies have been used extensively to try to more accurately determine the extent and nature of crimes committed by youth. Two significant indications arose from self-report studies into delinquent behaviour. One was that a large majority of young people tested had committed criminal acts at some time. The second was that only a small minority of these incidents lead to a court appearance (Rutter & Giller, 1983, p. 27).

While self-report studies have shown to provide a more accurate estimate of criminal activities, especially those committed by youth, there are some serious problems with the use of self-report studies. These problems present significant limitations in the use of self-report studies for examining the contributing factors to criminal activity. The major problems with self-reports are: some self-report scales are weighted towards minor criminal activities and neglect more serious criminal acts; the samples are too small to be representative, and; self-report studies tend to sample youths who are not already delinquent or who do not have characteristics associated with the increased risk of delinquency (Rutter & Giller, 1983, p. 31).

### **Victim survey statistics.**

The procedure for victim surveys usually involves interviewing people from the general population in order to get systematic information about their experiences as crime victims during a specific period. For example, people could be asked to give the details of all incidents of rape, robbery, assault or theft during the past six months (Rutter & Giller, 1983). Victim surveys have shown that there is a great deal of minor and some major crime which is not reported to the police. They can also be of particular value in showing the pattern of crime, as well as the extent. For example, victim surveys done in the United States showed that, generally, the young, the poor and black people are those most likely to be victims of crime. The one exception to this was that the victimization rates for household crimes such as burglary increased with income levels (Empey, 1978, cited in Rutter & Giller, 1983).

Although crime victim surveys do provide clearer indications of the extent and pattern of crime than official statistics or even self-report surveys, they too have several important methodological problems. First, victim surveys rely extensively on the accuracy of respondents' memories. This creates uncertainty over whether the amount and seriousness of crimes is over-reported or under-reported. There is also the tendency for crimes that happened over a longer period to be "telescoped" by the victim into the reporting period of the study (Rutter & Giller, 1983).

The research literature reflects a growing tone of scepticism and caution among those exploring the possible uses and limitations of crime statistics. Following through on Rutter and Giller's statement, to what use might this scepticism be put? For one thing, it would be extremely useful for anyone generating or relying on statistics to heed caution about how easy it is to elicit a "trend" from data. This means subjecting such trends to far more rigorous internal and external verification before promoting the possible "trend" as fact (Sheley & Smith, 1988).

Another constructive use of the scepticism around statistics would be for anyone generating or using statistics to remain very aware of just what statistics can and cannot show. In particular, it is vital to keep in mind that statistics do not provide a definitive picture of crime, no matter what method is used. What statistics can do is suggest patterns of crime and what information requires further exploration. Also, what is not being counted in the statistics can sometimes provide more information about the extent of crime than the statistics.

Awareness about the methods of collecting crime statistics and the bias inherent in these methods is important to the development and implementation of CPSD-type programs for several reasons. First, one needs to have a sense of what the crime problem is before one can design a targeted CPSD program to address the issue. Second, research studying the relationship between crime and social and economic factors is done using official statistics, which would colour what we know or believe about the relationship. Therefore, it is important that we are aware of the issues around crime statistics and that we examine new research approaches.

### **Changes in Research Approaches**

Because the aim of CPSD is to prevent crime, having information about just what the connections between risk factors and criminal behaviour are is particularly important. It is difficult to design a targeted, long term prevention program to reduce the risk of criminal behaviour when you don't know how or why certain risk factors can contribute to criminal behaviour in the first place. The research into the risk factors associated with crime will have to provide information which is relevant to initiatives aimed at changing the quality of peoples' lives over the long term. Three of the main shifts that need to take place in connection

with research and CPSD concern longitudinal studies, data bases and understanding more about the role and impact of public opinion on crime prevention.

### **More longitudinal studies.**

One of the major obstacles to dealing effectively with crime is insufficient knowledge about the history and development of persistent offenders. There is a need to know what kinds of children become persistent and serious offenders, why people begin committing crimes, why they continue to engage in crime, why their crimes change in frequency and seriousness and why they stop (Farrington, 1989). There is a need to know the effects of early preventive measures on the process of how a child becomes delinquent and a career criminal as an adult. So far, the best method of investigation that can provide the answers to these questions is the longitudinal study. A longitudinal study takes a sample of people and follows them from childhood, through adolescence into adulthood. There is a pressing need to conduct longitudinal studies to trace the development of delinquency and crime in the Canadian population in order to find out if the kinds of risk factors identified in foreign studies are also valid in Canada.

There is also a need to conduct more social prevention experiments in Canada. This could involve building on the research already started through the Perry Preschool project. For example, one experiment might be to offer free daycare to at-risk children, providing an intellectually stimulating environment, consistent and loving caretakers, positive parental role models and training in basic social skills (Farrington, 1989). A lengthy, 20-year project is not needed. The progress of the children could be followed into school at age six to eight, when any improvements in school behaviour as a result of being in the program could be seen. The daycare program could be backed up with parent training and a home-school program designed to improve school attendance, academic achievement and constructive use of leisure time. This

kind of longitudinal study which includes this type of prevention experiment would be an important step toward implementing effective CPSD initiatives.

### **Data bases.**

There is a need to develop more comprehensive international and national data bases, which would make it easier for those working locally on crime prevention projects to get information about successful prevention strategies and activities already underway elsewhere. The 1989 European and North-American Conference recommended that an international data base be created that local officials in all countries could draw on for anti-crime and prevention models (European and North-American Conference, 1989). In 1993, the House of Commons Standing Committee looking into developing a national crime prevention strategy for Canada recommended that changes be made to the way criminal justice statistics are compiled. They noted that the current system of collecting crime and crime prevention information is inadequate because it does not provide detailed information that allows useful evaluation of crime prevention programs or community-based policies (Standing Committee, 1993). The Standing Committee identified a need for a more comprehensive program of surveys which provide information that would help with crime prevention policy and program development. It envisioned the establishment of a national crime prevention centre responsible for gathering, analyzing and distributing information about crime, crime trends and crime prevention (Standing Committee, 1993).

### **Understanding public opinion and knowledge.**

Another major shift that needs to take place concerning research on CPSD is understanding the impact public knowledge and opinion have on the kinds of criminal justice and crime prevention policies and strategies used. Opinion polls on the seriousness of crimes and their punishments might arouse public

and media interest, but they do not provide a clear idea of what the public might think about the less dramatic alternatives such as diversion programs, electronic monitoring of convicted offenders, the treatment of inmates and community-based policing and prevention efforts (Roberts, 1992).

