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National Crime  
Prevention Strategy

Safer Communities  
A Crime Prevention Handbook

Fourth Edition



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2003

**National Crime Prevention Strategy**

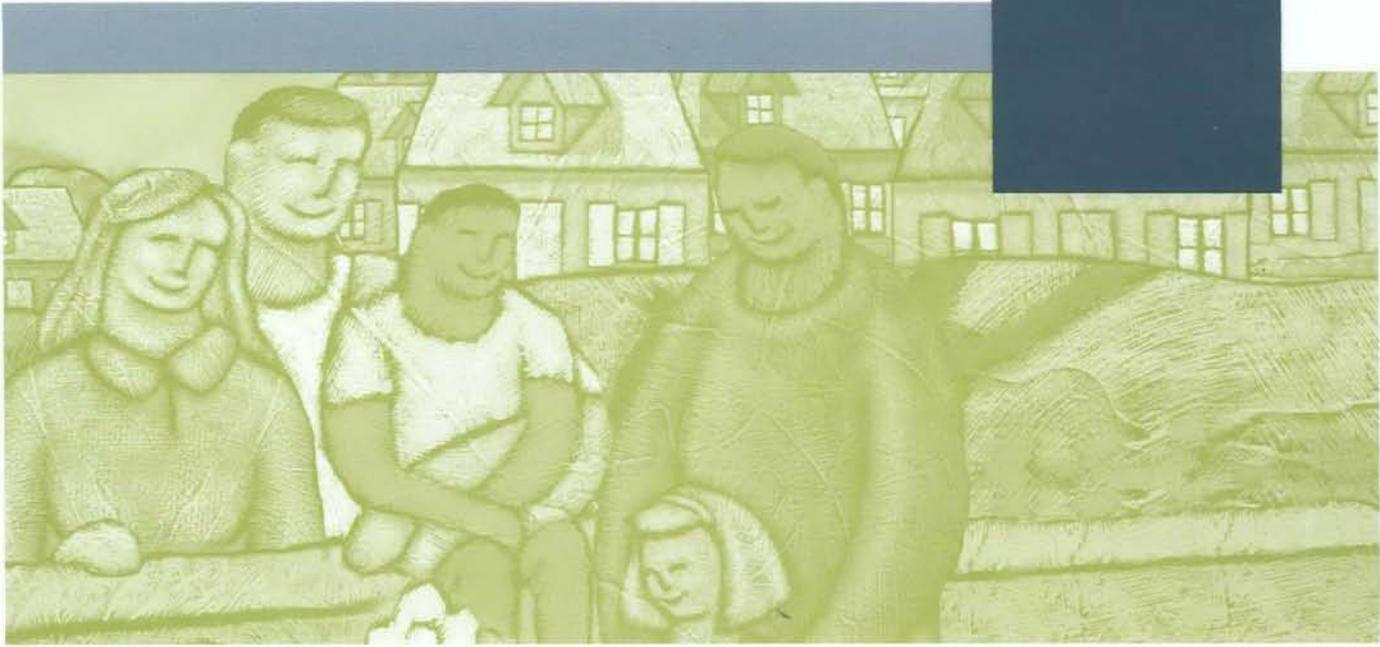
**Safer Communities  
A Crime Prevention Handbook**



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Fourth Edition



Safer Communities

“If you wanted to create a criminal, you’d have a pretty good chance  
If you took someone from a seriously troubled home  
Put them in a string of foster homes,  
Or group homes...  
Change their social worker on a regular basis  
Change everything  
Keep changing  
Change everything.  
If you really wanted to create a criminal  
You’d let a young person drop out of school,  
Let them run away from home at an early age,  
And let them look for comfort in alcohol or drugs.  
And somewhere...  
... somewhere...  
In their lonely and painful existence  
You’d let them be abused.  
Physically, sexually, or emotionally abused.  
And when they looked for help—  
... Because sometimes we do look for help...  
If we know where to look—  
If you wanted a kid to become a criminal,  
You’d see to it that there wasn’t any help available.  
When the people who could help them,  
Who want to help them,  
Just don’t have enough time...  
That’s when we fall through the cracks.  
You see kids as ‘trouble,’  
Instead of ‘troubled.’  
Most of all,  
If you want a kid to become a criminal,  
You treat him like a criminal.”

– Transcript from award-winning video *Bad Kids? (How To Create a Criminal)*, inspired by a quotation found in the National Crime Prevention Council’s 1997 publication *Young People Say*.



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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction ..... 1

Chapter 2: General Overview ..... 2

Chapter 3: The *National Crime Prevention Strategy* ..... 9

Chapter 4: Priority Areas ..... 13

Chapter 5: Communications Aids ..... 28

# 1

## Introduction

Canadians are concerned about crime, crime prevention, and ways to create a safer society, and are increasingly responding to these concerns. *Safer Communities* is designed to help Canadians effectively articulate crime prevention issues in their communities and identify the ways in which the National Crime Prevention Strategy can facilitate their efforts.

Inside, you will find information on community safety issues and crime prevention approaches, drawn from a variety of sources: police, analysts, researchers, statisticians, community leaders, and community-based crime prevention practitioners.

Crime prevention is not the apprehension, identification, and punishment of offenders. While these services are integral components of the criminal justice system, they are all **reactive** measures.

Crime prevention is stopping crime **before** it happens. Crime prevention through social development, which is at the heart of the Government of Canada's *National Crime Prevention Strategy*, deals with the underlying causes of crime: the social conditions and life circumstances that contribute to crime problems. The *National Crime Prevention Strategy* has been supporting literally thousands of crime prevention projects in hundreds of Canadian communities. It is an approach—an effective approach—to the complex problems of crime and victimization that is based upon intervening early and reducing the impact of a host of risk factors.

# 2

## General Overview

Crime is a problem that exists in every country in the world. In fact, since the Second World War, almost every major industrialized country has experienced increased rates of crime. The costs of crime to individual countries run in the billions of dollars annually, but the bottom line is that crime hurts people. It inflicts loss, injury, fear, and emotional trauma on individuals and changes the face of communities.

### Crime in Canada

Over the past decade, Canada's reported crime rate (with the majority of crime being property offences) was, by and large, on the decline, while victimization rates have remained relatively constant. Research reveals that roughly half the Canadian population has been a victim of crime at some point in their lives. As a rule, crime rates are higher as one goes from east to west across Canada. In recent reports, the cities with the highest rates have included Regina, Saskatoon, Vancouver, and Winnipeg.

The violent crime rate has also been relatively constant over the past decade. This includes homicide, attempted murder, assault, sexual assault, other sexual offences, abduction, and robbery. Homicide is the most serious type of violent crime and is often considered to be the most accurate indicator of the degree of violence in a community. Canada's homicide rate remains fairly stable at around the mark of 1.75 homicides per 100,000 population. The homicide rate has been gradually decreasing overall since 1973.

### Getting kids back on the right track

For most troubled students, being suspended from school is little more than a vacation. These young people, who clearly exhibit behavioural problems, are rarely given the attention they need to get their lives moving along the right track.

The YMCA du Parc, in Montréal, Quebec, with the support of the *National Crime Prevention Strategy's* Community Mobilization Program, is changing this with its ALTERNATIVE SUSPENSION project. Rather than letting suspended students stay home or roam the streets, the project administers activities to high school students who are receiving occasional or repeated suspensions. The activities include workshops on conflict resolution, effective communication, and active listening, as well as group discussions on issues such as substance abuse. Help with homework is also provided.

The YMCA du Parc set up the ALTERNATIVE SUSPENSION program three years ago, at the request of officials from Saint-Louis Secondary School. About 70 students spend between three to five days in the program each year. Two other YMCAs in Montréal have since adopted the program.

The project has shown early signs of success and, if the positive results continue, may be tested throughout the country.

## Crimes Committed by Youth

There is a public perception that youth crime, especially violent crime, is increasing. Media reports of youth gangs, violence in schools, and homicides tend to create the impression that the situation has reached crisis proportions. Research does not support this perception.

