U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice

ISSUE NO. 273

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

JOURNAL

03/2014

NIJ's Sentinel Events Initiative:

Looking Back to Look Forward

Criminal Justice System

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Changing Course: Keeping Kids Out of Gangs

'Cultural Shift' Is Among Findings of Second Chance Act Evaluation

Replicating HOPE: Can Others Do It As Well As Hawaii?

Solving Cold Cases With DNA: The Boston Strangler Case

Healthy Communities May Make Safe Communities: Public Health Approaches to Violence Prevention

Through Their Eyes: How Prisoners Make Sense of Their Incarceration

NIJ

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs

810 Seventh St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General

Karol V. Mason
Assistant Attorney General

Greg Ridgeway
Acting Director, National Institute of Justice

This and other publications and products of the National Institute of Justice can be found at:

National Institute of Justice
http://www.nij.gov

NCJ 244144

Subscribe

Online NIJ.gov, keyword: subscribe
Phone 301-519-5500
800-851-3420
Mail NCJRS
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000

Contact NIJ

National Institute of Justice
810 Seventh St. N.W., Washington, DC 20531, USA
202-307-2942

NIJ

Building Knowledge to Meet the Challenge of Crime and Justice

National Institute of Justice

Greg Ridgeway
Acting Director, National Institute of Justice

The *NIJ Journal* is published by the National Institute of Justice to announce the Institute's policy-relevant research results and initiatives.

Findings and conclusions of the research reported here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

All products, manufacturers and organizations cited in this publication are presented for informational purposes only, and their discussion does not constitute product approval or endorsement by the U.S. Department of Justice.

NIJ Journal Editorial Board

Thomas E. Feucht
Lee Mockensturm
Angela Moore
Marilyn Moses
Nancy Ritter
George Tillery
Cheryl Crawford Watson

Editor-in-Chief

Jolene Hernon

Contact Us

jolene.hernon@usdoj.gov

Production

Palladian Partners, Inc.
Beth Pearsall, *Managing Editor*
Sarah Berson, *Consulting Editor*
Amy Schneider, *Production Editor*
Aaron Auyeung, *Designer*
Yue Xu, *Designer*

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I have been the acting director of NIJ for just over a year, and on my anniversary, I naturally looked back at the past 12 months and forward to the coming months. So I was particularly intrigued by the article in this issue of the *NIJ Journal* in which former NIJ employee Winnie Reed reflects on her many years at NIJ.

When asked what she will miss most about the work, Winnie said, "The substance. Whatever the subject area, the idea has been improvement: Help people in the field stop doing things that aren't useful and start doing things that are. It makes life better for everybody."

This gets to the very heart of NIJ's mission: using rigorous science to determine what works — and what does not work — in criminal justice. We do this a number of ways:

Supporting scientific research and evaluation: NIJ provides evidence-based knowledge and tools to help ensure the safety of families, neighborhoods and communities. Several articles in this issue — like the one on NIJ's Second Chance Act evaluation and the story on the latest DNA research that helped Boston solve a 50-year-old rape and murder — demonstrate how we work across disciplines to reduce crime and promote justice.

Fostering innovative partnerships: We are committed to bringing all stakeholders to the table to help solve community problems. For example, two other articles in this issue highlight how police chiefs, public health directors and social science researchers are collaborating to find creative ways to address gangs, crime and violence.

Propelling the field forward: We are always looking to build a more effective, fair and efficient criminal justice system — be it through cutting-edge technology, groundbreaking programs or, perhaps most important, improved practice. NIJ has begun looking at ways to reduce criminal justice errors and strengthen the administration of justice. This issue's cover story talks about the viability of using a nonblaming, forward-thinking, all-stakeholders sentinel events review process to improve outcomes.

This issue of the *NIJ Journal* presents just a small sample of the innovative research, development, testing and evaluation we do every day to advance what works best in preventing and reducing crime — because the more we know about what works, the better we are at making a difference.

Greg Ridgeway

Acting Director, National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice is the research, development and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ's mission is to advance scientific research, development and evaluation to enhance the administration of justice and public safety.

The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Office for Victims of Crime; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART).

Photo Sources: ThinkStock, Matthew Nichols and the City of East Palo Alto.

CONTENTS

1 Director's Message

4 NIJ Bulletin • New on NIJ.gov

10 NIJ's Sentinel Events Initiative: Looking Back to Look Forward
by James M. Doyle

16 Changing Course: Keeping Kids Out of Gangs
by Nancy Ritter, Thomas R. Simon, and Reshma R. Mahendra

28 'Cultural Shift' Is Among Findings of Second Chance Act Evaluation
by Nancy Ritter

36 Replicating HOPE: Can Others Do It As Well As Hawaii?
by Beth Pearsall

42 Winnie Reed: More Than 40 Years of Contributions to NIJ
by Nancy Ritter

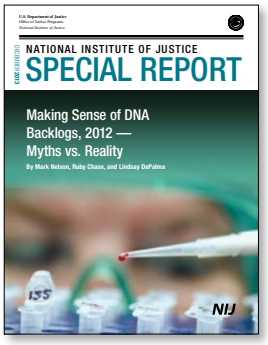
48 Solving Cold Cases With DNA: The Boston Strangler Case
by Philip Bulman

52 Healthy Communities May Make Safe Communities: Public Health Approaches to Violence Prevention
by Sarah Schweig

60 Through Their Eyes: How Prisoners Make Sense of Their Incarceration
by Nadine Frederique and Lori Sexton

NIJ BULLETIN

Publications in Brief



Making Sense of DNA Backlogs, 2012 — Myths vs. Reality

This special report provides an update on the status of DNA backlogs in the nation's crime laboratories and examines solutions for increasing efficiency. It finds that although laboratories processed 10 percent more DNA cases in 2011 than in 2009, the workload in laboratories is still increasing because the demand for DNA analysis nationwide continues to outpace laboratory capacity. The report, an update to NIJ's 2010 publication by the same name, is based on data collected from more than 120 public laboratories that received grants under NIJ's DNA Backlog Reduction Program.

Read the report at NCJRS.gov, keyword: 243347.

Research Report Digests

NIJ has released new issues of the *Research Report Digest,* which provides short summaries of NIJ-funded research reports added to the publications database at NCJRS.gov. Topics covered include crime, forensic sciences, and evaluations of technologies that are used in the law enforcement and corrections fields.

Read the latest *Research Report Digest* at NIJ.gov, keywords: research digest.

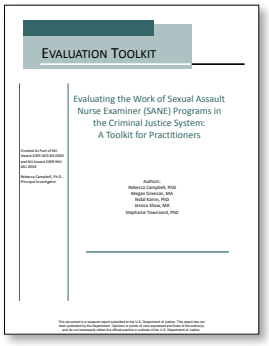
News & Events

NIJ Grantees Win the 2014 Stockholm Criminology Prize

NIJ grantees Daniel Nagin and Joan Petersilia won the 2014 Stockholm Prize in Criminology. The international prize is awarded annually for outstanding achievements in criminological research or for the application of research results by practitioners for the reduction of crime and the advancement of human rights.

Nagin and Petersilia's research has reshaped the use of prison and community corrections based on evidence of what works — and what doesn't. Petersilia's work on prisoner re-entry has led to increased support for offenders during the high-risk period immediately following their release from prison, when they often have no place to live or work. Nagin's research on the zero-to-negative effects of prison helped support the first decline in four decades in the world's highest incarceration rate, providing a clear rationale to invest more in policing than in imprisonment.

Watch Joan Petersilia give the keynote address at the 2012 NIJ Conference at NIJ.gov, keywords: Petersilia keynote.


Evaluation Toolkit

Evaluating the Work of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Programs in the Criminal Justice System: A Toolkit for Practitioners

Created As Part of NIJ Award 2005-WG-BX-0005 and NIJ Award 2009-WG-BX-0002

Rebecca Campbell, Ph.D., Principal Investigator

Author:
Rebecca Campbell, PhD
Megan Greeson, MA
Nidal Karim, PhD
Jessica Shaw, MA
Stephanie Townsend, PhD

This document is a research report submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice. This report has not been published by the Department. Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Rebecca Campbell Receives 2013 Outstanding Evaluation Award

NIJ grantee Rebecca Campbell of Michigan State University received the American Evaluation Association's 2013 Outstanding Evaluation Award, the association's highest award for a single evaluation project. Campbell used NIJ funds to develop a toolkit to help Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program staff evaluate the impact their programs have on sexual assault prosecution rates in their communities. Campbell and her colleagues then worked with six SANE programs across the U.S. to implement the toolkit's seven-step evaluation process.

Access the toolkit at NCJRS.gov, keyword: 240917.

Read "Implementation of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Practitioner Evaluation Toolkit" on NCJRS.gov, keyword: 240916.

Zgoba Wins 2014-2015 Fulbright Award

NIJ grantee Kristen M. Zgoba was recently awarded a 2014-2015 Fulbright award to the United Kingdom, where she will study sex crime rates pre- and post-sex offender legislation.

Over the years, Zgoba has contributed an impressive body of knowledge about sex offenses and offenders to the field, including characteristics of sex offenders, predictive validity of risk assessment tools, recidivism trajectories, and collateral consequences of sex offender notification and residency restriction laws. Her seminal work on prevalence rates of sex offenses before and after Megan's Law has become a benchmark for future research in the field.

Zgoba is currently supervisor of research and evaluation at the New Jersey Department of Corrections. In 2013, she won the Peter P. Lejins Research Award, the highest honor bestowed upon a corrections researcher.

Read more about Zgoba's work at NCJRS.gov, keyword: 240699.

Recent Research Findings

Opening the Black Box of NIBIN: A Descriptive Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Use of NIBIN and Its Effects on Criminal Investigations

NIJ funded a team of researchers from four universities to evaluate the operations of the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). Through NIBIN, firearms examiners at state and local crime laboratories can compare tool marks on fired bullets or cartridges found at a crime scene to digitized images of ballistic evidence in a nationwide database. The study found wide variation in NIBIN sites' use of the database, with some sites using NIBIN hits more effectively or efficiently. The report offers recommendations to realize the potential of NIBIN as a tactical and strategic crime prevention tool.

Read the full report on NCJRS.gov, keyword: 243875.

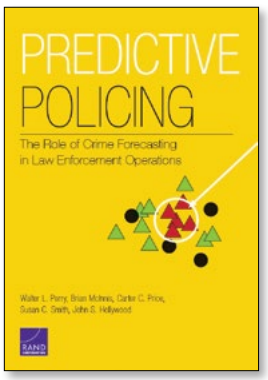
Learn more about NIBIN and the NIJ evaluation at NIJ.gov, keyword: NIBIN.

Monitoring High-Risk Gang Offenders With GPS Technology: An Evaluation of the California Supervision Program

California has roughly 250,000 gang members, belonging to 336 different gangs. The National Gang Intelligence Center estimates that in jurisdictions like California with a large concentration of gang members, gangs are responsible for at least 90 percent of crime.

In response, California has been using GPS to monitor high-risk gang offenders placed on parole. This NIJ-funded evaluation examined the effectiveness of California's strategy. The results suggest that GPS monitoring — integrated into a traditional parole supervision regime — is associated with decreased odds of arrests but increased odds of parole violations compared with traditional parole supervision. Moreover, some preliminary evidence indicates that those monitored by GPS are significantly more likely to return to custody than non-GPS-monitored parolees.