Polls have also provided inadequate information for researchers because their questions tend to deal with criminal justice and prevention issues the same way as when seeking consumer preferences information. The consumer preference approach tends to underestimate the public's ability to understand and respond to complex questions. However, the analysis and results of a Canadian Sentencing Commission survey indicated that respondents understood the more complex questions quite clearly. Surveys of public opinion and knowledge are more likely to elicit valuable information about public attitudes to crime and crime prevention by making greater use of open-ended questions rather than providing a limited number of alternatives to choose from (Roberts, 1992). In order to strengthen public knowledge about criminal justice and crime prevention issues, there needs to be more research information about the public's awareness of these subjects and how it develops this awareness.

## **Re-evaluating Evaluation Processes and Standards**

Evaluation plays a role in decisions about whether to fund most types of social development programs. Funders call for evaluations to justify their spending. Program providers conduct evaluations to assess what needs to be added, taken out, expanded or modified, to provide the rationale for implementing or not implementing a program and to promote the validity of a program by showing what has been done, monitoring it, and comparing it to other programs (Wolfe, 1994). CPSD-type programs, because they are targeted, coordinated and long term in nature, tend to be difficult to evaluate using standard, quantitative methods of evaluation. Some flexibility in evaluation styles will be necessary. This section will briefly discuss evaluation methods and make suggestions for modifications.

There are two basic reasons to evaluate: to examine the process of a program or to examine program outcome (King, Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1987). A process evaluation involves the monitoring of a program with respect to its administration and accounting and provides information on the program planning process, organizational structure and the types and levels of program activities (Bennett & Lavrakas, 1989). An outcome evaluation, on the other hand, tests for changes or impacts due to the program.

Cost-benefit analysis is one type of outcome evaluation. People often want to hear cost-benefit information such as how much money is saved for every dollar spent on the program, particularly with respect to CPSD-type programs. However, conducting a cost-benefit analysis requires complex measurement of the benefits of the program and the costs of not providing the program, such as the costs of crime. This type of evaluation of CPSD programs is very complicated for two reasons: 1) the social and economic costs of crime are very difficult to measure, and 2) cost-benefit analysis is not practical for most

CPSD programs at the local level. Both of these problems with cost-benefit analysis will be discussed in detail.

In conducting an evaluation of CPSD programs, it is important to recognize that the costs resulting from crime are both economic and social. Economic costs are the monetary consequences of crime, such as the costs of policing, the courts, corrections, medical costs and the loss of property and income. Social costs are the non-monetary results of crime, which are often much harder to measure but whose impact can prove just as devastating. (Please see Chapter 1 of the Resource Guide for more detailed information on the social and economic costs of crime). Costs such as fear, shock, grief and anger are difficult to measure and even more difficult for CPSD programmers to illustrate that a particular program resulted in a reduction in these costs.

The procedures involved in cost-benefit analysis are quite complicated. The basic steps of cost-benefit analysis are to identify the benefits of a program, place a value on those benefits (usually monetary value), add the costs associated with the program and compare the benefits to the costs (Meier, 1982). In spite of the often heard request for cost-benefit data with respect to social development programs, the procedure is controversial and problematic in this context. Particularly given the fact that most CPSD programs are implemented at the local level, the usefulness of cost-benefit analysis is limited. Its limitations include that it requires the assignment of value to immeasurables; the assignment of value necessarily injects bias; it is more suited to programs with a short-term focus; it ignores the income distribution (Meier, 1982); there is a need to articulate one clear objective, and; it ignores the process and only provides a "go/no go" policy decision (Datta, 1976). Most CPSD programs are initiated and administered at the local level so that they are responsive to community needs. The extensive requirements of cost-benefit analysis in terms

of sample size, sophisticated knowledge of economics and statistics and the financial resources to support such an evaluation call into question its applicability for most CPSD programs.

Given these above noted limitations of outcome evaluations for CPSD-type programs, many have suggested that process or implementation evaluations may be more appropriate. Once the decision is made to do a process evaluation, it can either be a documentation evaluation, which outlines the fixed, crucial features of the program, or a program monitoring evaluation, which reflects the evolving nature of the program (King et al., 1987). Then, one has to decide whether to perform a quantitative evaluation or a qualitative evaluation. Qualitative evaluations are more suitable if the programmer or evaluator believes that reality does not exist apart from someone's perception of it, so that the evaluation merely describes what the evaluator sees (King et al., 1987). Qualitative evaluations rely extensively on data collection methods such as interviews and participant observations and usually relate what is found, as opposed to comparing what was to what should have been.

Qualitative process evaluations will likely be the most appropriate type of evaluation for CPSD-type programs. However, funders and managers will have to become convinced of the utility of this type of evaluation and continue to support programs which propose this type of evaluation. Other suggestions with respect to the evaluation of CPSD-type programs include that evaluators examine how the program was experienced by participants (Zinberg, 1976); that evaluations not be conducted solely for the purpose of justifying funding as a program nears the end of the fiscal year (Abt, Capron & Rivlin, 1976); that evaluations focus on what is happening that was intended, what is happening that was not intended and what is happening that was not anticipated, and; that evaluations be planned after agreement by the

programmers, the funders and the evaluators about the purpose and nature of the evaluation (Deutscher, 1976).

### **Risk Factors and Crime**

"Causes" is not the most accurate word to use when talking about factors commonly associated with delinquent behaviour. A cause-and-effect mind-set makes it too easy to assume that the existence of a risk factor inevitably leads to criminality. Besides raising significant ethical concerns, any CPSD program designed on the basis of such a simplistic assumption would be doomed to fail from the start.

The evolution of a connection between actual criminal behaviour and an individual's life experiences and social and economic circumstances is far too complex and unpredictable to be attributed simply to cause-and-effect. Poverty does not cause crime--if it did, then it would be women, not men, making up 98% of the prison population in Canada. If poverty caused crime, white collar crime such as embezzlement or computer fraud and environmental crimes by industry would be non-existent. Nonetheless, poverty during childhood is a recurring theme in the stories of so many persistent offenders that it is considered a significant risk factor, especially when in conjunction with other stress factors in a person's life, such as violence unemployment or substance abuse. While social factors can combine to increase the likelihood of a person becoming delinquent, experience has also shown that being poor, a single mother and living in a disadvantaged area, for instance, still does not inevitably produce delinquent behaviour.