A small minority of young offenders repeatedly engage in serious offences against property and persons. Not surprisingly, it is these violent and repeat offenders that generate the most public anxiety.

Statistical information reveals that most youth crime is committed by young males, and that most crimes are not violent. The majority of youth crimes are property offences.

Most violent crimes committed by youth are against their peers, usually acquaintances, and not against adults or strangers. The most common victims of youth violence are girlfriends, boyfriends, other young people, family members, and members of ethnocultural groups or sexual minorities (gays, lesbians, bisexuals).

All the same, Canada has a higher rate of youth incarceration than other western countries, including the United States.

## The Costs of Crime

The social and economic costs of crime are devastating. There is no way to fully quantify the physical, emotional, and psychological damage that crime causes its victims. Victims who lose a child or family member to violent crime suffer an unspeakable loss, and those who have been physically or sexually abused may suffer lifelong trauma.

While certain aspects of the costs of crime are quantifiable, the human costs of crime can never be fully determined. No price tag can be placed on the lost productivity crime causes or on the effect it has on an individual's personal aspirations, sense of security, and well-being.

The fear that crime generates in communities reduces quality of life. It restricts people's sense of freedom and breeds distrust and intolerance. The fear of crime can lead people to secure themselves behind locked doors and protective systems and to harbour suspicions against strangers.

Reacting to crime—apprehending, sentencing, incarcerating, and rehabilitating offenders—costs the federal and provincial governments almost \$10 billion per year. However, this amount is only a small portion of the total costs associated with crime. It does not include, for example, the cost of property loss, security services, insurance fraud, and crime-related hospitalization.

## Hidden danger lurking on the Internet



A great educational tool, the Internet has also become a place where sexual predators can stalk unsuspecting children. Over the past decade, the rate of criminal behaviour online has risen alarmingly. In a Youth Internet Safety Survey conducted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in March 2001, almost 1 in 5 (19 percent) of the young Internet users surveyed received an unwanted sexual solicitation in the past year. In particular, police agencies have noticed—and have apprehended—an increasing number of pedophiles who are using the Internet to meet children. They may persuade children to become involved in child pornography and may even kidnap them.

The Science Alberta Foundation and LiveWires Design tackled the problem head on by developing an education kit called MISSING. The goal of the project was to create a proactive community of adults and children, empowered to protect children and youth against Internet crime. The program, supported by the *National Strategy's* Crime Prevention Partnership Program, was designed with the belief that children will not observe Internet safety rules created and enforced by adults. Rather, the partners believed that the best way to protect children was to establish an environment in which children and adults can discuss Internet safety in an open and constructive way. Today, other partners such as Telus, IBM Canada, Symantec Corporation, the B.C. Ministry of Education, and the Mounted Police Foundation are also involved.

The MISSING kit, widely distributed across Alberta and British Columbia, contains a computer game, an interactive video game that shows young people how they can be lured by pedophiles and how to avoid them online, a written guide, a poster, and a Web site: [www.livewwwires.com](http://www.livewwwires.com)

Crime also exacts a cost on the economic development of communities. In communities that are hit hard by crime, housing prices drop and people (who can afford to do so) move to other neighbourhoods. Industries bypass high crime areas, because these areas provide inadequate labour forces and physical conditions. As the tax base disappears, infrastructure deteriorates, and economic and social development grinds to a standstill or starts moving backwards. The dollar value of these economic losses is difficult to measure.

In 1996, during Phase I of the *National Crime Prevention Strategy*, the National Crime Prevention Council conducted research on the cost of crime, using a formula developed by a panel of experts that reports to *Business Week*. This formula uses the actual costs associated with the criminal justice system to calculate the total annual cost of crime, including the costs associated with pain and suffering. Based on this research, it was estimated that the total cost of crime in Canada is approximately \$46 billion per year (regarded as a conservative amount). Indeed, a more recent study by the Department of Justice now estimates the cost to be closer to \$59 billion a year.

### The Cost of Incarceration

- The cost of federal and provincial adult correctional services is \$2 billion per year.
- On average, it costs \$59,000 per year to incarcerate a male offender in a federal penitentiary.
- On average, it costs \$114,000 per year to incarcerate a female offender in a federal penitentiary.

## Incarceration and Crime Prevention

Many Canadians believe that offenders are not dealt with harshly enough. However, the United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the industrialized world, and imprisonment has failed to prevent crime in that country. As noted, however, youth incarceration rates in Canada are higher than those of other countries and higher than incarceration rates for adults.

The prison population in the United States effectively doubled through the 1990s, and has stood as high as a record level of 6 prisoners per 1,000 citizens. Despite this, every hour, approximately 200 Americans become victims of violence. As the Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General stated: "If locking-up those who violate the law contributed to safer societies, then the United States should be the safest country in the world."

Canada's crime and incarceration rates are more similar to those of countries like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Like Canada, these countries balance conventional methods of control with crime prevention and community safety strategies that address the underlying factors that contribute to crime.

## What Canadians Say

Studies confirm that crime, while not the highest priority at any given time, is an issue that persists in the minds of many Canadians. And, in the context of community issues, crime typically gets noted as a high priority.

There is a perception that crime is worse elsewhere than in one's own community, which means that most Canadians do feel fairly safe in their neighbourhoods. Only 11 percent indicated they feared becoming a victim of property crime in their own neighbourhood; only 8 percent feared becoming a victim of a violent crime (From: Ekos Research Associates, *Canadian Attitudes Towards the Prevention of Crime*, 2000).

Furthermore, Canadians indicate that feeling safe from crime is a key part of our national identity. It is, possibly, a characteristic thought to be under duress. Public opinion studies demonstrate that there is a continued perception that crime rates are increasing. Even through periods of declining crime rates, majorities of Canadians have expressed the belief that there has been an increase in youth crime, Internet crime, fraud, property crime, family violence, violent crime, and hate crimes in Canada.

There is, amid these findings, a strong sense of frustration among Canadians in the traditional justice system. More and more, there is a perception that the most effective means by which to prevent crime lies not within the confines of the system but in approaches that are in place before the crime is committed.

## A Balanced Approach to Crime Prevention

When crime happens, two main factors are at play: an offender with the motivation to commit a criminal act and a situation that provides an opportunity for the crime to be committed. It follows that two possible measures for preventing crime are: ensuring that fewer people become offenders and reducing the opportunities for crimes to be committed. These approaches are known, respectively, as “crime prevention through social development” and “opportunity reduction.” Both are necessary, and complement each other. Together, they form a balanced approach to crime prevention.

### Reducing the Opportunities for Crime

Commonly known measures to prevent crime are those that aim to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur. They involve actions by communities or individuals to decrease their likelihood of becoming victims of public violence and property crime. These “target-hardening” measures include installing better locks and alarms, organizing Neighbourhood Watch and Block Parent programs, and modifying urban design (e.g. by improving street lighting).

While these measures can be effective, they are not intended to address the long-term root causes of crime. Alone, they are rarely sufficient in breadth to do more than shift crime from one home to another, from one office to another, or from one person to another. It is necessary to combine opportunity reduction measures with the social development approach.

### Targeting the Roots of Crime

Crime prevention through social development works to create safer communities by addressing not just the symptoms, but also the **roots** of crime. The approach aims to directly address the factors that are known to increase the likelihood of a person becoming an offender.

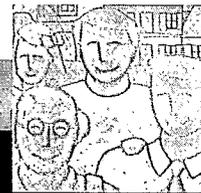
The roots of crime are complex and multi-layered. A combination of factors—that can include poverty, physical and sexual abuse, child abuse and trauma, low self-esteem, inadequate schooling and housing, unemployment, inequality, and dysfunctional families—contribute to the making of a criminal. Long-term crime prevention aims to reduce the likelihood of people becoming criminals—and others from becoming victims—by altering conditions that can cause childhood neglect and disadvantage. Such measures might include programs focusing on positive parenting, the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, ways to reduce unemployment, and ways to improve literacy.