Read the full report on NCJRS.gov, keyword: 244164.



Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations

Through a grant from NIJ, the RAND Corporation released *Predictive Policing: The Role of Crime Forecasting in Law Enforcement Operations,* a practical guide for departments interested in using predictive policing. The guide assesses the most promising technical tools for making predictions and the most promising tactical approaches to act on them. Predictive policing, which involves looking at data and making connections, offers a solid prevention process to avoid and predict crimes such as gang activity and burglary.

Read the report at NCJRS.gov, keyword: 243830.

Watch NIJ's Greg Ridgeway discuss predictive policing and ways it can lower crime at NIJ.gov, keyword: predictive.

NEW ON NIJ.GOV

'Sentinel Events' and Criminal Justice System Errors

When bad things happen in a complex system, the cause is rarely a single act or a lone "bad apple." More often, an error — or "sentinel event" — actually signals a systemwide problem.

In criminal justice, a sentinel event could be a wrongful conviction or even a "near miss" that could have led to a bad outcome if it had not been caught.

NIJ supports research on reducing criminal justice errors and improving the administration of justice, including using a forward-thinking, nonblaming, all-stakeholders approach; examining wrongful convictions; and improving eyewitness identification.

Learn more at NIJ.gov, keyword: sentinel.

From Juvenile Delinquency to Young Adult Offending

Scholars and laypeople alike debate what causes young people to commit crimes. Most states mark the legal transition from adolescence to adulthood at age 18, but researchers question whether the human brain is fully mature at this age.

As part of NIJ's Study Group on the Transitions Between Juvenile Delinquency and Adult Crime, scholars examined differences between juveniles who continue to offend and those who stop. They also looked at offending in early adulthood and the costs and benefits of interventions.

Learn more about research related to young adults at NIJ.gov, keyword: transitions.

Watch an interview with Yale Law School's Tracey Meares about deterrence and legitimacy at NIJ.gov, keywords: Meares interview.

Information for DNA Backlog Reduction Program Grantees

Applicants and grantees under NIJ's DNA Backlog Reduction Program can now find recommended documents, guidance, quick guides and answers to frequently asked questions online. Topics covered include applications, budgets, progress reports and performance measures, federal financial reports, grant adjustment notices, program income, and closeouts.

Read more at NIJ.gov, keywords: backlog grantees.

Sharing Data to Improve Science

Secondary data analysis allows researchers to build on existing findings, replicate results and conduct new analyses. Through NIJ's Data Resources Program, data collected as a part of NIJ research are archived and made available to support new research aimed at reproducing original findings, replicating results and testing new hypotheses.

- Learn about NIJ's Data Resources Program at NIJ.gov, keywords: data resources program.

When an NIJ-funded study ends, researchers submit their data to the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, which has been collecting data since 1978.

Recent data sets added to the National Archive include:

- Alternative Sentencing Policies for Drug Offenders: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Kansas Senate Bill 123, 2001-2010
- Dynamics of Retail Methamphetamine Markets in New York City, 2007-2009
- Evaluation of SAFEChildren, a Family-Focused Prevention Program in Chicago, Illinois, 2006-2010
- Habeas Corpus Litigation in United States District Courts: An Empirical Study, 2000-2006
- Investigating the Role of Context, Meaning, and Method in Violence Against Women in Atlanta, Georgia, 2000-2002
- Process Evaluation of the Demonstration Project to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Atlanta-Fulton County, Georgia, United States, 2006-2009
- Situational Crime Prevention at Specific Locations in Community Context: Place and Neighborhood Effects in Cincinnati, Ohio, 2005-2008
- Systematic Review of School-Based Programs to Reduce Bullying and Victimization, 1983-2009

Learn about accessing and using research data from NIJ studies at NIJ.gov, keywords: accessing data resources.

Research Updates

The following NIJ Web pages have been updated with additional research findings:

- **Teen dating violence:** Teen dating violence includes physical, psychological or sexual abuse; harassment; or stalking of any person age 12 to 18 in the context of a past or present romantic or other consensual relationship. Building on a long history of research on intimate partner violence, NIJ is now looking to adolescent relationships to understand the factors that put individuals at risk for involvement in abusive romantic relationships as adults. Read the updated pages at NIJ.gov, keywords: teen dating.
- **Predictive policing:** NIJ awarded grants to Rutgers University and the Police Foundation to conduct studies on using geospatial strategies to improve policing. Read more about the predictive policing grants at NIJ.gov, keyword: predictive.

- **Body armor:** Body armor is critical safety equipment for law enforcement and corrections officers. NIJ establishes and updates voluntary minimum performance standards for body armor, conducts testing to ensure that body armor complies with these standards, and sponsors research to improve body armor. Visit the updated pages at NIJ.gov, keywords: body armor.

Second Chance Act: What Have We Learned About Re-Entry Programs So Far?

Offender re-entry into the community continues to be a pressing social problem: The number of inmates released every year from U.S. prisons increased fourfold over the past three decades.

Since the passage of the Second Chance Act (SCA) in 2008, more than $250 million has been awarded to government agencies and nonprofits for programs to help offenders successfully re-enter society. In this interview, NIJ grantee Ron D'Amico of Social Policy Research Associates discusses the implementation of SCA programs and their impact on offender re-entry.

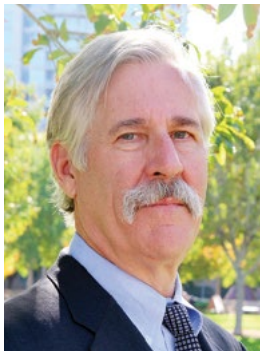
Watch the interview on NIJ.gov, keyword: D'Amico.

Research for the Real World: Why Is the United States the Most Homicidal Nation in the Affluent World?

Since World War II, the homicide rate in the U.S. has been three to 10 times higher than the rate in Canada, Western Europe or Japan. However, this has not always been the case. What caused the dramatic change?

In this *Research for the Real World* seminar, Randy Roth discusses how and why homicide rates have varied across time and space over the past 450 years, including an examination of the murder of children by parents or caregivers, intimate partner violence, and homicides among unrelated adults.

Watch and listen to Roth's seminar at NIJ.gov, keywords: Roth presentation.



Research for the Real World: Consequences of a Prison Record for Employment: How Do Race, Ethnicity and Gender Factor In?

Scott Decker and his colleagues recently completed an in-depth examination of the roles of race, gender and education in one of the greatest social challenges facing our nation today: employment for criminal offenders returning to the community. Based on the results of this three-year study, Decker makes recommendations that could be critically important as decision-makers craft pre- and post-release policies and strategies to help the more than 600,000 criminal offenders who return to the community every year, particularly in this increasingly online world.

Watch and listen to Decker's seminar at NIJ.gov, keywords: Decker presentation.

Criminal
Justice
System

NIJ'S SENTINEL EVENTS INITIATIVE: LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

BY **JAMES M. DOYLE**

Can — and should — the criminal justice system implement a nonblaming, forward-thinking, all-stakeholders approach to improving criminal justice outcomes?

DNA exonerations of wrongfully convicted defendants have thrown a new light on the problem of error in American criminal justice and have revealed a gap in our system's design. We lack a feature that medicine, aviation and other high-risk enterprises see as critical: a way to account for tragic outcomes that no one intended, learn lessons from these errors, and use these lessons to reduce future risks.

Can the criminal justice system develop this capacity for "forward-looking accountability"?[1] Can we accept error as an inevitable element of the human condition and study errors (or "near misses") in a disciplined and consistent way? Can we share the lessons learned from these studies to prevent future errors? Can we focus on minimizing future risks instead of on blame for the past?

To explore these questions, NIJ has launched a "sentinel events" initiative. A sentinel event is a significant, unexpected negative outcome — for example, a wrongful conviction, an erroneous release from prison or a cold case that stayed cold too long — that signals a possible weakness in the system or process. Sentinel events are likely the result of compound errors and may provide — if properly analyzed and addressed — important keys to strengthening the system and preventing future adverse events or outcomes.

As part of its sentinel events initiative, NIJ convened a roundtable of experts in 2013 to discuss the applicability of a sentinel events approach — a nonblaming, forward-thinking, all-stakeholders approach — to improving criminal justice outcomes. The eclectic and veteran group, drawn from all criminal justice stakeholders, agreed that NIJ should step across the threshold and begin to critically test the viability of a sentinel events approach (see sidebar, "NIJ to Fund Research on Sentinel Events").

How Things Go Wrong: The Wrong Patient, The Wrong Man

One way to see the learning opportunities presented by criminal justice sentinel events such as wrongful convictions is to examine contemporary medicine's encounter with its own version of the problem: "iatrogenic" injuries to patients, or harm caused by medical treatment.

NIJ to Fund Research on Sentinel Events

Subject to congressional appropriations, NIJ hopes to fund research in fiscal year 2014 to explore a sentinel events review process of criminal justice system errors. The goal would be to test the viability of implementing a nonblaming, forward-thinking, all-stakeholders approach to improving the functioning of the justice system. Proposals are due May 22, 2014. For more information, go to NIJ.gov, keyword: sentinel.

The criminal justice system is haunted by the fact that it sometimes convicts the wrong person; the medical field is haunted by the fact that it sometimes operates on the wrong patient. When modern medical researchers began to look carefully at wrong-patient events, they uncovered surprising insights. For example, one intensive examination of a wrong-patient surgery discovered at least 17 errors, including that the patient's face was draped so that the physicians could not see it; a resident left the laboratory assuming the attending physician had ordered the invasive surgery without telling him; conflicting charts were overlooked; and contradictory patient stickers were ignored. But the crucial point for the researchers was that no single one of the 17 errors they catalogued could have caused the wrong-patient surgery by itself.[2]

The researchers' analysis showed not only mistakes by individual doctors and nurses but also latent systemic problems. Communication between staff was terrible; computer systems did not share information. When teams failed to function, no one was alarmed because of a culture of low expectations that "led [staff] to conclude that these red flags signified not unusual, worrisome harbingers but rather mundane repetitions of the poor communication to which they had become inured."[3] Deviations from good practice had become normal — and tragedy resulted.

The findings showed that the wrong-patient surgery was an "organizational accident." No single error can cause an organizational accident independently; the errors of many individuals ("active errors") converge and interact with system weaknesses ("latent conditions"), increasing the likelihood that these individual errors will do harm.

These insights can apply to "wrong-man" convictions and other criminal justice system errors.

Many things have to go wrong before the wrong man is convicted. Yes, the eyewitness has to choose the wrong man from a photo array, but law enforcement has to decide to put him into the photo array in the first place as well as design and administer the array. Forensic evidence on the crime scene may have been overlooked or — even if properly collected and tested in the laboratory — distorted in the courtroom presentation. Cell phone, Metro card or other alibi information may have been ignored or considered insignificant. Tunnel vision — augmented by media hysteria or by clearance-rate and caseload pressures from above — may have overwhelmed investigators and prosecutors.[4] Poorly funded or untrained defense counsel may have failed to investigate alternative explanations or execute effective cross-examination. No single error would have been enough. The errors combined and cascaded — *then* there was tragedy.

The right answer to the question "Who is responsible for this wrongful conviction?" is almost invariably: "Everyone involved, to one degree or another." Those involved either made a mistake or failed to catch one. And "everyone" includes not only cops, forensic scientists and lawyers directly involved in a case but also legislators, policymakers and appellate judges far away from the scene of the event, as they helped design the system and dictate the conditions under which those directly involved work.