Research into risk factors and anti-social behaviour in children also emphasizes the importance of making a distinction between influence and cause. While behaviour problems in early childhood may influence future antisocial behaviour, such early behaviour problems do not necessarily cause later criminality (Loeber, 1991). The route from disadvantaged child to delinquent youth is not a straight line.

The complex problems of at-risk youth, for instance, have been described as "...a circle of antisocial and self-destructive behaviour. Young persons may enter the circle at any point, by using drugs, for example, or by committing petty crimes or dropping out of school. If they persist in such activity, however--if they remain on the circle--some or all of the other types of antisocial behaviour will begin to appear in their lives" (Kolberg, 1987, pp. 96-97).

Such descriptions not only emphasize the non-linear process of becoming delinquent, but the need for an equally non-linear and long term approach to crime prevention. How clearly this non-linear relationship between risk factors and potential criminality is understood and applied at the policy development and program planning stages will determine how effective the implementation of CPSD initiatives will be in the long run.

The term "at risk," whether pertaining to individuals, groups or communities, is a key definition in research into the effects of underlying social factors and criminal behaviour. Having a clear understanding of what at risk means and why it happens is essential to the CPSD process of implementing targeted programs which effectively address the underlying factors contributing to crime (Mayor's Task Force, 1992). One municipal task force on safer cities defines "at risk" as:

Individuals or groups who are at greater risk of becoming involved in crime because of early life experiences, family characteristics, social factors in their community, or lack of positive opportunities. (Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities, 1992, p. 8)

"At risk" is frequently used in reference to a specific group, as in at-risk parents, at-risk youth and at-risk population. For example, Kolberg (1987, p. 95) uses the term "at-risk youth" to describe young people who are at risk of being early school leavers and unemployed and who he sees as being "very much at risk of leading lives marred by crime and violence." Loeber (1991) examines risk factors in the

development of anti-social behaviour in children and defines risk as having two elements: exposure and influence. A child must be exposed to the risk factor, and such exposure must influence the child's likelihood of engaging in anti-social behaviour (Loeber, 1991).

There is no one factor which is more likely than any other to contribute to crime. So, while we discuss each risk factor individually, it is vital to keep in mind that it is the combination of factors which may generate criminal behaviour. Thinking of risk factors in combinations can help with breaking away from the compartmentalized approach to crime prevention and social development programs. Once again, it must be emphasized that successful CPSD initiatives will more likely be those specifically designed and collaboratively implemented to meet the multi-faceted needs of at-risk groups and individuals.

There are many factors which can contribute to criminal behaviour, ranging from age and gender to diet and television violence. The Literature Review will examine many of the risk factors which are so often discussed in connection with CPSD: age, gender, race, poverty, unemployment, family violence, parenting, negative peer influences, difficulty in school and substance abuse. The dynamics of multiple risk factors will also be further explored.

## **Age**

Statistics show that certain age groups are more prone to criminal behaviour. In 1992, young people 12 - 17 years were accused in 13% of all violent incidents and 27% of all property incidents (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1994, p. 13). Meanwhile, adults 18 - 34 years were accused in 55% of all violent incidents (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1994, p. 13). It is important to consider these statistics in the context of the proportion of the population each age group represents. In 1992, youths 12 - 17 years constituted 8% of the population, while adults 18 - 34 years made up 27% of the population (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1994, p. 13). It is clear that both groups are disproportionately involved in crime. The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (1994) points out that this disproportionate involvement is particularly pronounced in terms of youth involvement in property crime and young adult involvement in violent crime.

Some research has been conducted into population proportions and crime. A study conducted by Sheley and Smith (1988, p. 238) examined the relationship between the baby boomers entering the crime-prone years and crime rates, hypothesizing that "crime rates can be expected to rise as the size of younger age groups increases relative to the size of other age groups." Empirical evidence attributes 25% of the increase in crime during the 1960s to a rise in the proportion of young people in America (Sagi & Wellford, 1968, cited in Sheley & Smith, 1988). It is evidence such as this which bolsters the age composition hypothesis regarding crime rates. However, the corresponding hypothesis that crime rates would decrease as the baby boomers moved out of the crime prone years has not been witnessed in the statistics to the degree expected; thus, some researchers have begun to examine age composition within the larger social context (Sheley & Smith, 1988, p. 239).

Age as a risk factor in connection with crime cannot be looked at in isolation. How age relates to crime must be looked at in the context in which youth crime occurs. This context can include the effects of poverty, racism, woman abuse and family violence, parental and community neglect and problems with school. Children and youths are at particular risk because the earlier delinquent behaviour starts and the longer it continues, the greater the risk of persistent offending in adulthood. Media distortion of youth crime and the degree of public concern about youth crime also contribute to the context in which age is related to crime. Methods for detecting and reporting youth crime have improved, so the actual level of youth crime may not have increased to the same degree that the statistics suggest (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1994).

Age will continue to be considered a significant risk factor associated with crime. However, the effect social development based prevention may have is to emphasize the importance of broadening the public's perception of the age-crime connection to automatically include young children. The tendency so far has been to equate the age factor with what official statistics indicate about crime committed by youths between 12 and 17 years. Perhaps more important than the relationship between age and crime is the relationship between age of onset of criminal behaviour and persistent offending. Indeed, Rutter and Giller (1983) report that most adult offenders began their criminal careers in childhood and the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (1993) points out that many persistent delinquents begin their involvement in anti-social activities before adolescence. Further, studies show that 80% of crimes are carried out by about 20% of offenders, most of whom are repeat or persistent offenders (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 8). Thus, research into what generates persistent offending has particularly emphasized the need to focus crime prevention efforts on early childhood.