It is important to note that most people who are considered at risk do not turn to a life of crime, and that not all criminals come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Nevertheless, it has been proven that these negative social conditions **are** factors that can increase a person’s chances of coming into contact with the law.

According to social learning theory, children learn to be aggressive by observing and imitating the behaviour of influential people in their lives. Violence may become the way in which problems are solved if there is a lack of negative consequences, the results are seen as positive, and there are few opportunities for learning other means of conflict resolution. When parents use violence to deal with problems or resolve conflicts, children may learn to use aggression as an appropriate tool for interpersonal relations.

*Juristat*, Vol. 21, no. 6.

### Building on Capacities targets junior high grades.



Junior high years usually mean diminishing parental influence and the increasing influence of peers. This age group must also adjust from the “warm and cozy” elementary school environment to one that is less protective. These junior high years are a time when many of the risk factors and behaviours associated with the root causes of youth crime emerge.

**BUILDING ON CAPACITIES** is a pilot project that provides easily accessible school-based interventions for youth at risk in three eastern P.E.I. communities—Georgetown, Souris, and Morell. Project staff work one-on-one with students in twelve schools to improve these young people’s school performance and attendance, and reduce their involvement with the justice system. Project staff also take on various community capacity-building activities—such as delivering presentations and workshops, and meeting with community organizations—based on the particular needs of the youth in the communities. Homework clubs, smart talk/anger management sessions, drug and alcohol sessions, group and individual counselling, and classes on healthy relationships are also popular.

Because the project staff work independently from the schools, students feel comfortable talking to them, which has helped the staff to build links between families and their schools. This also appears to be the same for families, which feel they can approach the project staff without fear of repercussions.

The project is supported by the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* through the Crime Prevention Investment Fund. Key partners are the P.E.I. Coalition for Youth, the P.E.I. Department of Community Services, and the P.E.I. Office of the Attorney General, among others.

After one year of operation, more than 200 students have received the program, most of them in Grades 5 to 9.

## Head Start Programs

The importance of early intervention with children at risk is acknowledged throughout the crime prevention community in Canada. Pre-school or “Head Start” programs, which aim to improve the mental and social skills of high-risk children, are operating in many parts of Canada. Complementary parenting programs generally accompany these programs.

Research indicates that, over the long term, nurturing healthy childhood development is one of the most cost-effective crime prevention measures available. A highly regarded American study in child development—the Perry Pre-school Program—indicates that children born into poverty who attend a crime prevention–targeted day-care program have half as many criminal arrests, are less dependent on welfare, are more likely to complete high school, and have higher earnings than those who do not participate. It was found that taxpayers saved \$7.16 for each dollar invested in the program. The pre-school participants absorbed fewer resources because they were less likely to come into conflict with the law.

The Canadian public supports a focus on children as a means of preventing crime. Poll after poll indicate that an overwhelming number of Canadians state that they favour placing a great deal of emphasis on programs giving children a better start in life in order to prevent them from becoming offenders.

## What's black and white? And runs on wheels?

It's C.O.W.—the CLASSROOM ON WHEELS! C.O.W. is an innovative project from Edmonton, Alberta that delivers high-quality pre-school programs to low-income, high-risk neighbourhoods where the children and their parents need them the most. Transportation barriers keep a growing number of families from accessing quality pre-school programs. Because it's mobile, the C.O.W. can serve a different neighbourhood on alternating days, which is much less expensive than establishing several permanent locations in different communities.

A Success By 6 project, the five black and white “Holstein” buses offer constructive play, counting games, and positive experiences with other tots to get pre-schoolers ready for school by developing their language and motor skills, and enhancing their self-esteem, social and communication skills, creativity, and curiosity.

Funded in part by the Crime Prevention Investment Fund of the *National Crime Prevention Strategy*, C.O.W. is an example of crime prevention in action. “Poverty, school failure, abuse and other family difficulties can be precursors of criminal behaviour,” says Martin Garber-Conrad, chair of the Success by 6 Council of Partners. “By interrupting this process, and ideally turning it around, people can break out of the cycle that leads to bad outcomes, both for individuals and communities.”

Cold Edmonton weather prevents the bus from being used in the winter, but all of the furniture and supplies are portable. The program is coordinated with existing indoor facilities in the carefully selected neighbourhoods where C.O.W. grazes.



## 3

## The National Crime Prevention Strategy

To build safer communities Canadians must be supported with the tools and resources necessary to prevent crime, rather than simply respond to crimes after they occur. This early intervention approach is part of the Government of Canada's commitment to support Canadian children to ensure that they have a good start in life, and to support their families to ensure that they have the tools they need to provide proper care. There is no better investment than investing in children and youth; no investment does more to break the cycle of poverty and dependency, or to maximize the potential of every Canadian.

#### The Role of the *National Strategy*

Crime prevention works when it takes root at the community level. It is the people who live and work in a community who are the experts on their area's problems, strengths, and needs. Yet, for communities to develop innovative solutions to create a safer society, they need to form partnerships. They also need the information, tools, training, and resources necessary to get crime prevention projects off the ground. The *National Crime Prevention Strategy* supports community-based responses to crime. It is designed to enhance the knowledge and expertise of communities with respect to crime prevention, as well as foster partnerships and collaboration.

The initiative began in 1994, under the name of the National Crime Prevention Council. The Council was comprised of a group of field experts who set the foundation and framework for federal leadership in crime prevention. From there, in 1998, the Government of Canada launched Phase II of the initiative with investments of \$32 million a year resulting in The National Crime Prevention Centre, which administers the work of the *National Crime Prevention Strategy*. In 2001, the Government of Canada expanded the initiative over four years.

This expansion will, over the four-year period, enhance the ability of the *National Strategy* to realize three key objectives: strengthening its delivery platform, strengthening its organizational structure, and strengthening the Safer Communities Initiative and its funding programs. The expansion will also enable the *National Strategy* to tackle key challenges, such as:

- undertaking development work in high-need, low-capacity communities, including inner city, rural, remote, and Aboriginal communities;
- offering a continuum of supports and models for communities requiring a range of programming interventions;
- facilitating citizen engagement through focused public education efforts and informed discussion, again with an emphasis on high-risk, high-needs/low-capacity communities; and
- establishing a centre of excellence, expertise, and learning on crime prevention research, policy, and practice.

## Safer Communities

The *National Strategy* also provides a framework for increased federal, provincial, and territorial cooperation on community safety and crime prevention. This collaboration helps to determine areas of joint interest and serves as a basis for identifying priorities at the community level.

Today, you can see the *National Strategy* at work in every part of the country. Still, more initiatives will make real differences in the lives of communities, and much work remains to be done to fully realize the objectives of the *National Crime Prevention Strategy*.

### Mobilizing for Action

The sources of crime and other social issues are found in local communities, so community involvement is necessary to address these problems. Every community is different, with its own set of problems and circumstances, and crime prevention approaches must be tailored to reflect the conditions of individual communities.

Generally, there are four steps involved with planning a crime prevention project.

- Step one:** identify, describe, and analyse community problems.
- Step two:** develop an action plan, by determining the level of intervention, setting goals and objectives, and selecting participants and strategies to be implemented.
- Step three:** implement the project; determine participants' roles and obtain necessary support from the agencies involved in the project.
- Step four:** monitor and evaluate the project to determine its impact and to fine-tune the approach.

This section provides information on Phase II of the *National Strategy*'s funding programs.

#### Safer Communities Initiative

##### **Community Mobilization Program (CMP)**

The CMP is the largest funding program offered by the *National Strategy*, and is managed in partnership with each of the provinces and territories. This program helps communities—both large and small—to develop innovative ways to prevent crime and undertake activities that deal with the root causes of crime. The CMP helps people who are working at the ground level to develop community-based partnerships, in order to strengthen their efforts and make them more sustainable. The CMP also seeks to increase public awareness and support for crime prevention activities, while it increases the capacity of communities to deal with crime and victimization.