The range of criminal justice sentinel events extends far beyond wrongful convictions. It encompasses "near miss" cases that at earlier points seemed

solid and cold cases that stayed cold too long. It includes wrongful releases (because of legal or technical shortfalls) of dangerous or factually guilty criminals. Sentinel events also could encompass failures to prevent intimate partner violence within at-risk families or situations where catastrophic cost constitutes the harmful event, such as incarcerating a nondangerous geriatric prisoner long past the point that the imprisonment serves any purpose. In fact, anything that stakeholders can agree should not happen again could be considered a sentinel event.

From Blame to Comprehension

In criminal justice, we traditionally take a single-cause approach to error that assumes those responsible are "bad apples." Someone must be to blame for the error, so the impulse is to find and discipline that person: charge him, sue him, fire him or, at the very least, shame him and exhort him to do better. This is what people typically mean when they call for "accountability" in the aftermath, for example, of the exoneration of an innocent person.

But by focusing exclusively on ascribing blame, we drive valuable reports of errors underground and leave latent system weaknesses unaddressed. Practitioners do not want to be blamed, and they do not want to blame colleagues — thus, nothing gets reported.

This can affect agencies as well as individuals. In a blame-oriented environment, it's likely that when a sentinel event cannot be buried completely, the pressure intensifies to keep it in house or to try to shift the blame to someone else's "house." But because no individual house can ever fully explain an organizational accident, weaknesses that might be studied and understood instead remain latent in the system, waiting for the next "perfect storm" of case facts or processes to come along. Searching for a single cause prevents us from understanding how complex systems fail through the confluent, cascading errors — active and passive — of multiple contributors from many houses.[5]

Even in situations where we identify a bad apple — a corrupt or incompetent forensic scientist, for example, or a prosecutor who buries plainly exculpatory evidence — the single-cause approach is incomplete. Standing to the left and the right of the bad apple are the officials and practitioners who hired him, created his work environment and failed to catch his mistakes. We never ask the critical question, "Why did this horrific decision look like the best (or, perhaps, the least bad) decision to the bad apple at the time?"

From Stovepipes to Common Ground

To reduce the chronic risk of organizational accidents, the medical and aviation fields bring all stakeholders together to examine — in a nonblaming manner — sentinel events; they then share the lessons uncovered.

If we decide to view a sentinel event in criminal justice as an organizational accident to which everyone's house contributed, we — like those in medicine and aviation — must consider an all-stakeholders approach. All practitioners and stakeholders should come to the table to analyze known errors and near misses — not by searching for a single cause or blaming a single bad apple, but by appreciating and describing an event's complexity.

As Dr. Lucien Leape, a professor at the Harvard University School of Public Health and a pioneer in the patient safety movement, noted in the medical context, "Efficient, routine error identification needs to be part of hospital practice, as does routine investigation of all errors that cause injury."[6] The National Transportation Safety Board follows a similar practice in the aftermath of an airplane crash.

But as Leape added, "The emphasis is on *routine.* Only when error is accepted as an inevitable, although manageable, part of everyday practice will it be possible to shift from a punitive to a creative frame of mind that seeks out and identifies the underlying system failures."

System Repairs

NIJ's sentinel events initiative explores this idea in the criminal justice field: Can — and should — criminal justice develop a commitment to regular, routine,

risk-oriented review of known errors and near misses conducted by experienced practitioners and other stakeholders?

To discuss the applicability of such an approach, NIJ convened a roundtable of experts in May 2013. The roundtable, which included nationally recognized experts from law enforcement, prosecution, defense, courts, crime laboratories, the victims' community, risk management and the research community, was a first step in maturing the concept of using a sentinel events review process in the criminal justice system.

The group noted many challenges to a sentinel events approach, including some that are obvious: inertia, unfamiliarity and the adversarial basis of American jurisprudence. Other challenges were more subtle: the balance between incident liability and risk management, the role of internal disciplinary processes, and the current state of confidentiality protections.

Noting that these and other challenges could not be resolved by a one-size-fits-all program, the roundtable participants agreed that each jurisdiction would have its own unique features.

But there was also a conviction among participants that these local challenges were not insurmountable — that "if you want to learn something, try something." The participants returned again and again to the importance of shifting focus from blame for past mistakes to understanding future risk. And most of the roundtable participants came away convinced that there is room for taking a step forward and testing the prospects.

To read more about the roundtable and NIJ's sentinel event work, go to NIJ.gov, keyword: sentinel.

An Ambitious Goal by Modest Means

In practice, the world of criminal justice operates as a vague ecosystem — a swamp or a pond, where something (funding, for example) dumped in on one coast has mysterious and unanticipated effects on the far shore. An effort to adopt modern medicine and aviation's experiences to criminal justice will enter this swamp or pond from a different angle.

Such an effort can be at once both modest and ambitious: modest in the investment and the degree of federal involvement; ambitious in that it seeks to change a culture to one that routinely concentrates on improving the reliability of the criminal process for the victims, the accused and the public. To accomplish this, NIJ's sentinel events initiative would ensure that the effort be subjected to rigorous scientific evaluation right from the start.

About the Author

James M. Doyle is a visiting fellow at NIJ.

For More Information

The full summary of the roundtable is available at NIJ.gov, keyword: sentinel.

Notes

1. Sharpe, Virginia A., "Promoting Patient Safety: An Ethical Basis for Policy Deliberation," *Hastings Center Report, Special Supplement* 33(5) (July/August 2003): S1-S20, available at http://www.thehastingscenter.org/pdf/patient_safety.pdf.

2. Chassin, Mark R., and Elise C. Becher, "The Wrong Patient," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 1(36) (2002): 826-833.

3. *Ibid.,* 829-830.

4. Findley, Keith A., and Michael S. Scott, "The Multiple Dimensions of Tunnel Vision in Criminal Cases," *Wisconsin Law Review* 2 (2006): 291-395. University of Wisconsin Legal Studies Research Paper No. 1023. Available at http://hosted.law.wisc.edu/lawreview/issues/2006-2/findley-scott.pdf.

5. Woods, David D., "Conflicts Between Learning and Accountability in Patient Safety," *DePaul Law Review* 54 (2005): 485-502. Available at http://csel.eng.ohio-state.edu/woods/medicine/Woods%20LawReview%202.1.pdf.

6. Leape, Lucian L., "Error in Medicine," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 272 (1994): 1851-1857.

NCJ 244145

THE NATION'S FORENSIC SCIENCES REPORT CARD

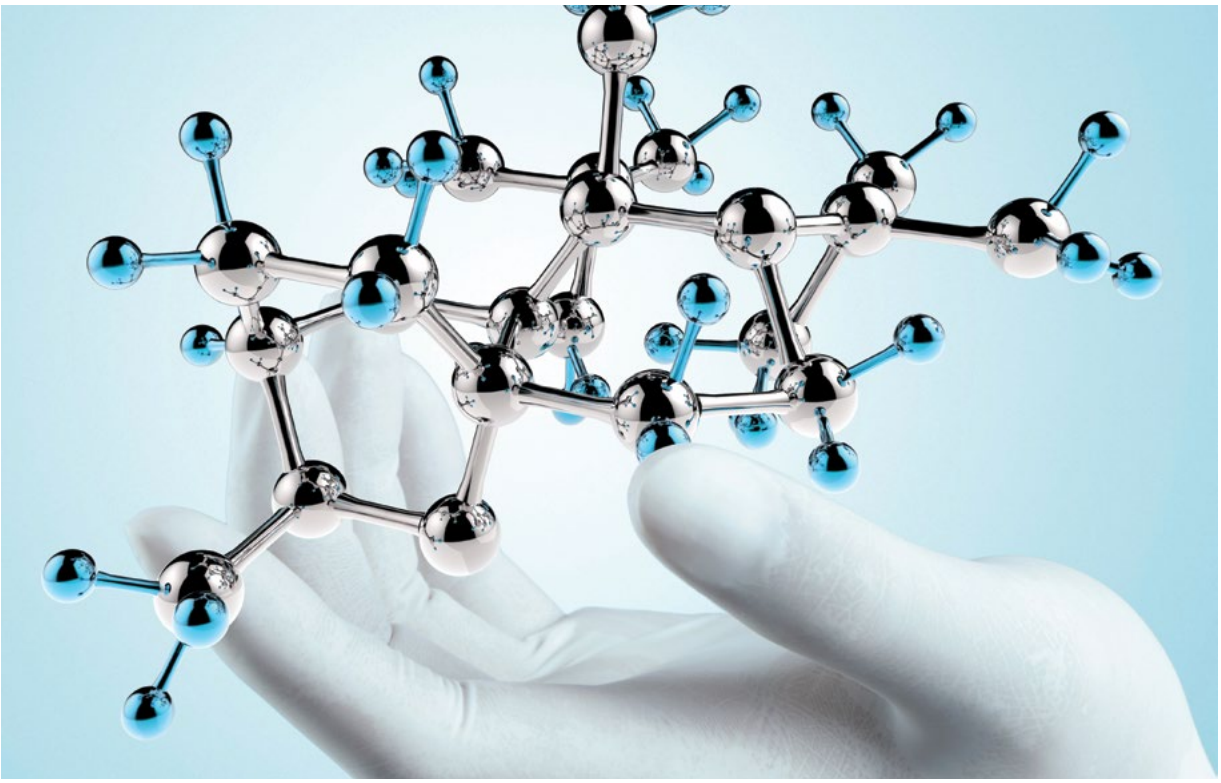
In February 2014, the White House released a report on the nation's progress toward strengthening the forensic sciences. NIJ plays a large role in the ongoing effort.

"Today more than ever, science and technology are essential to the pursuit of justice and are critical to the appropriate collection, assessment, and application of evidence in the criminal justice system," said the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, which is coordinating the nationwide effort.

Read the White House report, *Strengthening Forensic Science: A Progress Report,* at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/forensicscience_progressreport_feb-2014.pdf.

Learn more about NIJ's forensic sciences research, which investigates DNA and other biological evidence; toxicology; impression and pattern evidence (fingerprints and shoeprints); document analysis; ballistics; and trace evidence like hair, fiber and gunshot residue, at NIJ.gov, keyword: forensic.

See forensics research funded by NIJ in recent years at NIJ.gov, keyword: forensic.



8
36

CHANGING COURSE: KEEPING KIDS OUT OF GANGS

BY **NANCY RITTER, THOMAS R. SIMON,** AND **RESHMA R. MAHENDRA**

A new book offers evidence-based principles that can halt the cascading impact of gangs on youth, families, neighborhoods and society at large.

The gang problem in the United States has remained stubbornly persistent over the past decade. Here are the facts:

- One in three local law enforcement agencies in 2010 reported youth gang problems in their jurisdiction.[1]
- In a 2010 national survey, 45 percent of high school students and 35 percent of middle-schoolers said that there were gangs — or students who considered themselves part of a gang — in their school.[2]
- Nearly one in 12 youth said they belonged to a gang at some point during their teenage years.[3]

Public health and public safety workers who respond to gang problems know that after-the-fact responses are not sufficient. An emergency department doctor who treats gang-related gunshot wounds and a law enforcement officer who must tell a mother that her son has been killed in a drive-by shooting are both likely to stress the need for prevention — and the complementary roles that public health and law enforcement must play — in stopping violence *before* it starts.