This means that CPSD efforts with the best chance of success in the long term will be those aimed at altering the early childhood experiences which increase the risks of criminal behaviour later in life. The importance to crime prevention of the proper care of children early in life was emphasized in presentations to a federal government Standing Committee responsible for developing a crime prevention strategy:

...if we don't do it right in the earliest years--and I put that figure at three years; other people put it at two or five--when affection and the capacity to respond to affection are learned, then a vigorous system of trying later on to stamp on social values that are crime-free is doomed. You have to have people who are nurtured to do that. (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 10)

## **Gender**

It is almost impossible to talk about age as a risk factor without referring to the role that being male or female plays as a risk factor associated with crime. It has long been recognized that males are much more likely to be involved in crime than females (Chilton & Datesman, 1987). For example, in 1990, only 18% of all youths charged in criminal incidents were female (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 1). United States statistics indicate that women commit far fewer crimes than men--only 1 woman is arrested for every five arrested men (Bennett, 1989). Males are also over-represented in the official crime statistics in proportion to Canada's overall population. While males comprise only 49% of the population, they consistently account for a significant majority of both the adults and youths accused of property and violent crimes. Although the number of females being charged is increasing, males still account for most of the adults and youths charged with property and violent offences. Consider the following statistics:

! Female youths (12 to 17 years old) were charged at a rate of 22 per 1,000 of the female youth population in 1990, compared with a rate of 97 per 1,000 for males (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 1).

! The number of females charged increased by 29% between 1986 and 1990, compared to a 14% increase for males; the female youth population in Canada decreased by 2% during that time and the male youth population by 3% (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 1).

! 48% of the charges against female youths were for theft under \$1,000, with 86% of these being for shoplifting (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 4).

! The second largest number of charges against female youths were for minor assault (9%) (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 4).

! Minor assault charges against female youths increased by 128% (from 986 to 2,211 charges) between 1986-1990, compared to a 78% increase for male youths (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, pp. 4-5).

! Female youths constitute only a small proportion of the caseload in youth court (16%) (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 6).

! The largest number of females appearing before youth court were generally younger (16 years) than the male youths (17) (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 6).

! The proportion of 16- and 17-year-old females appearing in youth court has decreased since 1986, while the proportion of 12 to 15 year-olds has increased (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992, p. 7).

While demographic information about age and gender is comparatively easy to find, equally rigorously documented information about why being male constitutes a basic risk factor associated with crime is far less copious. However, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) (1984, p. 16) points out that:

Crime usually involves aggression, risk-taking, and predatory behaviour. Although there is some overlap between the sexes on aggressivity, research indicates that males are more aggressive than females due to both biological differences and the influences of social learning.

As with age, gender cannot be assessed as a risk factor in isolation from other circumstances that may exist in the lives of children and young adults. Indeed a review of past and present delinquency literature revealed that the risk factors are the same for male and female delinquency (Simourd & Andrews, 1994). Pinpointing the "influences of social learning" is impossible without considering the risk factors of woman abuse and family violence, for instance. Nor is it possible to talk about gender without looking at the impact of poverty and racism. Getting away from looking at risk factors in isolation is even more pressing for CPSD, where the effectiveness of its initiatives relies so heavily on being targeted to meet the specific needs of certain vulnerable at-risk groups.

The gender gap in criminal offending is narrowing; in Canada the increase in the number of female youths charged has been greater than that for males since 1986 (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1992). In the United States between 1970 and 1986, the imprisonment rate for women quadrupled to 20 per 100,000 (Bennett, 1989, p. 23). Similarly, the CCJA (1989, p. 376) reports that arrest proportions by gender among young people 14 to 17 years of age in England and the United States have narrowed significantly; only 1 girl was arrested for every 11 boys in 1957 while in 1977 1 girl was arrested for every 5 boys. The focus of more contemporary research has been on examining the increased propensity of females to commit crimes (Chilton & Datesman, 1987). The CCJA attributes this narrowing gap between the sexes to changes in child socialization and police practices. Meanwhile, Bennett asserts that:

The woman of the future will find herself living in a world of increasing *singleness*; escalating *feminization of poverty*; and burgeoning access to *new work opportunities* (emphasis in

original). These three central trends will have far-reaching repercussions on female crime patterns. (1989, p. 23)

Gregory looks to societal factors to explain gender differences in criminality. According to Gregory, "the more that we know about the informal mechanisms of control, whether they occur within the family, education, medicine, employment or the media, the more we will be able to say about why it is men rather than women who turn to crime" (1986, pp. 327-328). However, a study conducted by Simourd and Andrews (1994) found that the risk factors associated with male delinquency are also associated with female delinquency to the same degree. Chilton and Datesman reached a similar conclusion in their study of the impact of gender and race on criminality. When looking at the relationship between gender and crime, it is important to recognize that:

While gender differences provide important clues in the search for a better understanding of crime, theories based on gender alone will be incomplete - if not misleading. It is necessary that theories of crime be able to take gender into account, but it is not sufficient. A general example for men's and women's crime rates must incorporate gender, race, age, and economic status. (Chilton & Datesman, 1987, p. 168)

## **Race**

Members of ethnic minorities are over-represented in correctional facilities (Reiner, 1989). This over-representation has been central to the linkage of race and criminality (Reiner, 1989; LaPrairie, 1992). In the United States, black people represent 11% of the population; however, 61% of individuals arrested for robbery and 55% of individuals arrested for homicide are black (Sampson, 1987). A very similar picture exists in Canada, where the number of incarcerated aboriginals is disproportionately high (CCJA, 1989; LaPrairie, 1992). Indeed, in 1989, 45% of the women admitted to provincial institutions were aboriginal (LaPrairie, 1992).

According to the CCJA (1989), disproportionate aboriginal involvement in the criminal justice system is due, in part, to the poor family and social conditions in which many aboriginals live; health care is inadequate and crime prevention programs are scarce. The CCJA (1989) concludes that the disjuncture between aboriginal and non-aboriginal values and beliefs increases the risk of aboriginal involvement in the criminal justice system. Reiner (1989, p. 18) attributes the over-representation of racial minorities in the criminal justice system to "societal and institutionalized racism." According to Reiner, racism "forces discriminated-against ethnic minorities to acquire those characteristics upon which 'normal' policing bears down most heavily, and it is the policing element which is crucial for feeding disproportionate numbers of black people into the system" (1989, p. 18). Thus, talking about race or ethnicity as a factor associated with crime means making it a discussion about racism. Being of a particular race or ethnic group is not the problem. The problem is the fundamentally racist society within which non-white races and ethnic groups are living. Many of society's major institutions which have considerable influence on the quality of people's lives--the law, education, governments, media--were originally set up with structures and attitudes that

would ensure that non-white races and ethnic groups were excluded. Most of these institutions have yet to undergo the kind of overhaul or total rebuilding needed to get rid of the racism which continues to keep so many people at an economic and social disadvantage. This disadvantage, in turn, greatly increases the risk of turning to crime as a way of coping.