### **Crime Prevention Investment Fund (CPIF)**

This program identifies and evaluates social development approaches to crime prevention by conducting research on crime prevention and evaluating model projects. The main goal of the CPIF is to establish reliable information on what works and what is promising in reducing the risk factors associated with crime and victimization. The CPIF supports selected demonstration projects of Canada-wide significance, and encourages the sharing of information on quality crime prevention initiatives across Canada. It also supports research and evaluation of the costs, benefits, and overall effectiveness of innovative efforts to prevent crime.

### **Crime Prevention Partnership Program (CPPP)**

This program supports organizations that can contribute to community crime prevention through the development of information, tools, and resources. These products and resources are intended to facilitate community participation in all phases of crime prevention, in communities from coast to coast. They can consist of needs assessments, the development of plans, or implementation and evaluation tools that can be used across the country. The CPPP also supports the involvement of national and international non-governmental organizations that can directly contribute to community crime prevention efforts.



### **Victoria's children are not for sale**

Canada's western-most city harbours a dark side—a serious teen prostitution problem. Boys and girls as young as 11 are selling their bodies on the street for money, drugs, shelter, or their next meal. One million boys and girls are believed to enter the world sex trade each year. More than 300,000 work in North America. In Canada, between 10 and 15 percent of sex trade workers on the street are youth.

In 1998, the **CAPITAL REGION ACTION TEAM ON SEXUALLY EXPLOITED YOUTH (CRATSEY)** was formed in response to the growing incidence of sexually exploited youth in the city. CRATSEY membership includes seven of Greater Victoria's municipalities, the Government of British Columbia, local school districts, police chiefs, the University of Victoria, and Save the Children Canada. It is funded in large part by the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* through its Crime Prevention Investment Fund.

CRATSEY operates an integrated and seamless program of services for youth who are recruited into, or at risk of being recruited into, the sex trade, and provides them with the immediate and long-term support they need to leave (and remain away from) the streets. A full-time outreach team, consisting of a police officer and youth outreach worker, follows up leads from police, social workers, or other kids, or just spots teens hanging out with known pimps or prostitutes.

Interventions can take place from anywhere on the streets, to corner cafés, to hotel rooms. The team simply tells the kids what CRATSEY does, what their services are, and offers help—without lecturing. If the sex worker decides to leave the street, the team links the young person up with whatever basic services he or she needs, such as clothing, food, counselling, income assistance, drug and alcohol treatment, and even reunites the youth with his or her family if desired. CRATSEY has also established a network of six "safe houses" where young people who are ready to break away from life on the streets can live in safety with stable, specially trained house parents as they make the break.

**Business Action Program on Crime Prevention (BAPCP)**

The private sector has an important role to play in promoting safer communities. The extensive networks of national business and professional associations can help communities prevent crime, share information, and encourage community mobilization. Through the BAPCP, the Government of Canada invites the private sector to become an active partner, leader, and resource on crime prevention within communities. The BAPCP focuses on specific crime problems that have a direct impact on the private sector, such as auto theft, consumer fraud, and shoplifting. It also expands upon the commitment of corporate partners which have already taken action to prevent crime and, at the same time, reaches out to new business partners through their networks of associations across Canada. The *National Strategy* reinforces these efforts through the Business Network on Crime Prevention (BNCP), a coalition of associations that have come together to encourage and support greater private sector involvement in crime prevention.

**The charter members of the BNCP are the Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores, the Retail Council of Canada, the Insurance Council of Canada, the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, the Canadian Automobile Dealers Association of Canada, the Canadian Bankers Association, and the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute. Their task is to encourage a greater level of commitment on the part of the business community in Canada to deal with community safety and reducing victimization. They do this through promotion and public education efforts with their corporate constituencies, and through the use of cost-matched funding support for projects under the BAPCP.**

**Support from the Government of Canada**

The Safer Communities Initiative forms the backbone of the *National Strategy*. The largest, most commonly accessed program is the Community Mobilization Program. This program can provide grants for crime prevention projects in your community. To apply for a CMP grant—or funding from any other program—you can fill out and mail us an application form. The application forms and program Access Guides can be found on the *National Crime Prevention Strategy's* Web site at [www.prevention.gc.ca](http://www.prevention.gc.ca) or by calling 1-877-302-NCPC.

## 4

## Priority Areas

The *National Crime Prevention Strategy* focuses its efforts on those population groups that are most at risk of coming into contact with the law, be it as offenders or victims. These groups include children and youth, women and girls, Aboriginal people, as well as seniors, persons with disabilities, ethnocultural minorities, and gays and lesbians. Because crime prevention efforts are most effective when made at an early stage of life, children and youth are the focus of the vast majority of projects undertaken by the *National Strategy*.

One of the significant accomplishments of the original National Crime Prevention Council was the development of policy frameworks to address the needs of children and youth. Since 1998, the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* has built upon this foundation by working on policy frameworks to address the needs of women and girls as well as Aboriginal people.

## 1. Children

**A Focus on Early Intervention**

Years of research show that childhood development hinges on a complex interplay of individual and environmental factors. Studies from fields such as health, social services, and crime prevention demonstrate the profound effects that fetal and early childhood development have on an individual's later physical and mental well-being and social behaviour. Other studies have demonstrated that negative effects can occur when a child's development is compromised.

Longitudinal studies of children in Canada and other countries have traced the paths of antisocial behaviour—including criminal behaviour—back as far as the presence of risk factors during prenatal and early childhood stages. There are many pieces to this complex puzzle, as well as potential life-long consequences. A lack of family and social support jeopardizes healthy development and may increase a child's vulnerability to victimization and to problem behaviours. Protective factors, such as caring parenting, can help children build resiliency in the face of adversity.

**Risk Factors**

Community safety, secure family environments, and the positive social development of children are linked in many ways. The risk factors that undermine the personal security of children need to be addressed from various perspectives, which require collaboration among various players. The *National Strategy's* focus is to develop community-based ways to address issues related to children and families living in conditions of multiple risk. This may include social development strategies focusing on the following:

- Children and families living in situations where risk factors (or combinations of risk factors) are present in the home, such as violence and abuse; substance addiction; disorganized, unstable, and/or criminal lifestyle exercised by family members; and siblings who have exhibited serious behavioural difficulties. Strategies that focus on children and families living in situations of relative disadvantage, or who are marginalized due to factors such as race, class background, disability, homelessness, and addiction/fetal alcohol effects (FAE), among others, as well as children and families living in communities that are at high risk and/or in high need are priority considerations.

- Children who display behavioural signs that indicate that they are at risk of coming into conflict with the youth justice system when they reach adolescence. The signs may include early onset of aggressive behaviour, bullying and other disruptive behaviours in child care or school, early conflict with the law, and association with peers and youth involved in gangs. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is also a consideration. It is important to note that behavioural signs may vary by factors such as the child's age, developmental stage, and gender.

### **Bullying — a big problem in many Canadian schools**



After many requests from teachers for an anti-bullying, anti-harassment program, the Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton developed a program called **A MATTER OF RESPECT**. With the assistance from the *National Strategy's* Community Mobilization Program, the Halton Catholic District School Board piloted the program in April 2000, by sending flyers to all the 107 elementary schools and 23 high schools in Halton, a region of urban and rural communities southwest of Toronto.

The initial focus of the program has been on students in Grades 7 and 8, before they enter Grade 9. The classroom program kicks off with a discussion about community values and individual rights, and allows students to have a frank and open discussion on such things as harassment and bullying. "We ask the students if they have ever harassed or bullied someone," says Lynda Levins, education co-ordinator for the intervention service. "Most hands go up eventually, including the presenter's. The students are asked to identify the areas of violence in society—physical, sexual, verbal, etc.—and are encouraged to go into specifics."

At the end of the presentation, the class is asked to come up with a slogan or motto to put up on the board as a daily reminder of how their behaviours affect others. The goals of the project are not just to raise awareness of bullying, but also to teach students to recognize oppressive behaviours and the root causes of violence in society.

**Models of Prevention: Transforming Knowledge into Action**

This table illustrates the factors that can foster resiliency in children.