But how can we prevent gang-joining, especially during a time of limited national, state, tribal and local budgets? To help meet the challenge, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NIJ engaged some of the nation's top criminal justice and public health researchers to explore what the evidence shows. The result of that effort is the book *Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership* and its companion executive summary, which are available in print, Web and e-book formats. (See sidebar, "What's in the Book?")

The Consequences of Gang Membership

The consequences of gangs — and the burdens placed on the law enforcement and health systems in our communities — are significant. Homicide is the second-leading cause of death for American adolescents and young adults: an average of 13 deaths every day among 15- to 24-year-olds.[4] However, the number of violent deaths tells only part of the story. More than 700,000 young people are treated in emergency departments in the U.S. for assault-related injuries every year.[5]

Although kids in gangs are far more likely than kids not involved in gangs to be both victims and perpetrators of violence,[6] the risks go far beyond crime and violence. Gang-involved youth are more likely to engage in substance abuse and high-risk sexual behavior and to experience a wide range of potentially long-term health and social consequences,

including school dropout, teen parenthood, family problems and unstable employment.[7]

Local, state and federal budgets — in public health, criminal justice, education and community services — currently address the aftermath of gang-joining. But because the large majority of youth who join a gang do so at a very early age (between the ages of 11 and 15[8]), early prevention is key.

Fortunately, we know that many early-prevention programs are effective and provide taxpayers with significantly more benefits than costs. For example, Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman has written about the economic benefits of targeting high-risk children before they start kindergarten.[9] Steve Aos and his colleagues at the Washington State Institute for Public Policy have done cost-benefit analyses of prevention programs that show significant effects on a range of outcomes, including crime, educational attainment, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, and public assistance.[10] Many programs have substantial returns that far exceed the costs.

Therefore, in our partnership to publish *Changing Course,* NIJ and CDC focus on the early prevention of gang-joining, which has the potential for enormous savings for communities in terms of medical, law enforcement, incarceration and lost productivity costs — not to mention reductions in fear, increases in school security, the enhancement of property values and greater community cohesion.

How Big Is the Problem?

In the first chapter of *Changing Course,* James C. ("Buddy") Howell discusses the magnitude of the problem and why preventing kids from joining gangs is so important. Howell is a senior research associate at the National Gang Center who has been performing research on gangs for more than 30 years.

"At the individual level," he says, "youths who join a gang develop an increased propensity for violence, and, in turn, their likelihood of violent victimization increases. In addition, their favorable life-course outcomes are significantly reduced."

Howell discusses how gang involvement encourages more active participation in delinquency, drug use, drug trafficking and violence — all of which, in turn, may result in arrest, conviction and incarceration.[11] Gang involvement also tends to bring disorder to the life course in a cumulative pattern of negative outcomes, including school dropout, teen parenthood and unstable employment.[12]

With respect to community decline and costs, Howell reports that large cities have seen consistently high or increasing levels of gang-related homicides in recent years.[13] He also discusses other impacts on communities, including loss of property value and neighborhood businesses and tax revenue, weakened informal social control mechanisms, and the exodus of families from gang-ridden neighborhoods.[14]

According to one estimate, by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, crime costs Americans an estimated $655 billion each year.[15] And highly respected researchers have determined that, over the course of a lifetime, a high-rate criminal offender can impose some $4.2-7.2 million in costs on society.[16] But, Howell notes, the costs are relatively low during the *early* years of a chronic offender's life (defined as six or more law enforcement contacts through age 26): about $3,000 at age 10.[17] This, he argues, demonstrates the cost-benefit of early-prevention efforts that focus on youth in high-risk settings before problem behaviors develop.

The Attractions of Gangs

In a *Changing Course* chapter on the attractions of gangs, Carl S. Taylor and Pamela R. Smith discuss what the evidence shows about factors that, for some kids, outweigh the potentially life-destroying consequences of joining a gang. Taylor, a professor at Michigan State University, has worked with communities on the issues of youth violence, gangs and youth development for 40 years. Smith manages the female study for the Michigan Gang Research Project. They discuss several factors that have been shown to attract some youth to gangs, including:

Economics: For many young people who feel disconnected from the American dream, the economic opportunities of gang membership offer an acceptable alternative to a low-wage job in the legitimate-employment arena.[18]

Relationships: Youth who feel marginalized, rejected or ignored — in the family, school or church — may join a gang to fill a need for support.[19] Some youth join a gang for a sense of belonging, viewing the gang as a substitute or auxiliary family.[20] For some, the appeal is that a friend or family member is already in the gang.[21]

Protection: Although there is incontrovertible evidence that kids in a gang are more likely to be exposed to violence than kids who do not belong to a gang, this does not resonate with many young people who believe that joining a gang will protect them from violence in school or the community. Also, girls who experience physical or sexual abuse at home may believe that being in a gang offers protection.[22]

Status: Gangs can be seen as a way to increase status among peers, a way to get respect, freedom and independence — self-empowerment factors that may be missing from some kids' lives.

Outlaw culture: Many youth — not only those at risk for gang membership — rebel against traditional societal values. During the cognitive-development stage of adolescence, being a part of an "outlaw culture" can, for some kids, be compelling.

Understanding the Role of Child Development

The promise of prevention is that most youth — even those most at risk, living in the most distressed urban communities — do *not* join a gang. The question, therefore, is: Why do some?

"A 13-year-old does not wake up one day and decide out of the blue to join a gang," say Nancy G. Guerra, Carly B. Dierkhising and Pedro R. Payne in *Changing Course.* "The decision is a consequence of a particular life environment, behavior and way of thinking that leads a child to adopt the gang lifestyle later on."

Guerra is a professor of clinical/developmental psychology at the University of Delaware and also serves as the editor of *Journal of Research on Adolescence.* Dierkhising, a doctoral student in developmental psychology at the University of California, Riverside, works for the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. Payne manages a community-based nonprofit organization at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California.

Guerra and her colleagues argue that every decision we make is influenced by contexts that develop over time, and joining a gang is no different. In describing the individual and family factors in early childhood (ages 0-5) and during the elementary school years (ages 6-12), the authors note that joining a gang should be understood as part of a life course that begins when a child is born (or before). Important risk factors for children ages 0-5 include hypervigilance to threat, cognitive impairments, insecure attachment to a caregiver, and early aggressive behavior.[23] For 6- to 12-year-olds, important risk factors include poor school performance and parental monitoring, deficits in social information-processing skills, antisocial beliefs, and negative relationships with peers, including being rejected and victimized by peers.[24]

"We know, for example, that children are at risk for joining a gang from an early age if they are hypersensitive to threat because they regularly see shootings in the neighborhood, have fallen behind in school because they can't read, or live in neighborhoods where gangs and 'easy money' seem to go hand-in-hand," Guerra and her co-authors say.

There are protective factors, however, that can help youth who are growing up in high-risk communities; these include higher levels of social-emotional competence, academic success, secure attachment and effective parenting. The key is identifying at-risk youth and providing them with age-appropriate prevention strategies, such as those that improve family functioning and connections with schools, facilitate involvement with socially appropriate peers, and reduce bullying and victimization. Such programs can help these youth avoid a cascade of problems, including gang-joining, delinquency and violence.

The Role of Public Health

Gang membership has traditionally been viewed from a public safety, rather than a public health, perspective. In *Changing Course,* however, three public health experts argue that looking at the issue solely through the public safety lens fails to leverage the extensive expertise of our nation's public health professionals, who understand the impact on the health of an individual gang member and on the health of a community.

Tamara M. Haegerich, a senior health scientist at CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, has been researching youth-violence prevention for more than 10 years. Along with co-authors James A. Mercy, who oversees global violence prevention activities at CDC's Division of Violence Prevention, and Billie P. Weiss, an epidemiologist who has worked in injury and violence prevention for more than 25 years, Haegerich describes the public health approach to violence prevention. This four-step approach is based on a cross-disciplinary principle that puts everybody — those who work in medical and mental health, criminal justice, education and social services — at the table:

- Describe and monitor the problem.
- Identify the risk and protective factors.
- Develop and evaluate prevention strategies.
- Ensure widespread implementation.

Although the public health model is ideal for developing programs to help prevent kids from joining gangs, it does not come without challenges. One is that, in many respects, the idea of "prevention" is not understood or highly valued by our society.

"Policymakers and the public are strongly invested in programs and strategies that focus on punishment and that supposedly yield immediate results," Haegerich and her colleagues say. "Preventing gang violence through reductions in gang membership will require a long-term investment in research, program development and evaluation."

Public health can contribute to the development of definitions, data elements and data systems that can help the nation understand the magnitude of gang-joining and violence. Indeed, the public health approach to monitoring trends, researching risk and protective factors, evaluating interventions, and supporting the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based strategies is an important complement to law enforcement.

Haegerich and her co-authors call for fundamental operational changes in agencies and systems — as well as for the coordination of funding streams — to facilitate collaboration across sectors, generate sufficient resources to monitor gang membership, and implement and evaluate prevention strategies.

The Role of Law Enforcement

In *Changing Course,* Scott H. Decker says that to prevent kids from joining gangs we must move beyond "Hook 'em and book 'em." Police officers, he says, must enhance their traditional role as crime fighters by collaborating with public health, school, community and other public- and private-sector partners on primary, front-end prevention strategies.

A professor at Arizona State University who has been conducting research on gangs and gang members for more than two decades, Decker argues that the mandate for law enforcement to play a key role in gang membership prevention is clear.

"The police have a vital role in *preventing* youth from joining a gang in the first place," he says. "In fact, they have a true mandate with respect to efforts to prevent gang-joining: It is, quite simply, a part of their job to serve and protect."

Law enforcement can play a crucial role in a community's effort to prevent kids from joining gangs by gathering better knowledge of where gang problems exist and who is vulnerable to membership. Decker writes that, in this regard, patrol is important, and because officers are already doing this, it doesn't cost more money. Law enforcement leadership should

emphasize, reinforce and reward these prevention aspects of patrolling, Decker argues.

Decker also notes that working in collaboration with other groups to prevent gang-joining increases police legitimacy and credibility, particularly in at-risk communities and among at-risk youth.

"Police legitimacy can be increased through partnerships with community groups and agencies that are trying to reduce the attraction of gangs; when police play a more active, visible role in gang-membership-prevention activities, it builds trust and improves community efficacy," he writes.

The Role of Schools

Gary D. Gottfredson, a professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, who has studied school safety issues for more than three decades, describes the need to increase the ability — and the willingness — of schools to accurately assess gang problems, implement prevention strategies, and address the fear in schools that contributes to the risk for gang-joining. Indeed, Gottfredson argues, providing a safe environment to ensure that students are not fearful may be the single most important thing that schools can do to prevent gang-joining.

"Communities must prevent gang problems and provide safe school environments not only to protect students and improve their educational outcomes but also to forestall a cycle in which school disorder and community disorganization perpetuate each other," he says.

Arguing that many principals in schools with gang problems do not recognize or admit a problem, Gottfredson points to a large study of secondary schools that found that only one-fifth of the principals in schools with gang problems (defined as more than 15 percent of students reporting they belonged to a gang) said their school had a problem.[25]

Gottfredson says that despite their potential to reduce the risk for problem behavior and violence in the general population when implemented well, school-based programs are unlikely to reach youth who are at greatest risk of gang-joining because many have dropped out or are not fully engaged in school. In places with staggering dropout rates, such as Baltimore (41 percent), Albuquerque (49 percent) and Philadelphia (61 percent),[26] it is unrealistic, he says, to expect to reach those youth who are most at risk with school-based programs.