The race/ethnic factors associated with crime are, in reality, the consequences of people being kept at a social and economic disadvantage. In Canada, Aboriginal people are grossly over-represented in prisons, are far more likely to be under-educated and under-trained and, consequently, are more likely to be chronically unemployed. The consequences of being exposed to the direct and indirect violence and neglect of a racist society include anger, outrage and despair. The incidence of family violence, child abuse and neglect and substance abuse remains epidemic in some Aboriginal communities.

As startling a link as the statistics seem to make between being non-white and the risk of becoming involved in crime, nowhere is it more important for researchers to avoid making the simplistic correlations which lead to generalizations and stereotyping. This concern is surfacing more frequently than it used to in the more recent literature as researchers stress the need to focus more theoretical attention on structural factors, rather than individual and subcultural factors. For example, Sampson (1987) stresses the importance of looking at such structural factors as the level of unemployment among black males.

A main objective of CPSD initiatives is to improve the quality of life of those seen to be most at risk of becoming involved in crime. This means that long term crime prevention programs targeted at those at a disadvantage because of racism must reflect the fact that the root of the problem is the racism, not the race. The subject of race and criminal justice constitutes one of the more controversial and hotly debated

issues among researchers and others involved with the politics of crime, policing, crime prevention and social control.

## **Poverty**

Poverty is often cited as a factor associated with crime, although the link between poverty and crime has not been consistently established by research (Hartnagel & Lee, 1990). The three basic definitions of poverty in current use are absolute poverty, relative poverty and exclusionary poverty. Absolute poverty refers to those without the most basic resources for survival such as food, shelter and clothing. Starvation is the basic measure in this definition (Ryerse, 1990). For families living in absolute poverty, the sole daily preoccupation is the struggle to find enough food and water to survive another day. The tendency has been to maintain that absolute poverty is exceedingly rare in a country like Canada. Yet, the number of people living on the streets is growing and while it is known that people are dying from starvation and inadequate shelter, especially during Canadian winters, the number of these casualties remains unknown (Ryerse, 1990).

Relative poverty refers to families and individuals whose income and other resource levels are scant in comparison to the majority of people in Canadian society (Ryerse, 1990). The number of people living in relative poverty fluctuates with economic conditions. The measure of relative poverty is the number of people living below a certain percentage of the average income level of the rest of the country. This arbitrary measure can mask the real circumstances in which many "poor" people are living, because income is not an accurate indicator of quality of life. While low income may not result in starvation, it can negatively affect development and future opportunities, barring impoverished persons from full participation in society (Ryerse, 1990).

Exclusionary poverty refers to persons excluded from our society's basic living requirements and opportunities (Ryerse, 1990). Exclusionary poverty more accurately depicts the quality of life of people living in poverty because it transcends simple economic considerations. Rather, exclusionary poverty looks at an individual's access to transportation, opportunities for socializing and participating in community life, health care and quality of diet (Ryerse, 1990).

Statistics Canada defines a family spending on average more than 57% of its income on food, clothing and shelter as "poor" (Lempriere, 1992). This Low-Income Cut-Off measure is the most widely accepted relative poverty measure and it varies by family size, by region and by rural or urban location (Lempriere, 1992). Low-Income Cut-Off figures are also called "poverty lines" in many reports, even though Statistics Canada no longer calculates poverty lines.

Another often-used method of measuring the poverty level calculates the incidence of poverty in a specific year. However, this gives an incomplete picture of poverty in Canada because it looks only at a few characteristics of poverty over a short time. The Economic Council of Canada carried out a study to find out about the poverty that families experience over time, which is a perspective usually concealed by traditional methods of measuring poverty (Lempriere, 1992).

Despite the fact that research has failed to demonstrate an impoverished individual's greater likelihood of criminal involvement and that white collar crime proves contradictory, poverty continues to be linked to crime (Short, Jr., 1991). Even studies using unemployment or the poverty line as measures show inconsistent results (Hartnagel & Lee, 1990). Further, while researchers take increasing care to warn against simplistic correlations which equate poverty with crime, there is considerable consensus that living in poverty greatly increases the risk of criminality. The relationship between poverty and criminal behaviour

is complex and unpredictable. There are too many variables involved and such a variety of different ways individuals cope with poverty that it is not possible to talk of poverty strictly in terms of being a risk factor.

However, history has shown that many of the conditions arising from living in poverty can increase the risk of becoming involved in crime, especially for children. For example, inadequate housing is often associated with poverty and crime. Inadequate housing may be defined as "accommodation that does not meet basic physical standards of safety, sanitation, maintenance, privacy, access, adequacy and/or affordability" (Larrie Taylor Architect Ltd., 1990, p. 1). The Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities' Housing and Urban Development Committee (1991) asserts that inadequate housing contributes to social problems including substance abuse, family violence and prostitution. Further, one study found that residents of public housing developments in the United States are more vulnerable to criminal victimization than other Americans (Huth, 1981). Five physical characteristics of public housing developments which may contribute to crime have been identified in the literature:

(1) restricted surveillance of certain areas within the projects; (2) insufficient "target hardening" measures to prevent burglaries; (3) lack of controlled access to project grounds and buildings; (4) the absence of controlled pedestrian circulation routes; and (5) insecure public transportation waiting facilities. (Huth, 1981, p. 597)

Other conditions associated with poverty include poor nutrition and health, chronic stress, problems with school, child abuse and neglect, family violence, inconsistent or poor parenting skills, psychological disorders and early childhood behavioural disorders. Research has demonstrated a relationship between these risk factors and crime; many of these factors will be discussed in other sections of this review.

That those living in poverty continue to be over-represented in Canada's crime statistics tends to say more about the criminal justice system and how it keeps official statistics than it does about any link

between poverty and crime. Juvenile delinquency, for instance, is not exclusive to poor or working class youth. Self-report studies of adolescents indicate that at least 90% of high school boys engage in some delinquent behaviour (Ryerse, 1990). What makes it easier for people to believe that impoverished youth are responsible for the youth crime problem is the fact that the majority of incarcerated young persons are from poor families. However, this only represents those caught and incarcerated, not the overall youth population that commits crime (Ryerse, 1990).