**Prenatal to 6 Years of Age**

Level	Goals	Means
Prenatal	Promote healthy babies.	Prepared parents. Supports to parents.
Birth	Facilitate attachments and prevent child abuse.	Home visiting/supports. Early identification of difficulties.
Family	Increase family cohesion. Improve parenting skills.	Range of supports to parents and families.
Toddler/Pre-school	Encourage cognitive and social development.  Reduce aggressive behaviours.	Early child care/education with family involvement to children whose families require assistance.  Community/societal actions to prevent violence.
School	Improve school outcomes.	School-based initiatives.

**6 to 12 Years of Age**

Level	Goals	Means
Family	Promote competent parenting and prevent child abuse/family violence.	Skills training. Societal actions to prevent violence. Range of community-based supports.
School	Improve school outcomes and foster prosocial behaviour.	Initiatives to increase commitment to school and academic achievement. Anti-bullying programs. Anti-violence/healthy relationships programs. Media awareness instruction. Training to prevent substance abuse.
Peers	Increase social skills and reduce aggressive behaviour.	Social skills development. Supervised recreation. Non-structured play. Adequate monitoring of children.
Community	Promote community development and community identity.	Community events. Recreation activities and spaces. Increased public awareness of community resources. Volunteer work.

## Safer Communities

Early intervention is the most effective way to prevent problem behaviour from emerging. This intervention can be a community-based, universally available program that supports early child development and the acquisition of prosocial behaviours, or a similar program that specifically targets families with children who are at risk of developing problem behaviours.

Early intervention measures—such as school-based violence prevention and conflict resolution programs, as well as support and training for parents and teachers dealing with children who display disruptive behaviour—can help to reduce the risk of subsequent conflict with the law. Support programs that help boys and girls who have been exposed to violence in the home also show promise. Programs that promote nurturing, safe, and supportive environments—in families, schools and other institutions, and communities—can foster healthy child development, caring relationships, prosocial interest and engagement, and responsible behaviour

### **The Perry Pre-school Program**

**One of the most widely known prevention programs is the Perry Pre-school Program that was begun in Ypsilanti, Michigan, in 1962. This research-driven Head Start program involved 123 black children born into poverty, who were at high risk of failing in school. The aims of the program were to provide intellectual stimulation, to increase cognitive abilities, and to improve later school achievement. At ages 3 and 4, the children were divided into two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group received a 2.5-hour-per-day, high quality, active learning pre-school program, backed up by weekly home visits of 1.5 hours each. The control group did not.**

**The individuals from the two groups were followed up to age 27, and considerable differences exist between the experimental and control groups. For example, compared with the control group, the group involved in the pre-school program had:**

- **50 percent fewer accumulated arrests, on average;**
- **33 percent more high school graduates; and**
- **significantly higher earnings.**

**A cost-benefit analysis of this project revealed that, for every dollar that was invested in the program, taxpayers have saved \$7.16. The Perry Pre-school Program is a unique study, because it clearly illustrates the long-term benefits of early investment in the lives of children at risk.**

**2. Youth**

**A Focus on Crime Prevention**

Crime prevention efforts involving youth are intended to help them make the transition from adolescence to adulthood and self-sufficiency in a prosocial manner. This approach calls for multifaceted interventions that deal with situations that place youth at risk of victimization, as well as interventions that will help youth who are engaging in behaviours that put them into conflict with the law. Myriad factors can put a youth at risk of victimization or offending. These include poverty, family violence, health and behaviour problems, poor school performance, and parental substance abuse, among others. Individual factors such as effective coping skills and a sense of hope—as well as factors such as support from family members, caregivers, friends, teachers, and the broader community—play a critical role in crime prevention.

**Models of Prevention: Transforming Knowledge into Action**

This table illustrates the factors that foster resiliency in youth.

**12 to 18 Years of Age**

Level	Goals	Means
Family	<p>Improve parenting skills and child-rearing practices.</p> <p>Provide stable living environments for youth in care and after leaving care.</p>	<p>Eliminate abusive child-rearing practices.                      Encourage use of appropriate and non-violent techniques.                      Teach skills to help reduce interparental conflict.                      Eliminate sibling violence.                      Support parents to respond to youth in crisis.                      Provide local supports or services for families requiring assistance.                      Encourage healing of whole community.</p> <p>Provide support and training for caregivers.                      Develop placement criteria sensitive to cultural backgrounds of youth.                      Provide integrated service support and continuity of care.                      Provide follow-up and continuing support for young people leaving care.</p>
School	<p>Build academic and social skills and reduce aggressive behaviour.</p>	<p>Teach skills for interpersonal problem solving.                      Provide mental health counselling.                      Distinguish between youth whose antisocial behaviour starts in early or late teens.                      Use alternative teaching methods.                      Facilitate school transitions.                      Establish peer-mentoring/tutoring and self-help programs.                      Conduct routine school safety audits.                      Provide media literacy programs.                      Provide parenting programs.                      Provide substance abuse, early pregnancy, and gang prevention programs.                      Form supportive working partnerships with parents.</p>

cont'd on page 18

Safer Communities

Level	Goals	Means
School	<p>Promote a positive social environment in the school.</p> <p>Facilitate the transition from school to work or further education.</p>	<p>Promote change in the whole school environment. Provide anti-bias education. Provide appropriate training and professional development to teachers. Promote student involvement in school planning.</p> <p>Provide co-op educational programs. Provide paid or unpaid work experience and work education. Offer more flexible school hours. Reduce financial barriers to further education and job training.</p>
Peers	<p>Promote positive peer relations.</p>	<p>Provide supervised recreation programs.</p>
Community	<p>Build stronger and healthier communities.</p> <p>Use a focused approach to crime prevention.</p> <p>Reflect diversity and inclusiveness in community development efforts to prevent youth crime.</p> <p>Prevent youth homelessness.</p>	<p>Encourage use of public spaces and facilities. Encourage youth volunteerism. Link seniors and elders with youth. Conduct community resource audits. Encourage grassroots crime prevention.</p> <p>Develop broad-based support and community consensus about causes of crime and solutions.</p> <p>Obtain broad public input into crime prevention efforts. Build a working relationship with the local media. Encourage youth involvement in political decision making.</p> <p>Provide local support programs and outreach.</p>
Society	<p>Make the promotion of healthy families and communities a priority for all levels of society.</p>	<p>Strengthen financial commitment to education, health and social welfare programs. Eliminate child/family poverty. Promote family-friendly workplaces. Support and encourage young people's spiritual development. Establish alternative youth justice programs. Increase young people's knowledge of the law. Help social support agencies find common ground to work together.</p>

Community-based prevention and intervention approaches that are sensitive to the characteristics of youth, their families, and communities, that focus on the needs and abilities of youth, and that foster youth engagement and participation can yield significant benefits. Approaches that focus on reducing these risks can help to reduce victimization and contribute to long-term reductions in youth crime rates. A preventive approach demands broad involvement from many sectors and the development of partnerships. This approach can be a community-based, universally available program that supports prosocial development or a similar program that is specifically targeted toward families with youth who are at risk or who have engaged in offending behaviour.

## **Risk Factors**

It is widely accepted that the presence of risk factors is linked to criminal behaviour during adolescence and in later life stages. The interplay of these various risk factors is complex and there are no clear, linear lines of cause and effect.

Research is continually refining our understanding of the role and interplay of risk factors in crime and victimization, and of the policies and programs that would be most effective to address these factors. The presence of more than one risk factor may increase risk of victimization in certain circumstances. The presence or combination of risk factors in a given situation may also affect an individual's propensity to engage in offending behaviour. The presence of multiple risk factors produces the greatest levels of risk. Interventions that address multiple risk factors are, therefore, most desirable.