"Preventing gang violence through reductions in gang membership will require a long-term investment in research, program development and evaluation."

"Much of the dropout occurs in the ninth grade, which means that youth at risk of dropout — who are typically poor school attendees while they remain enrolled — have little chance of exposure to programs in high school," he writes.

Finally, in *Changing Course,* Gottfredson discusses the importance of conducting a careful needs assessment before a school-based gang-prevention program is implemented. Assessments of gang risks, as well as the usefulness of current prevention activities, are necessary to guide future action, he says. Therefore, systematic self-report surveys regarding gang involvement and victimization should be used to supplement existing data collection — such as school- or principal-reported incident or suspension rates — which are insufficient for developing a true picture of gang problems in schools. Schools can use this information to make decisions about which risk factors for gang-joining, including substance abuse, delinquency and violence, are most prevalent; choose programs that are known to reduce those risks; and then fully implement those programs.

What's in the Book?

> Visit NIJ.gov, keywords: changing course

The chapters in *Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership* are written in plain English and share these common features to help readers see the most critical information up front and begin to connect research with real-world applications:

- Key principles are presented in short, bulleted form.
- An "In Brief" summary pulls together key findings and ideas.
- A Q&A interview with a practitioner ("In the Spotlight") offers a personalized illustration.
- Implementation challenges are explored.
- Policy issues are discussed.

In addition to an introduction and conclusion by NIJ and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are 11 chapters:

- Why Is Gang Membership Prevention Important? by Dr. James C. ("Buddy") Howell
- How Should We Reduce the Attraction of Gangs? by Dr. Carl S. Taylor and Ms. Pamela R. Smith
- How Should We Identify Youth at Risk for Joining Gangs? by Dr. Nancy G. Guerra, Ms. Carly B. Dierkhising and Dr. Pedro R. Payne
- What Should Public Health Professionals Do to Prevent Gang Membership? by Dr. Tamara M. Haegerich, Dr. James A. Mercy and Ms. Billie P. Weiss
- What Is the Role of Police in Preventing Gang Membership? by Dr. Scott H. Decker
- What Should Be Done in the Family to Prevent Gang Membership? by Dr. Deborah Gorman-Smith, Ms. Kimberly Bromann Cassel and Ms. Andrea Kampfner
- What Should Be Done in the Schools to Prevent Gang Membership? by Dr. Gary D. Gottfredson
- What Should Be Done in the Communities to Prevent Gang Membership? by Dr. Jorja Leap
- How Should We Prevent Girls From Joining Gangs? by Dr. Meda Chesney-Lind
- How Do Race, Ethnicity and Immigration Influence Gang Membership? by Drs. Adrienne Freng and Terrance J. Taylor
- Program Evaluation: How Do We Know If We Are Preventing Gang Membership? by Drs. Finn Esbensen and Kristy N. Matsuda

"In the Spotlight" sections feature interviews with these practitioners:

- Anthony Holt, chief of police and assistant vice president for community affairs at Wayne State University; Virgil Taylor, executive director of The Peace Project, a Detroit-based partnership; Tisha Johnson, with the Detroit-based Street-Side Development Academy; Yusuf Shakur, director with the Detroit-based Urban Youth Leadership Group and a former gang leader; and Michael Williams, president of the Detroit-based Orchards Children's Services

- Sgt. Raul Vergara, Riverside County (Calif.) Gang Task Force (RCGTF), and Cmdr. Joe DelGuidice, RCGTF's assistant director and a member of the Riverside County District Attorney's Office Bureau of Investigations
- Connie Rice, civil rights lawyer and co-director of the Advancement Project
- Joe Mollner, senior director of delinquency and gang initiatives for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Jan Hassan-Butera, program director, and Rhonda Jackson, clinical supervisor, with the New York City-based SCO Family of Services
- Thomas W. Gore, president and executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Associates for Renewal in Education (ARE) Public Charter School
- Father Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries
- Marian D. Daniel, founder of the Baltimore-based Female Intervention Team (FIT)

The Role of Communities

Because of the heavy emphasis on school-based programs, communities have largely been overlooked as a major player in targeting kids who are at risk of joining a gang, says Jorja Leap in *Changing Course.* Too often, programs in the classroom are not connected to what is going on in the streets.

This disconnect can be exacerbated by a feeling in the community that a "solution" is being imposed on them from the outside — but this paradigm must change, argues Leap, an anthropologist and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, who has more than 30 years of research experience focused on violence, culture and identity.

In her discussion on the role of communities in preventing gang-joining, Leap says that in today's economic reality — where budget cuts have reduced or entirely eliminated youth-development programs — community partnerships must step up to the plate. Emphasizing the need for comprehensive approaches that enhance "core activities" such as tutoring, mentoring, life-skills training, case management, parental involvement, connection with schools, supervised recreational activities and community mobilization, Leap outlines several key strategies, including:

- Avoid reinventing the wheel by building from programs that already exist.
- Develop strategic plans.
- Identify real and imagined boundaries.
- Make community participation a priority and maximize partnerships.
- Use training and technical assistance to expand organizational capacity.
- Ensure sustainability.

Leap discusses how communities can conduct a needs assessment, choose the right partners, and eliminate bureaucratic obstacles. The hard reality is that many community-based gang-membership prevention programs depend on a single or a small number of funding sources, she says. Because sustaining effective programs requires a funding stream, building partnerships can be crucial.

The Role of Families

Deborah Gorman-Smith and colleagues Andrea Kampfner and Kimberly Bromann Cassel discuss how early-prevention strategies can increase the protective role of families in preventing gang-joining. A professor at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, Gorman-Smith has been working in the area of youth violence prevention for 20 years. Co-author Bromann Cassel works for the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, and co-author Kampfner is a research

associate at the Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention at the University of Chicago, Chapin Hall.

We know, for example, that aggressive and antisocial behavior during childhood is a risk factor for crime, violence and gang involvement later in life. In general, the earlier the onset of such behavior, the authors note in *Changing Course,* the greater the severity. The age of onset, in turn, tends to be related to family functioning; serious disruptions in parenting and family functioning are related to earlier onset of delinquent behavior, which is generally more severe and dangerous than when criminal activity begins later in adolescence.[27]

However, effective parenting and strong family functioning — with warm affective bonds, high monitoring and consistent discipline — protect against a variety of antisocial and problem behaviors, such as involvement with delinquent peers and subsequent likelihood of gang membership and violence.

"Particularly for families living in high-risk neighborhoods, programs that help to build networks of social support and foster family-community ties can provide an additional protective factor to support healthy development and prevent youth involvement in gang and other types of violence," Gorman-Smith and her co-authors say. In *Changing Course,* they also discuss how practitioners, policymakers and prevention scientists need to coordinate efforts for scaling up and disseminating evidence-based, family-focused programs.

Preventing Girls From Joining Gangs

Until recently, girls in gangs were often "invisible," says Meda Chesney-Lind. One reason for this is that girls enter gangs — and exit from gang activity — at younger ages than boys.

In *Changing Course,* Chesney-Lind, a University of Hawaii professor who has worked for years on the issue of girls in the criminal justice system, discusses families that are unable to support female adolescent development and provide basic safety. This — in conjunction with dangerous neighborhoods, possible sexual and other abuse, and poor-quality schools — paints a daunting picture for girls who are at risk of joining a gang.

Girls in gangs are far more likely than their non-gang peers to have been sexually assaulted, generally by a family member.[28] In one study, researchers found that 62 percent of female gang members had been sexually abused or assaulted, and three-fourths said they had been physically abused.[29]

Although girls join gangs for many of the same reasons as boys, girls are more likely to be seeking safety and security that they cannot find in a troubled or abusive home. Some girls join a gang in search of a surrogate family; others turn to a gang as a solution to family violence, believing that the gang may equip them to emotionally or physically fight back.[30]

The reality, however, is that a gang is not a good place for protection. Girls may be raped during a gang initiation.[31] Also, the link between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and drug use is more pronounced in girls than in boys; one study has shown that 40 percent of substance-abusing girls were experiencing PTSD compared with 12 percent of boys.[32]

Chesney-Lind argues that preventing gang-joining should focus on helping girls stay in school and avoid substance abuse and abusive boyfriends, and give them the skills to delay early sexual activity and parenthood.

"Such work will be challenging, however, given years of inattention to girls' programming and the consequent lack of robust, gender-informed program models," she says. "We urgently need strategies to help the girls who are at the greatest risk for gang-joining, particularly those who may turn to a gang for 'protection' or a sense of belonging."

The Role of Race and Ethnicity

"The role of race and ethnicity in gang membership is becoming increasingly complicated, and it is important to understand that the term 'gang membership' is not code for race or ethnicity," say Adrienne Freng and Terrance J. Taylor in *Changing Course.* Freng, an associate professor in the Department of Criminal

Justice at the University of Wyoming, and Taylor, an assistant professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, explore the complex role that race and ethnicity can play in gang membership. For example, do we need race- or ethnic-*specific* programming to help prevent gang-joining? Do we need more targeted programs that focus on specific risk factors for different racial and ethnic groups? Or is general gang-prevention programming — which includes some racial- and ethnic-*sensitive* elements — sufficient?

Freng and Taylor point out that there is surprisingly little research to answer these questions. Noting some recent evidence that racial-/ethnic-specific gang-prevention programming may not be necessary, the authors suggest that general prevention programming — which includes race- and ethnic-sensitive elements — may be helpful.[33]

"To know whether race- and ethnic-*specific* programming would be more successful than general gang-prevention programming, it is important that current prevention programs be better evaluated to determine whether particular impacts based on race or ethnicity exist," they say.

For now, however, Freng and Taylor argue that gang-prevention strategies should focus on "common denominators" that cut across racial and ethnic lines, such as poverty and immigration, social isolation and discrimination, drug use, limited educational opportunities, and low parental monitoring.

Evaluation: Prepare to Prove Success

In a *Changing Course* chapter on the importance of evaluation, Finn-Aage Esbensen and Kristy N. Matsuda say it is not a surprise that policymakers, practitioners and researchers have different mindsets when it comes to solving gang problems. But, they say, it is crucial that their thinking converge when it comes to determining whether a solution does (or does not) work.

Everyone — from federal and state policymakers to local school board members, and from health departments to police departments — needs to be able to answer the question: "How do we *know* if we are preventing gang membership?" Esbensen, a professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis who has conducted research in youth violence and gangs for more than three decades, and his co-author Matsuda, an assistant research professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, argue that anecdotal success stories do not justify creating a new program or continuing the investment in an ongoing one. Decisions should be made using the best available evidence. Therefore, it is crucial that decision-makers understand the key principles of process, outcome and cost-effectiveness evaluations. And a formal evaluation of a strategy, initiative or program that is designed to prevent gang-joining is the only way to measure outcomes and to understand what works and why it works.

"It is important that policymakers and practitioners understand the components of the most rigorous evaluations and, most important, be able to articulate to their constituents the real-world occurrences that sometimes make an outcome evaluation difficult to execute," Esbensen and Matsuda say.

They explore the two basic types of evaluation: outcome and process. They also discuss two strategies — cost-benefit analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis — for comparing the cost of a gang-membership prevention program to the cost to society of a criminal offender.