Why youths from low income families make up a larger proportion of the statistics on juvenile offenders is still the subject of much debate. Reasons given range from the criminal justice system's inherent inequity and discrimination against the disadvantaged to an inevitable, cumulative effect of various stresses that result from living in poverty. Also, middle and upper income youth simply have access to more money and parental supervision. A youth from a low income family may have less parental supervision because of the time constraints experienced by a working single parent. This youth is also less likely to have the money to participate in school sports or community recreation activities, so would be more susceptible to dropping out of school. Poor families also experience greater difficulty raising children, as low income often deprives the family of many opportunities and necessities associated with basic child rearing (Ryerse, 1990).

Continued economic hardship, combined with health problems resulting from malnourishment and chronic stress, puts strains on family relationships that may lead to family breakdown. This, in turn, can further add to stress from the difficulties of a sole parent trying to raise children. Unsatisfactory living conditions are particularly stressful during pregnancy. Fetal development is negatively affected by maternal

stress. Such stress has shown to be closely related to ill-health, neurological problems, slow development and behaviour disturbances in children (Ryerse, 1990).

The CPSD programs with the greatest chance of making a difference in the long run will be those which target those most vulnerable to living in poverty and the multitude of problems arising from it. This will mean designing initiatives specifically for those experiencing such problems as poor nutrition and health, child abuse and neglect, woman abuse and family violence, poor parenting skills, inadequate and unsafe housing and poor school performance. Successful CPSD programs must also recognize that poverty is not a one-size-fits-all phenomenon. While some Canadians experience long-term poverty, others move out of poverty after a relatively short period. This has considerable implications for the planning and development of CPSD programs. The social and economic difficulties faced by people with inadequate income year after year are different from those experienced by people who are poor for a year or two. An effective CPSD program must address the different needs of these two groups (Lempriere, 1992). Finally, successful CPSD programs must also challenge the stigma and blame society has traditionally placed on those living in poverty.

## **Unemployment**

Unemployment is believed to be a risk factor associated with delinquency (Task Force on Crime Prevention, 1993; CCJA, 1989; Waller & Weiler, 1984). According to Waller (1991, cited in Task Force on Crime Prevention, 1993, p. 84), youth at risk are more inclined towards criminal activity when they are unemployed. Further, Kolberg (1987, p. 95) asserts that "the sense of frustration and despair that joblessness can provoke finds expression in a variety of ways: theft, substance and alcohol abuse, and spouse and child abuse." Meanwhile, Hiew and MacDonald (1986, p. 292) claim that "unemployment in all its forms is a major stressor linked to physical and mental illness, to alcoholism and higher crime rates, and to family violence." Further, the Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities' Young Adult Employment Committee (1992) found that long-term unemployment among young adults can permanently impair their ability to become responsible citizens. Studies on the relationship between unemployment and crime show inconsistent results, although more often than not a positive relationship has been found (Juvenile Crime Prevention Project, 1984). Indeed, studies have found that massive layoffs witness corresponding increases in crime rates (Koeppel, 1989; Midwest Center for Labor Research, 1990; both cited in Task Force on Crime Prevention, 1993). The Alberta Solicitor General reports that a high number of young admissions to correctional facilities are unemployed (cited in Mayor's Task Force, 1992). Further, a study on the relationship between unemployment and repeat offending found that one year after release from federal penitentiaries, unemployed men were more likely to re-offend than employed men, 42 percent versus 29 percent respectively (Waller & Weiler, 1984, p. 21). The CCSD (1984, p. 29) points out that "there is evidence that individuals confronted with failure in the school setting combined with an unstable job record are susceptible to continued involvement in crime."

## **Family Violence**

As the long held public silence around family violence gradually lifts, the effects of woman abuse and child abuse on a youngster's risk of becoming involved in crime become more apparent. Violence against women within the family has a negative impact on both women and children. One Canadian study found that over 50% of violent young offenders witnessed wife abuse in the home. Another study found that men who grew up witnessing violence in the home were 1000 times more likely to become wife abusers later in life than men who did not (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 11). As one researcher into the dynamics of family violence put it:

Childhood abuse breeds abusers... (sic) abused children are three times more likely than the rest of the population to become violent adults. Physically abused children are five times as likely to be violent as adults towards a family member. Sexually abused children are eight times as likely to be sexually violent as adults towards a family member. And severity of childhood abuse does not predict adult problems... (sic) It's not how badly you were beaten. It's whether you were beaten. (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 10)

A federal government Standing Committee responsible for developing a crime prevention strategy for Canada acknowledged that violence against women "poses significant risks to the community" (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 11).

Sexual abuse also plays a part in increasing the odds of a child later committing sexual offences. A Manitoba study found that over 90% of the 35 young sex offenders studied were sexually abused as children. When they began committing offences the boys were, on average, aged twelve and a half. Over 70 children were abused by the 35 boys in 750 incidents by the time the boys reached age 14 (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 10).

The available statistics seem to suggest that child abuse, and especially child neglect, occurs disproportionately among those living in poverty. However, considerable controversy exists over the association between poverty and child abuse. Some maintain that the material and emotional deprivation inherent in poverty increases the risk of child physical abuse and neglect. However, others suggest that the high statistical correlation between child abuse and poverty is due to the lack of privacy in the lives of low-income families. They say research over-uses reports from the public agencies which are used extensively by those living in poverty. The reason middle and upper income people are under-represented in the statistics may be because they are better able to maintain their privacy (Ryerse, 1990). The elements of this controversy could also provide a clue as to why the poor, the young and the non-white are over-represented in the crime statistics.

## **Parenting**

Most of the information about the influence of parenting on criminal behaviour comes from studies about parenting and delinquency. Lack of parental supervision, parental rejection and lack of parent-child involvement are consistent indicators of delinquent behaviour. Parenting that features inconsistent, incoherent, overly punitive or too permissive methods of discipline also increase the risk of delinquency, but to a lesser extent. Parental criminality, marital discord, having a single parent and parental health were even less influential, with the least powerful correlate to delinquent behaviour being family size (Goetting, 1992).

Delinquency is by no means the only outcome of ineffective parenting. If it was, criminal behaviour would be seen as a norm not an exception. There are other significant negative effects that are hard to measure. They range from anxiety, fear, anger, hate, apathy and depression to paranoia, multiple

personalities and woman abuse (Goetting, 1992). However, most of the existing research into the factors contributing to delinquency and adult criminal behaviour carry a similar and important message: parenting is crucial. The way children are treated can have serious repercussions, not only for children, but for parents and the larger society (Goetting, 1992).