### **Rap and break dance break down barriers**



**Toronto's Spanish-speaking community has joined the crime prevention campaign with the PEACEFUL COMMUNITY EQUALS NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY project. An initiative for at-risk Latin American youth, the project's goal is to equip 13 to 21 year-olds with the skills to deal with issues that trigger violence and disrespect toward other youth and authority figures.**

**The project uses rap and break dance to communicate with youth. These musical workshops focus on the specific needs of youth, such as anger management, conflict resolution, and the development of positive family communications. The workshops begin with rap songs that discuss family values, cultural identity, youth unity, unity among Latin Americans and other cultures, discrimination, and racism. The rap session is followed by an open discussion about some of the issues raised by the rappers.**

**The project tries to reach at-risk youth who endure over-crowded spaces and poor living conditions. The project also involves youth outreach workers who visit young offenders in open custody facilities. The goal is to encourage youth to stay away from crime, youth gangs, and drugs.**

**The project has worked with more than 300 young people so far and has many success stories. One teen who was an active member of a youth gang went on to a mechanical engineering program at George Brown College. Another, who had been in jail for assault and came in for counselling, is now an honours student at the University of Waterloo.**

### 3. The Personal Security of Women and Girls

#### **The Concept of Personal Security**

Personal security is a person's physical, intellectual, emotional, economic, and spiritual sense of well-being. Crime—and fear of crime—are two critical factors that can undermine a person's sense of security. For many women and girls living in Canada today, personal security is being jeopardized by victimization experiences and fear of crime.

Both girls and boys who are exposed to violence in the home during childhood experience a range of emotional and behavioural effects, including fear for their safety. Exposure to violence in the home teaches children that violent behaviour is an acceptable way to resolve conflict and to control women's behaviour. In the long term, it places women at higher risk of becoming victimized by men within their teen and adult relationships, and contributes to a sense of powerlessness and fear.

Violent crime represents a major threat to the personal security of women and girls, but other types of crime also affect them. Property crimes, such as fraud, theft, and break-and-enter, impact on their economic well-being and their sense of security in their homes and communities. There is also growing awareness of how crimes, such as telemarketing scams, are victimizing older women.

Recent studies suggest that women consistently report higher levels of fear of crime than men. Fear of crime can have myriad effects. It can contribute to a person's sense of isolation, reduce the person's participation in many aspects of community life, and eventually erode individual and community well-being.

#### **The Societal Context of Women's Personal Security**

It is widely accepted that acts which threaten the personal security of women and girls are a complex societal problem. This problem is deeply rooted in societal attitudes, behaviours, and institutions that facilitate and sustain unequal power relations between men and women and that render women and girls "acceptable targets" for crime, particularly crimes related to violence and abuse.

The personal security of women and girls is also undermined by subtle, yet powerful social innuendoes in daily life. Gender inequalities are reinforced through the socialization of boys and girls and through the media. From an early age, girls and women learn—through personal victimization experiences, or by hearing about, or being exposed to, situations that have affected the personal security of their mothers, sisters, and friends and neighbours—that their personal security cannot be taken for granted. They are vulnerable to violence in different ways than men and boys, and feel in some state of risk—even in everyday situations.

### What Are the Consequences?

Gender-based violence has consequences for individual women and girls, and for the communities in which they live. At the individual level, exposure to violence, or to a victimization experience, may increase the level of risk to their personal security. For example, young girls who run away from abusive family situations may face new risks while living “on the street,” including substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, stranger violence, pressures to engage in prostitution, and pressures to adopt an anti-social or criminal lifestyle. Women who leave abusive relationships may face new situations—such as financial insecurity—which may limit their ability to find safe housing, and thereby increase their level of risk.

The level of gender-based violence in communities also contributes to a sense of fear and danger. In a series of focus groups with girls (13–19 years of age) across Canada it was determined that violence, such as harassment and abuse, is a reality of their lives and that many believe their homes and communities are not safe places to be. Fear pervades the daily lives of many women and girls. It has direct consequences on their participation in community life and is a powerful factor in reinforcing gender inequality. Women and girls may modify or curtail their daily activities (e.g. going out alone at night) to lessen their perceived risk. This, in turn, hampers their personal freedom to participate in community life, such as their access to educational and employment opportunities, and more generally undermines a sense of equal citizenship.

#### **Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA)**



**WOMEN AND VIOLENCE: EDUCATION IS PREVENTION** is a community-initiated, school-based project to reduce violence against women in the long term by helping children and youth develop the attitudes, values, and skills they need to establish and maintain healthy, respectful relationships with peers and dating partners.

The intervention is a five-year, twelve-hour-per-year “healthy and respectful relationships” curriculum delivered to all Grade 7, 8, 9, and 11 students in the southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia. The project engages youth on the issues of relationships during the years when these issues are among the hottest topics in their lives.

The program involves classroom sessions by specially trained, community-based adult facilitators whose work is supervised by the sponsoring community agency, not the schools. There is also a youth team of five to eight students from the high school, which is trained to assist in the classroom work and to play a leadership and modelling role among the students. Professional counselling is available both for students who may report extreme problems that cannot be addressed adequately within the classroom program, and for facilitators who may experience intense mental and emotional pressure.

The project was developed by the Saltspring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA) Community Development and Research Society, and is delivered in partnership with School District 64. In its first year of operation, a total of 536 students took part in the program.

### **A Long-Term Policy Concern**

Governments throughout the world have recognized, and are seeking to address, personal security issues affecting women and girls. Various United Nations mechanisms—to which Canada is a signatory—have underscored that actions which result in, or could result in, threats to the personal security of women and girls are human rights violations. Over the past two decades, federal, provincial, and territorial governments have placed considerable emphasis on the issue of women and personal security. Many jurisdictions have implemented a range of legislative, policy, and program measures to prevent violence against women and children.

### **GO—a club just for teenage girls**



**GO, or GIRLS OWN, is a project supported by the United Way, the Boys and Girls Club in Toronto, Ontario, and the *National Strategy's* Community Mobilization Program, which provides a great chance to learn without being lectured. The Boys and Girls Club advertises the program through schools and the Children's Mental Health Centre.**

**Three groups of teenage girls meet once per week to learn about healthy forms of interacting by exploring relationship issues. They're encouraged to speak freely about what is on their minds and offer advice to one another. As part of the program, the teens develop a dance or song to present their thoughts and feelings to their peers.**

**GO is an opportunity for young women to discover for themselves, with guidance, acceptable ways to be treated by men. They learn that they don't have to "go along to get along" and that they're allowed to say how they feel. The club encourages the girls to ask questions about situations they face, and discuss in depth the mixed messages they see portrayed by the media. If young people do disclose that they are being abused, the Boys and Girls Club ensures that the proper agencies are contacted so the girls can receive help.**

The United Nations urges implementation of the following Model Prevention Strategies:

To develop and implement public awareness and public education and school programmes that prevent violence against women by promoting equality, co-operation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between women and men;

To develop multidisciplinary and gender-sensitive approaches, especially through partnerships between law enforcement officials and the services that are specialized in the protection of women victims of violence;

To set up outreach programmes for offenders or persons identified as potential offenders in order to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the management and control of anger and attitude modification about gender roles and relations;

To set up outreach programmes and offer information to women, including victims of violence, about gender roles, the human rights of women and the social, health, legal and economic aspects of violence against women, in order to empower women to protect themselves against all forms of violence;

To develop and disseminate information on the different forms of violence against women and the availability of programmes to deal with that problem, including programmes concerning the peaceful resolution of conflicts, including educational institutions at all levels;

To support initiatives of organizations seeking women's equality and non-governmental organizations to raise public awareness of the issue of violence against women and to contribute to its elimination.

*General Assembly Resolution 52/86, 12 December 1997, Annex—Model Strategies, Section 14.*

### Breaking the cycle of violence for Yukon women



In remote northern communities, women who face domestic violence and other personal crises may not have access to assistance and support in the same way that Canadians do in urban centres. In response to this problem, the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre in Whitehorse, Yukon, with funding from the *National Strategy's* Community Mobilization Program, developed the WOMEN'S ADVOCACY PROGRAM. Through this program, a social worker helps women with legal and governmental processes while providing a friendly shoulder to lean on. The centre helps women with social assistance, child support, legal aid, emotional needs, and many other issues.