Conclusion: An Invitation

The impacts of gang membership — and the burden it places on our health, law enforcement, corrections, social and education systems — are significant. But there is reason for optimism. By preventing youth from joining gangs in the first place, we significantly improve their chances for a safe and productive life.

In the conclusion of *Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership,* NIJ and CDC extend an invitation to policymakers and practitioners to engage in a new way of thinking about the intersection of public health and public safety and leveraging resources. Indeed, the need to think more broadly about gang-joining is one of the reasons CDC and NIJ brought together diverse perspectives from public health and law enforcement and from researchers and practitioners.

Faced with the current economic realities, prevention is the best way to halt the cascading impact of gangs on our kids, families, neighborhoods and society at large. By working together to focus on the prevention of gang membership, rather than solely caring for the victims of gang violence and arresting gang-involved youth, we can *change the course* of the future for our kids.

About the Authors

Nancy Ritter is a writer and editor with NIJ. Thomas R. Simon is a deputy associate director for science and Reshma R. Mahendra is a public health advisor with the Division of Violence Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Notes

1. Egley, Arlen, Jr., and James C. Howell, *Highlights of the 2010 National Youth Gang Survey,* OJJDP Juvenile Justice Fact Sheet, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, April 2012, NCJ 237542, available at http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/237542.pdf.

2. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, *National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XV: Teens and Parents,* New York: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2010, available at http://www.casacolumbia.org/upload/2010/20100819teensurvey.pdf.

3. Snyder, Howard N., and Melissa Sickmund, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2006, available at http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/nr2006.

4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Internet], Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2009, available at http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Thornberry, Terence P., Marvin D. Krohn, Alan J. Lizotte, Carolyn A. Smith, and Kimberly Tobin, *Gangs and Delinquency in Developmental Perspective,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003, available at http://cabinvillagellc.com/pdfs/Gangs%20and%20Delinquency%20in%20Developmental%20Persp.pdf; Peterson, Dana, Terrance J. Taylor, and Finn-Aage Esbensen, "Gang Membership and Violent Victimization," *Justice Quarterly* 21 (4) (December 2004): 793-815.

7. Krohn, Marvin D., Jeffrey T. Ward, Terence P. Thornberry, Alan J. Lizotte, and Rebekah Chu, "The Cascading Effects of Adolescent Gang Involvement Across the Life Course," *Criminology* 49 (4) (November 2011): 991-1028.

8. Howell, James C., *Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs,* OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention, December 2010, NCJ 231116, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/231116.pdf.

9. Heckman, James J., "Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children," *Science* 312 (June 2006): 1900-1902.

10. For more information, see http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/topic.asp?cat=18.

11. Krohn, Marvin D., and Terence P. Thornberry, "Longitudinal Perspectives on Adolescent Street Gangs," in ed. A.K. Liberman, *The Long View of Crime: A Synthesis of Longitudinal Research,* New York: Springer, 2008: 128-160; Howell, Megan Q., and William Lassiter, *Prevalence of Gang-Involved Youth in NC,* Special Issue Fact Sheet, Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, December 2011, available at https://www.ncdps.gov/div/JJ/DJJGangFactSheetPublicationDec2011.pdf.

12. Howell, James C., *Gangs in America's Communities,* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2012.

13. Howell, James C., Arlen Egley, Jr., George E. Tita, and Elizabeth Griffiths, "U.S. Gang Problem Trends and Seriousness, 1996-2009," *National Gang Center Bulletin, No. 6,* Tallahassee, Fla.: Institute for Intergovernmental Research, National Gang Center, May 2011, available at http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Bulletin-6.pdf.

14. Decker, Scott H., and David C. Pyrooz, "Gang Violence Worldwide: Context, Culture, and Country," in *Small Arms Survey 2010: Gangs, Groups, and Guns,* Geneva, Switzerland: Small Arms Survey, 2010: 129-155, available at http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/A-Yearbook/2010/en/Small-Arms-Survey-2010-Chapter-05-EN.pdf.

15. Christeson, William, and Sanford Newman, *Caught in the Crossfire: Arresting Gang Violence by Investing in Kids,* Washington, D.C.: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2004, available at http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/assets/PDF/Journals-and-Reports/fight-crime-invest-in-kids-gangreport.

16. Cohen, Mark A., and Alex R. Piquero, "New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 25 (2009): 25-49; Cohen, Mark A., Alex R. Piquero, and Wesley G. Jennings, "Estimating the Costs of Bad Outcomes for At-Risk Youth and the Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions to Reduce Them," *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 21 (4) (2010): 391-434.

17. Cohen and Piquero, "New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth."

18. Padilla, Felix M., *The Gang as an American Enterprise,* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992; Brown, William B., "The Fight for Survival: African-American Gang Members and Their Families in a Segregated Society," *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 49 (2) (May 1998): 1-14; Cureton, Steven R., "Introducing Hoover: I'll Ride for You, Gangsta'," in ed. R.C. Huff, *Gangs in America III,* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2002: 83-100.

19. Wiener, Valerie. *Winning the War Against Youth Gangs: A Guide for Teens, Families, and Communities,* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999.

20. *Ibid.*; Shelden, Randall G., Sharon K. Tracy, and William B. Brown, *Youth Gangs in American Society,* Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2004; Howell, James C., *Youth Gangs: An Overview,* OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, August 1998, NCJ 167249, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/167249.pdf.

21. Peterson, Taylor, and Esbensen, "Gang Membership and Violent Victimization"; Wiener, *Winning the War Against Youth Gangs: A Guide for Teens, Families, and Communities.*

22. Miller, Jody, "The Girls in the Gang: What We've Learned From Two Decades of Research," in ed. R.C. Huff, *Gangs in America III,* Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2002: 175-198.

23. Cicchetti, Dante, Fred A. Rogosch, Megan R. Gunnar, and Sheree L. Toth, "The Differential Impacts of Early Physical and Sexual Abuse and Internalizing Problems on Daytime Cortisol Rhythm in School-Aged Children," *Child Development* 81 (1) (January/February 2010): 252-269; Decker, Scott H., "Collective and Normative Features of Gang Violence," *Justice Quarterly* 13 (2) (1996): 243-264; Fearon, R. Pasco, Marian J. Bakermans-Kranenburg, Marinus H. Van Ijzendoorn, Anne-Marie Lapsley, and Glenn I. Roisman, "The Significance of Insecure Attachment and Disorganization in the Development of Children's Externalizing Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Study," *Child Development* 81 (2) (March/April 2010): 435-456; Bowlby, John, *Attachment and Loss, Volume 2: Separation: Anxiety and Anger,* New York: Basic Books, 1973; Hill, Karl G., Christina Lui, and J. David Hawkins, *Early Precursors of Gang Membership: A Study of Seattle Youth,* OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, December 2001, NCJ 190106, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/190106.pdf.

24. Hill, Karl G., James C. Howell, J. David Hawkins, and Sara R. Battin-Pearson, "Childhood Risk Factors for Adolescent Gang Membership: Results From the Seattle Social Development Project," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 36 (3) (August 1999): 300-322; Huesmann, L. Rowell, and Nancy G. Guerra, "Normative Beliefs and the Development of Aggressive Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 72 (2) (1997): 1-12; Fraser, Mark W., "Aggressive Behavior in Childhood and Early Adolescence: An Ecological-Developmental Perspective on Youth Violence," *Social Work* 41 (4) (July 1996): 347-361; Robertson, Angela A., Connie Baird-Thomas, and Judith A. Stein, "Child Victimization and Parental Monitoring as Mediators of Youth Problem Behaviors," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 35 (6) (June 2008): 755-771.

25. Gottfredson, Gary D., and Denise C. Gottfredson, *Gang Problems and Gang Programs in a National Sample of Schools,* Ellicott City, Md.: Gottfredson Associates, 2001.

26. Swanson, Christopher B., *Cities in Crisis 2009: Closing the Graduation Gap.* Bethesda, Md.: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2009.

27. Steinberg, Laurence, "Familial Factors in Delinquency: A Developmental Perspective," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 2 (3) (1987): 255-268.

28. Miller, Jody, "Young Women in Street Gangs: Risk Factors, Delinquency, and Victimization Risk," in eds. W.L. Reed, and S.H. Decker, *Responding to Gangs: Evaluation and Research,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2002: 67-105, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/190351.pdf; Esbensen, Finn-Aage, and David Huizinga, "Gangs, Drugs, and Delinquency in a Survey of Urban Youth," *Criminology* 31 (4) (November 1993): 565-589.

29. Joe, Karen A., and Meda Chesney-Lind, "'Just Every Mother's Angel': An Analysis of Gender and Ethnic Variations in Youth Gang Membership," *Gender & Society* 9 (4) (August 1995): 408-431.

30. Joe Laidler, Karen A., and Geoffrey Hunt, "Violence and Social Organization in Female Gangs," *Social Justice* 24 (4) (Winter 1998): 148-169.

31. Esbensen, Finn-Aage, Elizabeth Piper Deschenes, and L. Thomas Winfree, Jr., "Differences Between Gang Girls and Gang Boys: Results from a Multisite Survey," *Youth & Society* 31 (1) (September 1999): 27-53; Esbensen, Finn-Aage, Dana Peterson, Terrance J. Taylor, and Adrienne Freng, *Youth Violence: Sex and Race Differences in Offending, Victimization, and Gang Membership,* Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 2010.

32. Deyken, Eva Y., and Stephen L. Buka, "Prevalence and Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Chemically Dependent Adolescents," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 154 (6) (June 1997): 752-757.

33. Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, and Freng, *Youth Violence: Sex and Race Differences in Offending, Victimization, and Gang Membership.*

NCJ 244146

‘CULTURAL SHIFT’ IS AMONG FINDINGS OF SECOND CHANCE ACT EVALUATION

BY **NANCY RITTER**

The first phase of an NIJ-funded evaluation finds that re-entry programs are moving toward a rehabilitative philosophy and an acceptance of evidence-based practices.

In the last three decades, the number of inmates released from the nation’s prisons each year increased fourfold. Recidivism rates continue to be alarmingly high.

To address this national dilemma, Congress passed the Second Chance Act (SCA) in 2008 to help criminal offenders successfully return to the community after they are released from prison or jail. Through the SCA, the Bureau of Justice Assistance has awarded more than $250 million — through 300 grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations — to help medium- and high-risk adult and juvenile offenders successfully re-enter society and remain crime-free.

This fall, NIJ released a report on the first phase of a two-phase evaluation of demonstration sites funded under the SCA.[1] Called an “implementation evaluation,” this phase was an in-depth examination of 10 state and local government agencies from around the country that were among the first to receive SCA funding.

The findings of an implementation evaluation are important because they define the “it” in the second phase of the study that aims to answer the central question “Does it work?”

This question will be answered in the “outcome study,” which will examine the impact of the SCA on recidivism and determine the cost-effectiveness of the new re-entry programs. The outcome study will be completed in 2015.

A Social Imperative

Ron D’Amico, the principal investigator on the evaluation, cites significant — and straightforward — reasons why the nation’s ability to reintegrate prisoners has become a social policy imperative.