Some researchers portray children as an oppressed minority. Oppression is defined as the abuse of authority. The oppression of children continues from one generation to the next because its damage is not recognized. Recognizing childhood oppression and abuse is an essential step toward being able to solve the problems resulting from oppressive parenting (Goetting, 1992).

What the research has to say about the importance of parenting indicates that an important focus of long term prevention strategies must include providing support for families, especially for those family members primarily responsible for the care of children. At the community level, this support for family members can take in a wide range of programs and initiatives. However, the following are six basic approaches to supporting families suggested to those intending to implement CPSD initiatives:

! *Increasing resources for families.* Examples include community resources such as recreation, employee and family assistance, co-operative efforts such as collective kitchens and cooperative child care, or community economic development, government programs such as recreation and transportation subsidies and tax exemptions.

! *Assisting families that are vulnerable.* This may include support groups and daycare programs. In addition, subsidies for food, clothing and transportation may be provided.

! *Improving the ability of families to meet their responsibilities.* Programs may include parenting programs and family counselling. Also, comprehensive medical insurance plans and supportive work environments with provisions for family leave and flextime.

! *Providing complementary services for families.* Examples include care for children, the elderly and infirm, school meal programs and developmental programs for at-risk children.

! *Assisting families going through major changes.* Examples include programs such as marriage preparation, pre-natal counselling, support groups for single parents, mediation and counselling for broken families.

! *Strengthening community and neighbourhood supports.* For example, recreational facilities and programs, family resource centres, support groups and family advocacy work (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1994).

### **Negative Peer Influences**

Negative peer influences are often cited as a factor associated with delinquency. Most researchers support a connection between delinquent peers and delinquent behaviour (Brownfield & Thompson, 1991). The most popular interpretation of the relationship between parenting, peers and delinquency is that ineffective parenting encourages youth to associate with peers who teach them the attitudes that lead to their becoming involved in criminal behaviour. Most theorists agree that negative peer influence in itself is a primary factor associated with delinquent behaviour and that parenting has only an indirect influence (Simons, Wu & Conger, 1992). Attempts to understand just how peer influence relates to delinquency and how, if at all, peer relationships between delinquent and non-delinquent youth differ have resulted in three particularly widespread ideas.

One such idea is called the "peer influence perspective" (Simons et al., 1992, p. 1). According to this perspective, young people are influenced by the values and behaviour of their peers. It is inadequate parental supervision and discipline which allows adolescents to associate with friends who have a negative influence on them. The peer influence perspective holds that delinquents do not really differ in the number or quality of peer relationships. What is different are the types of behaviours which are encouraged and rewarded within those peer relationships (Simons et al., 1992).

A second theory about how peer influence contributes to delinquency holds a considerably different view from that of the peer influence perspective. The "control perspective" holds that ineffective parenting causes some adolescents to be impulsive, self-absorbed and daring, so they are more attracted to activities that involve delinquent behaviour. The control perspective also contends that the quality of friendships among delinquents is different from those of non-delinquents. Youths who are impulsive, daring and insensitive are enjoyable companions but they are unreliable and untrustworthy. So, the theorists maintain there is less trust and support among delinquent youths than non-delinquent (Simons et al., 1992).

A third theory regarding the relationships that exist between parenting, negative peer influence and delinquency has been seen to offer a compromise to the contrasting contentions of the other two theories. This theory maintains that the development of delinquent behaviour differs for early and late starters. Early starters are youths who take part in delinquent acts before age 14 and who are seen as having poor social skills because of ineffective parenting. They are aggressive and uncooperative with others, which tends to leave them rejected by their law-abiding peers. Thus, they are driven to associate with deviant peers (Simons et al., 1992). Late starters, on the other hand, do not engage in delinquent behaviour until after age 14. These adolescents have better social skills. They experiment with delinquency in late adolescence

when rebellious behaviour is common. Their delinquent behaviour is attributed to negative peer pressure. These youth are seen to have experienced a deterioration in parenting quality due to family crises such as divorce or unemployment. This deterioration facilitates these youths' association with deviant peers and their experimental delinquency (Simons et al., 1992).

According to this model, early starters are at risk of career criminality, whereas late starters tend to grow out of criminal behaviour fairly quickly. The early starter idea is compatible with the control theory because it maintains that ineffective parenting fosters antisocial behaviour and that the relationships with delinquent peers tend to be turbulent and aggressive. The late starter theory, meanwhile, is in keeping with the peer influence perspective because disrupted parenting is seen to contribute only indirectly to delinquency. Also, late starters have adequate social skills and therefore have friendships that do not differ in quality from those of non-delinquent youth (Simons et al., 1992).

The testing of these theories could provide information vital to the implementation of CPSD initiatives. For instance, the early starter-late starter perspective indicates that there are different routes to delinquency and that delinquent youths may have very different personal characteristics. This has implications for what types of supports and prevention programs are needed. These theories can also provide valuable information about who is most at risk and at what stage of a child's life that targeted intervention and support would be most effective.

### **Difficulty in School**

Another significant factor associated with risk of criminality is poor school performance or failure to thrive in school, often leading to early school leaving. Studies dating back to 1915 have observed a relationship between school performance and criminal offending in youth (LeBlanc, Vallieres & McDuff,

1993). According to LeBlanc et al. (1993), school performance is a significant predictor of both adolescent and adult criminality. Teachers are more likely to report behaviour problems in boys who later become delinquent; "in West's study, 38 per cent of the 'most troublesome' at the age of 10 years became delinquent, compared to four per cent of the 'least troublesome'" (West & Farrington, 1973, cited in Ouston, 1984, p. 4). Delinquents are less successful in school than non-delinquents, have lower attendance rates and are more likely to leave school early (Ouston, 1984).

Drop-outs experience numerous difficulties. The Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities' Children and Youth Committee (1992, p.3) found that "only two years after leaving school, drop-outs are more than four times as likely as are school graduates to have been in trouble with the law." Further, school drop-outs are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed (Mayor's Task Force, 1992).