The program was originally created to service Whitehorse, but as various agencies became aware of it, referrals began to pour in from other communities, and the program has now evolved into a Yukon-wide service. For those in remote communities, support is provided by telephone unless the client can travel to Whitehorse. The centre also holds innovative workshops, such as "Exploring Your Anger," which teaches women to identify and explore their emotions, and helps them take control of their lives and avoid being victimized by crime. Overall, the program is helping to break cycles of violence for women and their children.

### Risk Factors

A growing body of knowledge has identified various direct and linked risk factors associated with criminal victimization among girls. In some cases, there is empirical evidence that a risk factor is directly associated with crime; other factors may be linked to crime in less direct ways. Not all risk or linked factors have the same weight. Moreover, the presence of more than one risk factor (or certain combinations of risk factors) may increase a person's risk of victimization. At the other end of the spectrum, the presence or combination of risk factors may affect an individual's propensity to engage in criminal behaviour. At the same time, it is important to remember that many other factors influence the thoughts, feelings, and eventual behaviours of any girl or boy who has been either a victim of crime, or who has engaged in offending behaviour. Individual factors such as effective coping skills and a sense of hope—as well as community factors such as support from family members, caregivers, friends, and teachers—can play a critical role in prevention.

### 4. Aboriginal People

Many Aboriginal communities in Canada experience high rates of interpersonal violence, substance abuse, victimization, and fear of crime. These factors correlate with the widespread social and economic deprivation of Aboriginal people. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples found that “Aboriginal people are at the bottom of almost every available index of socio-economic well-being, whether they measure educational levels, employment opportunities, housing conditions, per capita incomes, or any of the other conditions that give non-Aboriginal Canadians one of the highest standards of living in the world.” The Royal Commission added, “There is no doubt in our minds that economic and social deprivation is a major underlying cause of disproportionately high rates of criminality among Aboriginal people.”

### Traditional ways to a brighter future

Many Aboriginal communities in Canada are looking for innovative approaches to teach youth traditional ways and avoid encounters with the criminal justice system. The JUNIOR CHIEF AND COUNCIL project is an example of such an innovative approach. Set up many years ago by the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation in Manitoba, with the support of the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* through the Community Mobilization Program, the JUNIOR CHIEF AND COUNCIL program has expanded to Shamattawa, an isolated reserve, Marcel Colomb, a semi-isolated reserve, and Opaskwayak Cree Nation, a developed reserve. By providing Aboriginal children with an understanding of their culture, these communities are responding to complex social issues with positive results.

Youth in the community elect the Junior Chief and Vice-Chief, and the remainder of the youth are designated Junior Councillors. The Junior Council works to evaluate the needs of the community's young people, particularly with regards to recreational activities. In addition to teaching leadership, responsibility, and community pride, the JUNIOR CHIEF AND COUNCIL project has instilled a sense of self-worth and produced a significant reduction in youth crime.

Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in the Canadian criminal justice system. For example, while Aboriginal people represent 3 percent of the Canadian population, they account for 17 percent of the federal and provincial inmate population. The situation on the Prairies is even graver. In Saskatchewan, where Aboriginal people represent fewer than 11 percent of the population, they make up over 76 percent of the provincial inmate population. Research studies and reports over the years (notably the Manitoba Justice Inquiry and the Marshall Inquiry) have consistently found that the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people occurs at every stage of the criminal justice process—from charging to incarceration—and that a systemic response is required to address this phenomenon.

Aboriginal communities—both on their own and with the support of various levels of government—are developing and implementing innovative and culturally based justice initiatives, such as diversion programs, community involvement in sentencing and mediation, and justice of the peace courts. As more Aboriginal communities become self-governing, interest in Aboriginal community-driven solutions to crime and victimization will likely increase. Crime prevention through social development—including such initiatives as child and family interventions, violence prevention measures, school programs, and restorative justice—has significant implications for Aboriginal persons and communities.

### **Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society**



**In response to high crime and suicide rates among the Tsilqhot'in First Nations young people, the Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society was formed to provide opportunities for them to find a positive life path. The Society provides a cultural and spiritual context in which Tsilqhot'in youth can learn life skills and take academic and vocational training in a safe, secure environment.**

**The Tsilqhot'in First Nations span over 16,000 square kilometres in the Chilcotin area of British Columbia, and comprise seven bands.**

**Supported by the Crime Prevention Investment Fund, the Society's YOUTH ENHANCEMENT PROJECT provides educational and awareness programs for youth to build crime prevention capacities, and strengthen their understanding of crime prevention and the root causes of crime. The SUICIDE PREVENTION PROJECT, developed through extensive needs assessments, observations, and consultations, provides specialized help to troubled youth and has seen remarkable success. There have been no youth suicides since March 2000, there has been an 80 percent reduction in the number of Tsilqhot'in youth on probation, there has been a significant drop in charges from the Alexis Creek RCMP detachment, a significant reduction in violence, and an increased level of trust and cooperation between the communities and the RCMP.**

**The project now involves the RCMP, B.C. Ministry for Children and Family Development, B.C. Ministry of Public Safety, B.C. Ministry of the Solicitor General, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, Williams Lake City Council, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, among many others.**

**With the purchase of a travel trailer, the Punky Lake community justice worker visits reserves, offering food and support in a portable office that makes it easier for people to come to her. This project has helped produce a huge improvement in the relationship between the communities and the RCMP, and violent crime has also decreased significantly.**

The *National Crime Prevention Strategy* supports the development, implementation, and evaluation of crime prevention initiatives in urban and rural Aboriginal communities in collaboration with Aboriginal groups and provincial and territorial governments. The *National Strategy's* approach to Aboriginal crime and victimization is closely tied to *Gathering Strength*—the Government of Canada's response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples that includes a commitment to a renewed relationship with Aboriginal peoples. A key element of *Gathering Strength* is the recognition that Aboriginal people must participate fully in the design and delivery of programs affecting their lives and communities. To date, more than 200 Aboriginal communities are working with the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* on activities grounded with a crime prevention through social development approach.

### Vulnerable Population Groups

There are other population groups in Canada that are at high risk of being victimized by crime, including seniors, gays and lesbians, persons with disabilities, and ethnocultural minorities. These population groups often cut across one or more of the *National Strategy's* four initial priority groups and are therefore at even higher risk.

#### **Seniors**

The safety and security of seniors is a growing issue in Canada as the population continues to age. For many seniors living in Canada today, personal security can be jeopardized by victimization experiences, social isolation, and the fear of crime. Seniors continue to be stigmatized and discriminated against because of age, and many Canadians take a paternalistic attitude toward seniors, frequently leaving them out of major decisions that directly affect their lives. This form of discrimination (ageism) is one of the challenges faced in promoting safety and security among older Canadians. It is apparent in stereotypes and images that depict older persons as mentally or physically weak; these images serve to exclude seniors from the mainstream of society, thereby contributing to paternalism, isolation, disempowerment, and potential victimization. Elder abuse and financial fraud are but two important issues for this group.

#### **Gays and Lesbians**

People who are deemed "gender-different" are disproportionately victimized by crime. They often suffer through rejection at home, bullying at school, and various other forms of mistreatment throughout life. This group includes gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and even heterosexual people who appear "gender different." They all experience high victimization rates, have a high level of fear of crime, and suffer social isolation and exclusion. Among other things, public education is needed to build understanding and eliminate the widespread homophobia that exists in Canada.

#### **Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities are highly vulnerable to abuse, assault, and sexual assault. Common living circumstances, such as institutionalization, social isolation, a dependency on support workers, and an overall misunderstanding of their cognitive ability to recognize and report an assault, contribute to high victimization rates for this group. Crime prevention projects in this area help persons with disabilities to spot potential dangers before they are victimized and should be complemented with educational programs for the general public.