“We have huge numbers of people who have been incarcerated over the past few decades,” said D’Amico, a senior social scientist with Social Policy Research Associates.[2]

The numbers are, frankly, staggering:

- More than 1.6 million adults were in state and federal prisons in 2010.[3]
- 750,000 were in local jails in 2010.[4]

- More than 4.8 million were under community supervision in 2011.[5]
- 700,000 were released in 2011,[6] four times the number released into the community 30 years ago.[7]

Within three years of release from jail or prison, two-thirds of offenders are rearrested and half are reincarcerated for a new crime or parole violation.[8] In addition to the extraordinary burden this places on the nation's correctional system, there is the stark reality of the individual lives behind the numbers. Half of offenders have not graduated from high school, and many have drug-abuse problems or mental or physical impairments.[9] They face overwhelming challenges finding work and housing and reintegrating with their families.

"And," D'Amico noted, "they tend to be released into a relatively small number of urban neighborhoods that are fragile at best, characterized by high rates of poverty and other social problems."[10]

The SCA, which passed with widespread bipartisan support, is the largest fiscal effort to date to try to turn the tide of these sobering realities.

Study Shows Three System Changes

One of the goals of the implementation evaluation is to determine whether the SCA demonstration grants can achieve fundamental, system-level changes. In the initial phase of the study, the researchers collected qualitative data on how the SCA-funded programs are

Program Services Under the Second Chance Act

In addition to case management services, the 10 Second Chance Act sites evaluated by NIJ-funded researchers deliver re-entry services that fall into these basic categories:

Education and Training	GED preparation and testing; vocational and community college education
Employment Assistance	Job search and placement assistance; resume development; interviewing training
Substance Abuse Treatment	Intensive, outpatient, 12-step-type services, administered by a licensed specialist
Mental Health Services	Screenings; referrals; subsidized medication
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Psychotherapeutic approach that addresses dysfunctional emotions or maladaptive behaviors through goal-oriented, explicit systematic procedures
Pro-Social Services	Stress and anger management; peer support; leisure activities; family and parenting classes; mentoring
Housing Assistance	Subsidized housing; housing placement services

being operated. The recently released findings from this first phase show three major system changes:

1. Partnerships are growing.
2. Services are becoming more "holistic."
3. There is a cultural shift in thinking about how services are delivered.

"Although it is too early to tell if these changes will be long-lasting — or if they will extend to broader criminal justice and re-entry systems — the 10 sites definitely changed their business as usual under the SCA, creating practices worthy of continuing and emulating," D'Amico said.

System Change #1: Partnerships Are Growing

Because state and local agencies and nonprofits often lack the capacity to deliver re-entry services by themselves, partnerships can be crucial. SCA funding has led to new partnerships, which are increasing the delivery of re-entry services.

Coordination between probation and parole departments and service providers has significantly improved. Case managers and parole officers are connecting with community groups that they did not know existed before SCA. Weak or limited partnerships that existed before SCA have been made stronger and more inclusive.

"With Second Chance funding, all of the stakeholders who have a role in ensuring the success of returning offenders are having more regular meetings where they are doing re-entry planning in a much more comprehensive way," D'Amico said.

Of course, there were challenges in building these partnerships. Substantial ramp-up time was needed (sometimes one to two years) before partnerships operated smoothly. Case managers, particularly those who serve in a parole officer role, too, required training in needs-based services planning.

Within three years of release from jail or prison, two-thirds of offenders are rearrested and half are reincarcerated for a new crime or parole violation.

That said, the researchers found that partnerships in the 10 demonstration sites have improved as a result of SCA funding. And, although it cannot be known whether important features, such as frequent all-stakeholder services-planning meetings, will continue when funding ends, D'Amico said there are clear indications that some project components are likely to continue.

System Change #2: Services Are Becoming More "Holistic"

The researchers found five significant improvements in the delivery of re-entry services in the 10 SCA demonstration sites:

1. There is greater continuity of services from pre-release to post-release.
2. Staff members are better prepared to work with offenders.
3. Assessments are being used well for services planning.
4. There is more time for case management.
5. More re-entry services are available.

One of the most significant findings concerns the role of case manager. When offenders are released into the community, they must meet specific conditions of parole, including reporting once a month (or with whatever frequency the state requires) to their parole officer. This means that, historically, most parole

officers handled hundreds of cases, leaving them with little time to focus on anything other than whether offenders are complying with their conditions of parole. But, with SCA funding, some sites provided special change-management training to parole officers, allowing them to assume more of a case manager role. Other sites brought in case managers from municipal departments and nonprofits.

"Although their titles differ from site to site — re-entry specialist in one, enhanced parole agent in another — there's no doubt that case management was perceived as a critical, value-added feature in all of the sites," D'Amico said.

After the case managers perform an assessment, which considers risks, needs, goals, strengths and barriers, they broker re-entry services in the community. Of course, assessments, per se, are not new, but the research found that SCA funding is enabling case managers to think more holistically. Essentially, D'Amico said, case managers function as mentors, enforcers and brokers of the services that each offender needs to successfully re-enter the community (see sidebar, "Program Services Under the Second Chance Act").

This is not to suggest that adding the role of case manager was smooth sailing. Yes, blending the roles of case manager and parole officer helped head off turf wars and also increased offender participation in programs, because offenders knew that they could face reincarceration if they did not show up for appointments and service assistance. But there were downsides, too.

"Some offenders had perceptions of parole officers, who then took on the role of case manager, that negatively affected their ability to take full advantage of SCA services," D'Amico explained.

But facing these challenges also helped prompt a cultural shift among corrections professionals that D'Amico characterized as "very exciting."

System Change #3: A Cultural Shift in the Re-Entry Mindset

Perhaps the most heartening observation the researchers made in their evaluation of the 10 demonstration sites to date concerns a true "cultural shift" — from a focus on simply enforcing re-entry rules and regulations to a rehabilitative philosophy and an acceptance of evidence-based practices. Put simply, many of the case managers and parole officers reported that they are approaching their jobs in new ways.

"One administrator said that Second Chance completely changed the way his agency thinks about re-entry planning," D'Amico said. "He pointed to a new mindset throughout the organization regarding what is needed to help offenders be successful after they are released."

The evaluation report discusses some of the long-standing cynicism and skepticism that case managers — particularly those who come from a corrections background — are overcoming through better communication, planning and training. It would be hard to overstate the strain that corrections facilities have historically faced: inadequate funding to support staff members who operate under extremely heavy workloads with a complicated population.

"In the past, corrections professionals have been constrained with what they are able to do with available funds, and also how they perceive their mission," said D'Amico. With the aid of SCA funding, these institutional challenges could be overcome as corrections agencies began to focus less on compliance and monitoring and more on a holistic, rehabilitative philosophy that identifies what each offender needs to successfully return to the community.

One of the lessons learned in the evaluation to date is that this type of cultural shift is not easy. It is not a transformation that happens quickly. Training staff takes time, and challenges remain.

"This cultural shift is far from complete," D'Amico said, noting that permanent changes in systemwide structures and policies are difficult to point to at this stage of the evaluation.

"Nonetheless," he added, "this transformation is an important one that will likely last well past the end of any formal funding."

Among the lessons learned to date:

- Projects need substantial ramp-up time.
- Identifying and training case managers are crucial steps.
- Re-entry success could be improved if there were more housing and mental health service providers.
- Women require different assessment methods and re-entry services than men.
- Preventing staff turnover must be a high priority.

Next Step: Outcome Study

The goals set by the Bureau of Justice Assistance when it issued the competitive solicitations for SCA funding were significant: increased employment, education and housing opportunities; increased payment of child support; and a 50 percent reduction in recidivism within 12 months of release. These types of outcomes will be measured in the outcome phase of the evaluation.

Data collection on 1,000 offenders in seven of the 10 sites will continue through the fall of 2014. Then, using a random assignment design, the researchers will compare offenders who received SCA services to those who did not to determine whether the outcomes achieved under the SCA are different than they would have been without the law and funding.[11]

There are substantial obstacles to successful re-entry after incarceration. On the individual level, they include poor social skills, low levels of education, the lingering effects of trauma, poor work history, weak or nonexistent support networks, and a lack of willingness to embrace the sorts of changes that, frankly, are necessary to turn one's life around. On the community and societal levels, barriers include economic downturns, community prejudice and a changing policy landscape.

And it seems to go without saying that none of these challenges is likely to diminish in the foreseeable future. As other states join California in realignment — shifting prison populations to jails and community supervision — these challenges will, in fact, be compounded by the sheer number of offenders who will need to be reintegrated into the community.

"This makes it more important than ever to determine the outcomes of the SCA re-entry programming," said Marie Garcia, program officer for NIJ's re-entry portfolio.

"The challenges surrounding a successful re-entry to society after incarceration are enormous," she added. "Quite simply, this is increasingly becoming everyone's problem."

About the Author

Nancy Ritter is a writer and editor at NIJ.

For More Information

- To read the full report, *Evaluation of the Second Chance Act (SCA) Adult Demonstration 2009 Grantees: Interim Report,* visit NCJRS.gov, keyword 243294.
- Watch a video of Ron D'Amico talking about recent findings in the first phase of the SCA evaluation at NIJ.gov, keyword: D'Amico.

Notes

1. Of the total SCA funding, $55 million was in the form of demonstration grants to more than 100 state, local and tribal governments to plan and implement re-entry strategies; the 10 sites in the NIJ evaluation were selected from these.

2. D'Amico's Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) colleagues are Christian Geckeler, Jennifer Henderson-Frakes, Deborah Kogan and Tyler Moazed. SPR partnered with MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization, and the National Opinion Research Center in the evaluation.

3. Guerino, Paul, Paige M. Harrison, and William J. Sabol, *Prisoners in 2010,* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, December 2011, NCJ 236096.

4. Minton, Todd D., *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2010 — Statistical Tables,* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, April 2011, NCJ 233431.

5. Glaze, Lauren E., and Erika Parks, *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2011,* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, November 2012, NCJ 239972.

6. Carson, E. Ann, and William Sabol, *Prisoners in 2011,* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, December 2012, NCJ 239808.

7. Travis, Jeremy, and Sarah Lawrence, *Beyond the Prison Gates: The State of Parole in America,* Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2002.

8. Langan, Patrick A., and David Levin, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994,* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, June 2002, NCJ 193427; Pew Center on the States, *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons,* Washington, D.C.: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011.

9. Petersilia, Joan, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; Ditton, Paula M., *Mental Health and Treatment of Inmates and Probationers,* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, July 1999, NCJ 174463; Hammett, Theodore M., Cheryl Roberts, and Sofia Kennedy, "Health-Related Issues in Prisoner Reentry," *Crime and Delinquency* 47 (July 2001): 390-409.

10. Travis, Jeremy, Amy L. Solomon, and Michelle Waul, *From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry,* Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2001; LaVigne, Nancy G., and Vera Kachnowski, *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland,* Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2003.

11. Random assignment is a key feature of scientific experiments. By randomly assigning subjects to either the experimental group or the control group, researchers are able to draw definitive conclusions about the distinctive contribution of the intervention to achieving the desired outcomes. A practitioner-friendly explanation of randomized control trials and related issues regarding program evaluation can be found at https://www.bja.gov/evaluation/reference/Quality_Outcome_Eval.pdf.