Once again, the discussion of the relationship between school performance and delinquency demonstrates the inter-connectedness of risk factors. One cannot examine the relationship between school performance and delinquency without taking into account the factors associated with poor school performance and early leaving: low family income, low family education level, abuse, single parent household, low grades, learning difficulties, truancy and lack of attachment to school (Canadian School Boards Association, 1991). Indeed, the CCSD (1991) reports that the main factors related to poor educational attainment among Aboriginal youth are poor health and poverty. Other factors related to low education levels among Aboriginal youth include: low expectations for economic success, lack of positive role models, inadequate child care, culturally inappropriate school curricula, alcohol abuse, violence and poor living conditions (CCSD, 1991). The preferred strategy for keeping Canada's youth in school echoes the underlying philosophy of CPSD:

There is growing recognition within both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities of the need to stress prevention, rather than remedial strategies, if problems such as illiteracy and low education levels are to be banished from our society. Within this prevention strategy, two factors are recognized. The first is that communities and families, not experts and governments, possess the creative energies necessary to find and manage durable community-based prevention initiatives. The second factor is that most human development problems are the result of multiple and intertwined factors or deprivations. Since people are shaped by their total environment, strategies must address this whole environment, not just one specific aspect of it. (CCSD, 1991, p. 17)

### **Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse is another factor commonly associated with criminal behaviour. Studies indicate that 55% of federal inmates were intoxicated or stoned when they committed their crimes (Vanderburg, Weekes & Millson, 1995). Loeber (1991) cites drug use as one of the strongest predictors of male delinquency. A study conducted by the Research and Statistics Branch of the Correctional Service of Canada (1991) on the relationship between substance use in adolescence and adult criminality found an association between regular alcohol use in adolescence and higher conviction rates in adulthood, particularly for violent crimes, compared with offenders who did not use alcohol or used alcohol infrequently in adolescence. Similarly, Vanderburg et al. (1995) found a strong relationship between early substance use and criminal behaviour.

It has also been found that adult offenders who engaged in drug use in adolescence had higher conviction rates for economically motivated crimes such as robbery and property offences than offenders who did not use drugs before the age of 18 years (Correctional Service of Canada, 1991). Similarly, a study conducted by Hser, Anglin & Chou (1992) on the relationship between substance use and female criminality found a relationship between drug use and property crime and drug dealing. Hser et al. (1992,

p. 215) speculate that "increased criminal involvement may be generally related to a lifestyle commitment represented by increased addiction, or may serve as an instrument for supporting the increased addiction."

### **The Dynamics of Multiple Risk Factors**

That there is no single root cause of crime no longer appears to be a matter of debate among researchers. "Rather, it is the outcome of the interaction of a constellation of factors that include: poverty, physical and sexual abuse, illiteracy, low self-esteem, inadequate housing, school failure, unemployment, inequality and dysfunctional families" (Standing Committee, 1993, p. 11). It is not hard to find research literature dealing with the factors contributing to crime which acknowledges that several factors are usually involved in creating a high risk population group. Sampson (1987) examined violence in urban black communities in the context of unemployment, poverty and family disruption. Sampson (1987, p. 377) concluded that "while male joblessness has little or no direct effect on crime, it has the strongest overall effect on family disruption, which in turn is the strongest predictor of black violence." In addressing the complex problems of at-risk youths, Kolberg sees the delinquency risk factor process as circular: Young people who regularly use drugs are less likely to do well in school, are more likely to engage in casual criminal behaviour, and are less likely to develop stable employment patterns. Young people who drop out of school are less likely to find employment and more likely to become involved with drugs and crime. In effect, these factors tend to assume the form of a circle of antisocial and self-destructive behaviour. Young persons may enter the circle at any point, by using drugs, for example, or by committing petty crimes or dropping out of school....These forms of behaviour reinforce one another. The longer one is on the circle, the more difficult it is to leave. (Kolberg, 1987, pp. 96-7)

It is from this perspective that Kolberg asserts that employment is a particularly significant point of entry in helping at-risk youth.

The assumption that delinquent behaviour is the outcome of a tidy, linear sequence of risk factors occurring in a child's life is also challenged by Loeber (1991, p. 22) who asserts that "rather than the

different problem behaviours replacing one another as a child ages, they may be thought of as being 'stacked.'" In her study which aims to test the effects of neighbourhood, family and employment on delinquency, Steele (1987) talks about the "myriad problems" that can be experienced by at-risk, underclass youths. These problems can include low self-esteem, poor school performance, drug and alcohol use, teen sexual activity, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, gang membership and crime and violence.

Whether described as a circle, stacking, myriad problems, "multiple factors and cycles" or "a series of overlapping problems and disadvantages" the language of the researchers leans strongly toward both looking at risk factors in combination with others and at seeing the dynamics of the process as circular rather than linear (CCJA, 1989, p. 375). What the full implications of this will mean for the theoretical foundations of research into the causes of crime remain to be seen, but it is already prompting some to question the adequacy of criminological research methodology and the effectiveness of crime prevention and social policy approaches; the very definition and basic assumptions about crime are also undergoing another look.

As the possibilities of the CPSD approach are explored, the shortage of data about the history and development of criminal careers is becoming both obvious and limiting. Longitudinal studies provide the best method of providing information about why and how criminal behaviour develops and progresses into adulthood. This information is vital to understanding how the course of criminal careers can be changed and at what points it is best to intervene; data which in turn is essential to the creation of specific intervention strategies for crime prevention (CCJA, 1989, p. 454). As far as policies are concerned,

researchers are more clearly urging that social policies be directed toward the structural forces behind such factors as poverty, unemployment, family disruption and social inequity.

### **Conclusion**

It is hoped that this literature review will serve as a useful reference point for politicians, administrators, communities and others interested in CPSD. A comprehensive review of CPSD theory and research has been presented, including the key definitions and underlying concepts of CPSD. Further, specific CPSD programs have been highlighted, with specific reference the characteristics of notably successful programs. It is anticipated that the information presented in this review will serve as a valuable appendix to the Resource Guide.

While much research has been conducted into CPSD, there are notable gaps in the literature. A significant issue which still needs to be explored is the ethics of CPSD. For example, the underlying philosophy of CPSD, which calls for targeted social programs for "at-risk" populations, raises numerous ethical considerations. This is not to imply that CPSD programs should not be implemented. Rather, exploring the ethical questions surrounding CPSD will enable CPSD programs to increase their sensitivity, which is simply an additional step in the process of making our communities desirable places to live.

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