### **Ethnocultural Minorities**

Canada is recognized throughout the world as an open, multicultural society. But many ethnocultural minorities in Canada continue to suffer discrimination due to race and culture. This form of discrimination creates social marginalization and limits the integration of ethnocultural minorities into Canadian society. It can also lead to bullying and other forms of violence. As with all vulnerable groups, public education is needed to correct misunderstandings regarding different peoples and to promote the value of multiculturalism within Canada.

# 5

## Communications Aids

This section provides tools that can be used to communicate information on safer communities and crime prevention.

The tips included in this section provide basic information to educate others about community safety and crime prevention, and to encourage action to address crime from a broad perspective. These tips can be presented with a personal introduction, to emphasize the fact that community involvement is a key aspect to creating safer societies.

### Canada's first drug court: Tough, but effective



When Ontario's chief drug prosecutor took over his office, he found that many of the same drug addicts he had seen during the early part of his career were still going in and out of Toronto's Old City Hall courthouse. Traditional court sentences were not solving the problem. Even conditional sentences, where the addicts were required by the court to seek treatment, were seldom enough to break the cycle.

The **TORONTO DRUG TREATMENT COURT** is changing this situation. A four-year, \$1.6-million pilot project started in 1998, the **DRUG TREATMENT COURT** offers intensive, court-supervised treatment, rehabilitation, and monitoring for non-violent drug addicts who get involved in drug-related criminal activity to support their habits.

Modelled after the approximately 600 such courts in the United States, this court is the first of its kind in Canada. The project is a joint venture between several municipal and provincial organizations, and is supported by the *National Strategy's Crime Prevention Investment Fund*.

The program, which lasts 12 to 16 months, brings together the criminal justice and drug treatment systems, as well as numerous community agencies. Known for being tough—only one in five applicants makes the preliminary cut—participants undertake a rigorous screening process, frequent drug testing and regular court appearances. In fact, these **DRUG TREATMENT COURT** participants are the most supervised non-incarcerated individuals in the criminal justice system. By summer 2000, 150 addicts had entered the program, and 22 had successfully completed the program.

In December 2001, the government launched the second **DRUG TREATMENT COURT** in Vancouver. The nature of the drug challenge in Vancouver is very similar to Toronto, though its size may be of a different order.

## Putting Crime Prevention in a Newsletter

*Safer Communities* can be used to produce a community newsletter on the subject of crime prevention. The helpful hints in this section can be used along with the information contained in other parts of the handbook. For example:

- An article could be written to outline the facts on the crime situation in Canada and emphasize the importance of a community-based approach to crime prevention through social development. Material from the **General Overview** could be used for this purpose.
- Articles and columns can be linked to relevant international and national days and weeks, such as International Women's Day, National Child Day, International Literacy Day, and so on.
- A box profiling groups and organizations involved in crime prevention in your community could be included. These organizations can be researched using the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* Web site at **www.prevention.gc.ca**.
- A column consisting of crime prevention tips could be written along with a personalized introduction. These tips could be targeted to specific population groups, such as seniors, parents, or women.

### Using Facts

The facts included in this handbook can also be useful for columns in community newspapers, speeches and appearances on cable television.

Sample Article

**SEVEN FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR**

Research has consistently shown that the following factors are linked to persistent criminal behaviour in young people and adults:

- family violence and neglect;
- parental rejection and lack of parent involvement;
- lack of friends, relatives, or neighbours who can provide emotional and social support;
- difficulties in school;
- peer pressure;
- poor housing and neighbourhoods that lack recreational, health, and educational facilities;
- drug and alcohol abuse.

For information on how individuals and communities across Canada are addressing these root causes of crime, call the National Crime Prevention Centre toll-free at 1-877-302-NCPC, or visit [www.prevention.gc.ca](http://www.prevention.gc.ca).

Eight Ways to Make a Difference

Crime prevention is about more than merely installing better locks and apprehending and punishing offenders. To really make a difference, we need to address the root causes of crime, and work to create vibrant and safer communities. Factors such as opportunities for education and employment, and access to services, adequate housing, and accessible play and recreational facilities are all important in this regard and we can all encourage our fellow citizens to create change. Our efforts can make a substantial difference for others, for ourselves, and for our communities.

Here are just a few ideas that you can share with those who wish to help build a safer community.

**1. GET INVOLVED.** Why not become a volunteer in your community? You can help make sure that safety needs are part of the agenda of a community organization. Or you can get involved in groups already working to help influence the factors that can prevent crime in the long run. For example, why not help out with Boys and Girls Clubs or Big Sisters and Big Brothers?

**2. BE NEIGHBOURLY.** If you live in a neighbourhood where many residents come and go, why not work with other residents to develop a “welcoming kit” for new neighbours? This kit could include information about community services, recreational facilities, and any organized groups such as Block Parents or Neighbourhood Watch. Neighbours developing a strong sense of community are one step toward creating a safer society.

**3. HELP BUILD PRIDE.** Why not establish a “Pride in Your Community” project? For example, you could help to organize community clean-ups in the spring, or check with your local municipality about starting a community garden in a public space or derelict site. Activities such as these celebrate communities and encourage residents to get to know one another.

**4. AUDIT FOR SAFETY.** If you conduct a safety audit, you can make recommendations about how to improve safety by modifying various features of your community. The findings can be presented to your local officials and work can be done with them to develop an action plan.

**5. BE A SPORT.** You can make a difference by getting involved in organized recreational activities and sports. Young people benefit most from the type of coach who not only teaches them a sport, but also aims to build self-esteem and helps them to become team players. Youth also need adult friends who are positive role models. This can help reduce the risk of their becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and make them less vulnerable to exploitation.

**6. FOCUS ON EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES.** These services aim to make sure babies and young children receive a rich and healthy upbringing. You can make a difference by getting involved in programs that address the issue of teen pregnancy, by working with your local community resource centre or residents’ or parents’ associations to set up babysitting co-operatives, or by establishing a community visit program for parents, especially single parents.

**7. CELEBRATE DIVERSITY.** In addition to planning events to celebrate diversity, you can help to ensure that the services delivered in your community (e.g., community health, resource and recreation centres) are culturally sensitive and appropriate. When the barriers that exclude some groups and individuals are dismantled, community spirit flourishes.

### A positive place to hang out



Hamilton, Ontario’s Centre Mall once drew groups of teenagers who were causing problems, smoking on the premises, and shoplifting. Today, the mall is a model for other shopping centres with similar problems. At the mall’s TEEN ZONE drop-in centre, kids can get involved in a range of positive recreational activities, develop skills, and find a sense of belonging.

With the March school break approaching, the TEEN ZONE organizers convinced mall management to let them use a vacant store space for the week. It’s now a place to play foosball or pool, watch TV, or use a computer. Once per week, there is a movie night with free popcorn.

But it’s more than just fun and games. Teens can also get help finding a job or a volunteer placement. Career counsellors are brought in to teach the kids how to write a résumé. The program also offers leadership training and life skills development sessions—all at no cost!

Supported by the Hamilton East Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club and the *National Strategy’s* Community Mobilization Program, this project has had a positive effect on the lives of many young people. One boy, who had committed a number of minor crimes, was brought to the drop-in centre by a police officer. Today, that teen has more self-esteem and has become the resident computer expert.

Always packed with teens during off-school hours, the TEEN ZONE is a huge success!

**8. REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRIME.** While you cannot entirely prevent theft, you can reduce the likelihood of its occurrence. For example, you can take action by never leaving valuables in open view, by always locking your car doors, and by making sure that someone keeps an eye on your home when you are away (e.g. have someone pick up your mail and help make sure your home looks occupied while you're gone).

### Finding Out More

Organizations and institutions interested in finding out more information about the *National Crime Prevention Strategy* can contact:

National Crime Prevention Centre  
Department of Justice  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0H8

Phone: (613) 941-9306 or 1-877-302-NCPC (toll-free)  
Email: [info@prevention.gc.ca](mailto:info@prevention.gc.ca)  
Web site: [www.prevention.gc.ca](http://www.prevention.gc.ca)  
Fax: (613) 952-3515

### Comments

We would appreciate feedback on the contents and usefulness of this handbook. Thank you.