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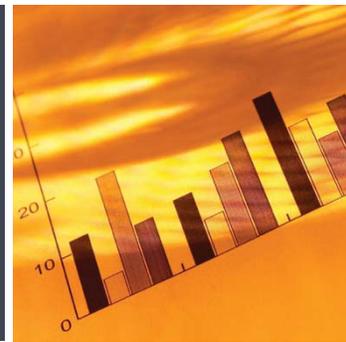
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RESEARCH SUMMARY

Results of Crime Prevention Programs for 12 to 17 Year Olds



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BUILDING A SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA

BACKGROUND

The research report focuses on the synthesized results of 9 evaluation studies of 10 different crime prevention models implemented for 12 to 17 year olds in 14 sites in Canada and funded under the National Crime Prevention Strategy¹ between 2009 and 2013. The following programs have been tested: Alternative Suspension (AS: Chilliwack BC, Edmonton AB and Moncton NB), Intervention Rethink Refocus Reintegrate (iR3: Surrey BC), Prevention Intervention Toronto (PIT: Toronto ON), Multisystemic Therapy (MST: Toronto ON), Youth Inclusion Program (YIP: Saint-John NB, North Sydney and Spryfield NS), Leadership and Resiliency (LRP: Hay River and Yellowknife NWT), Velocity (St. John's NFL), Life Skills Training (LST: Edmonton AB) and Towards No Drugs (TND: Hamilton ON)².

Most projects were implemented by voluntary not-for-profit organizations, in collaboration with key crime prevention stakeholders such as schools and local police. These organizations offered a variety of services for youth and young adults ranging from individual case management, education and employment support, skill building, and recreational activities. The interventions targeted youth who display multiple risk factors associated with criminal behaviour such as substance abuse, limited attachment to school, association with delinquent peers, violent and aggressive tendencies, and early contact with the justice system. Their risk profile is often complex and many of the youth also have low literacy rates, poor

parental supervision, mental health issues, unstable housing, and low academic achievement.

METHOD

A synthesis of nine evaluation studies was conducted to determine the efficacy of various crime prevention programs. Based on the original studies, a descriptive analysis was conducted for the domains related to knowledge, attitudes, risk and protective factors, and behaviours. Various types of statistics were clustered into four of the following types of categories:

A **positive change** is defined as a result that demonstrates a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) reduction in risk factors or offending behaviours or an increase in positive knowledge, attitudes or protective factors. A **negative change** is defined as a result that demonstrates that there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) increase in risk factors or offending behaviours or it demonstrates a decrease in positive knowledge, attitudes or protective factors. A **“neutral”** finding is defined as a result that does not demonstrate a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) change in the outcomes tested prior to and after the program. When an outcome has an equal number of negative and positive outcomes, an equal number of neutral and negative outcomes, or an equal number of neutral and positive outcomes, the findings are classified as **mixed**.

Information on the individual studies can be reviewed on Public Safety website. Individual studies are usually based on longitudinal pre and post-test designs with follow-up measures at six or twelve months. In some cases comparison groups were used. Also, evaluators were encouraged to utilize standardized and validated data collection tools, school and police data as well as qualitative techniques to strengthen the findings.

KEY FINDINGS

Knowledge and attitudes

¹ Overall, since 2010 PS has conducted 11 evaluation studies of 10 different models implemented for 12 to 17 year olds in 16 different sites across Canada; however, evaluation results of *Programme de suivi intensif de Montréal/Gangs de rue* and Youth Inclusion Program implemented in Montréal and Salaberry-de-Valleyfield were not available at this time.

² AS, iR3, PIT, MST, YIP, LRP, LST and TND.



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Seven of the studies measure knowledge and attitudes with a majority (71%) of the results showing positive changes for the youth in these various interventions (iR3 show neutral results and LST mixed results). A variety of knowledge and attitudes have been positively changed including: 1) *being motivated to change*; 2) *having a better understanding about the negative consequences of substance abuse*; 3) *having a positive attitude towards the justice system*; and 4) *having an appropriate attitude towards offending*.

Risk and protective factors

Eight of the eleven studies measure risks and protective factors with a majority of them showing positive changes for several variables related to seven domains. As indicated in the report, 43% of the domains show favourable changes (Skills, Education and Academic performance, Parenting and Family relationships), 43% show neutral results (Self-esteem and Emotional regulation, Externalizing behaviours and Pro-social behaviours, Alcohol and Drug abuse) and 14% show mixed results (Anti-social peers and Gang membership).

Skills: Two of the three studies (TND and Velocity) report favourable changes in decision making skills or ability to handle and reduce substance use. The LST program has had neutral trends on skills variables.

Anti-social/Peers/Gang membership: Two of the three studies (PIT and YIP) report mixed trends for this domain. The YIP addresses lifestyle (favourable), neighborhood and friends (neutral). The PIT had favourable changes associated with anti-social peers, but mixed results with regard to the association with gang-involved peers. The MST study reported favourable changes in youth success in academic/vocational settings.

Education/Academic performance: All of the studies measuring education/academic performance (AS, iR3, MST and YIP) demonstrate favourable trends for school-related behaviours. Key variables are related to performance, course completion, attendance, behaviour, disciplinary actions, absenteeism and suspension. PIT has mixed results for school attendance and disciplinary problems.

Self-esteem/Emotional regulation: One of the four studies had a positive impact on outcomes related to self-esteem and self-regulation. The YIP has had a

positive impact on perception of self and others, emotional and mental risk factors. The two other studies report neutral results (risk seeking for PIT and ability to handle stress for Velocity). LST has mixed results, with favourable results being demonstrated on self-image but neutral for coping skills.

Parenting/Family relationships: Two (MST and YIP) of the studies that measure parenting and family relationships report favourable changes. PIT's results related to these outcomes are neutral.

Externalizing behaviours/Pro-social behaviours: Impacts of Velocity on aggressive and anti-social behaviours are neutral.

Alcohol and drug abuse: For most of the programs (PIT, TND and YIP), results on substance use are neutral, and results for Velocity are mixed.

Behaviours related to crime

The impact evaluations also measured changes in behaviours related to crime and found that MST, Velocity and YIP had a favourable impact on *youth arrests* or *police contacts*. TND had a mixed impact on *weapon carrying* and PIT has been neutral on outcomes related to *arrests*, *non-violent offending* and *criminal victimizations*.

SOURCE

D. Laliberté, G. Rosario, L. Léonard, D. Smith-Moncrieffe and A. Warner (2014). *Results of Crime Prevention Programs for 12 to 17 Year Olds*, Research Report 2014-03. Catalogue number: PS18-18/2014E-PDF. ISBN: 978-1-100-24766-3 © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2014.

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