NCJ 244147

CRIMESTAT IV NOW AVAILABLE

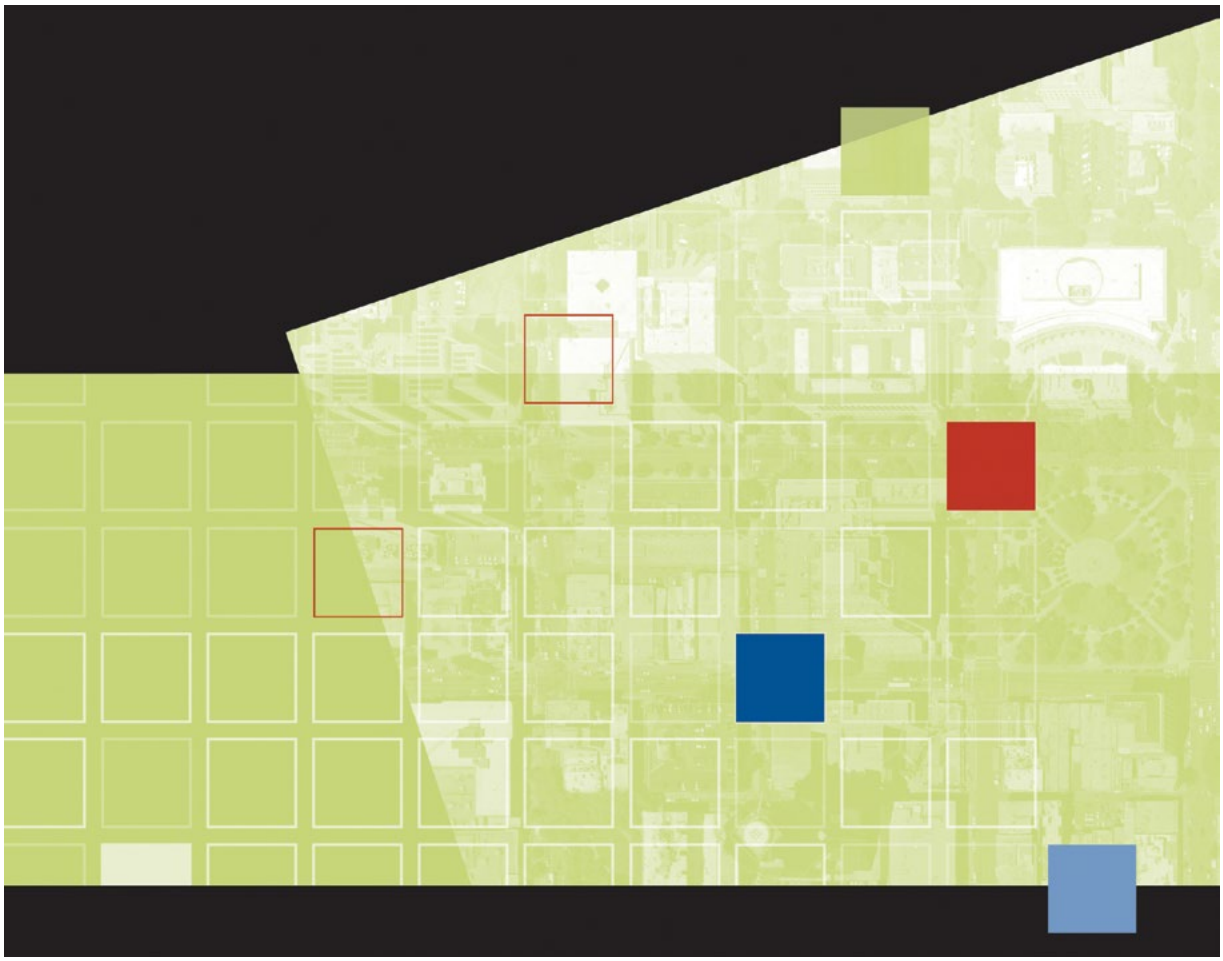
NIJ has released CrimeStat IV, the newest version of the free spatial statistics program for the analysis of crime incident locations.

CrimeStat IV can help law enforcement agencies and criminal justice researchers identify and analyze hot spots, plot crime incidents on a map, view crime concentrations over a large area, track offender behavior over time, estimate a serial offender's residence, and study routes for high-speed chases.

New features include:

- More than 100 statistical routines for the spatial analysis of crime and other incident data.
- A regression module that models crime for zones or individuals and can include spatial components and "at-risk" variables.

Download CrimeStat IV on NIJ.gov, keyword: CrimeStat.



REPLICATING HOPE: CAN OTHERS DO IT AS WELL AS HAWAII?

BY **BETH PEARSALL**

The lead researcher in NIJ's HOPE evaluation discusses efforts to duplicate the swift-and-certain sanctions model on the mainland.

When Judge Steven Alm wanted to change the behavior of drug-using probationers, he instituted a program that used strict "swift and certain" principles. A rigorous NIJ-funded evaluation in 2009 proved him right. Probationers in Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE) program were significantly less likely to fail drug tests or miss probation appointments. They also were sentenced to less time in prison because of probation revocations than were probationers who did not participate in the program.

Now, as jurisdictions around the country try to copy Hawaii's HOPE program, one central question arises: Can Hawaii's success be duplicated? To find out, NIJ and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) are replicating and evaluating the HOPE model in four jurisdictions that vary widely in population density and geographic location: Clackamas County, Ore.; Essex County, Mass.; Saline County, Ark.; and Tarrant County, Texas. To see whether the replications work as well as they did in Hawaii, researchers are conducting process and outcome evaluations and cost assessments.

NIJ asked Angela Hawken, who evaluated Hawaii's HOPE program, to discuss some of the challenges that jurisdictions might face — as well as several keys to success — when implementing a HOPE-style program. Hawken is associate professor of economics and policy analysis at Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy.

NIJ: How did the original HOPE program work, and what were the results?

Angela Hawken (AH): Hawaii's HOPE program begins with a "warning hearing," referred to in some jurisdictions as an "orientation hearing." During warning hearings, the judge clearly lays out the program's rules and structure, and probationers are put on notice that they will be punished for violations. The judge emphasizes that a probationer's success is entirely within his/her own control.

HOPE involves swift and certain responses to probation violations. The program requires probationers with drug conditions — who represent the vast majority of the caseload — to undergo regular random drug tests (six times a month during the first few months). The regular random drug tests remove any "safe window" for undetected drug use. Probationers must call a hotline each weekday morning to learn whether they will be drug tested that day. Probationers who fail a drug test are arrested immediately. Within a few hours or days, they may be in court, where the judge will modify the terms of

their probation to include a stay in jail. Jail terms are brief, typically only a few days, unless the probationer absconds, in which case a stiffer penalty applies. Each successive violation is met with an escalated response (i.e., longer jail stays).

Unlike drug-treatment-diversion programs and drug courts, HOPE reserves treatment for probationers who request it (only a small percentage request a treatment referral) and for those who consistently fail or miss drug tests. In our 2009 NIJ-funded study, we found that when faced with the credible threat of a swift sanction, more than 80 percent of probationers stopped using drugs — including even those who had long histories of drug use. Rather than trying to treat everyone and consequently spreading resources thin, the program targets treatment resources to those most in need. As a result, the program can afford to use intensive-treatment services, including long-term residential treatment, rather than relying primarily on outpatient counseling, as most diversion programs do for their clients.

Hawaii's HOPE program has shown that close monitoring — coupled with swift and certain responses to detected violations — improves compliance with probation conditions, including desistance from drug use. About half of the HOPE probationers in our study never tested positive after their initial warning hearing (and thus, did not require sanctions), and about a quarter tested positive only once. Overall, the rate of missed and positive drug tests dropped by more than 80 percent.[1] The other key outcomes included reductions in new crimes and in overall incarceration (primarily due to a reduction in the number of probationers who had their probation revoked).

NIJ: Those are impressive results, but Hawaii is a unique place. Will the program work just as well on the mainland?

AH: Whether HOPE works on the mainland is an empirical question. We have seen small-scale trials on the mainland that suggest the approach can reduce drug use and violating behavior — but only if the model's key features are implemented with fidelity: swift, certain and proportionate sanctions. NIJ and BJA currently are supporting implementation and evaluation efforts in four states. These will provide insight into whether HOPE works in other jurisdictions and the local conditions necessary to implement the model successfully.

Five Things That Make HOPE Work

(1) *Engagement matters.* Ensure that all of the key players are on board: the designated HOPE judge, the probation department overseeing the HOPE caseload, local law enforcement partners, jails, prosecutors, public defenders and treatment providers.

(2) *Atmosphere matters.* Ensure key players are enthusiastic about the principles underlying the program and want to try something new.

(3) *Relationships matter.* Foster mutual respect between the probation office and the judge. Bring other key criminal justice partners — prosecutors, public defenders, law enforcement officers — into the conversation early on.

(4) *Communication matters.* Learn from experience and modify the program accordingly. Be sure to inform all partners of any changes and give them a chance to weigh in.

(5) *Discipline matters.* Implement HOPE's key features with fidelity: swift, certain and proportionate sanctions. Inconsistency in discipline can lead to resentment among practitioners and probationers.

NIJ: How many localities are now trying out this swift-and-certain-punishment model, and where are they?

AH: We know of at least 40 jurisdictions in 18 states that have implemented similar models. The largest is Washington state. Anyone under community supervision by the Washington State Department of Corrections — which includes more than 100 field offices and more than 15,000 offenders — now falls under the state's Swift and Certain program, which shares many of the key features of HOPE.

NIJ: Most of these mainland programs are very new. Are you seeing any significant differences in how they work or in the results?

AH: Hawaii and Texas have the oldest versions of HOPE-style programs; they both launched pilot versions in 2004. When Texas-based researchers evaluated the Texas model — called the Special Sanctions Court and Supervision With Intensive enForcemenT (SWIFT) — the results were similar to our original findings in Hawaii: Violation rates and new crimes fell.

There are a few differences between the Texas and Hawaii versions. Texas uses hair samples in addition to regular instant-cup [urine] drug tests. Texas also makes next-day arrests for positive drug tests, which are logistically simpler and less costly than immediate arrests. If someone tests dirty, the system in Texas requires that the judge issue a warrant and the warrant be *hand-delivered* to the sheriff's office. As a result, the logistics of an instant arrest are difficult. Instead, offenders in Texas are instructed to appear in court the following morning. They appear before the judge, and the sheriff takes them into custody. The next-day arrest allows for simplified processing and reduced costs. The offenders know that not showing will be worse and that they *will* be caught. Those who do not show are given a stiffer sanction when arrested (law enforcement prioritizes these warrants, and most are cleared very quickly). Thus far, the Texas system seems to be working well: 94 percent appear as instructed.

Washington state's Swift and Certain program differs from the original HOPE model in several important ways. First, it targets what most jurisdictions would consider to be parolees, and they are high risk. Washington also uses a clearly elaborated Behavior Accountability Guide, which dictates sanctions. The first violation — for example, a positive drug test or a missed office visit — typically leads to a stipulated agreement. The second through fifth violations result in one to three days of confinement; there is no graduated increase like in HOPE. If the offender commits a serious violation — for example, if they abscond or commit a new offense — stiffer penalties apply.

NIJ: What are the challenges involved in taking a pilot program that works in a relatively small place and trying to apply it in multiple counties or even an entire state?

AH: The HOPE program is easy to describe, but implementing it well takes a great deal of coordination and cooperation. No jurisdiction should plan to launch a HOPE program without first ensuring that all of the key players are on board. This includes local law enforcement partners, jails, prosecutors, public defenders, treatment providers, and, importantly, judges and probation officers. It is essential that the HOPE court and probation office work well together. This is a judge- *and* probation-centered model.

A committed judge is essential to successful implementation. But without the involvement of other equally essential partners, the program will likely be unsustainable. HOPE is a collaboration. It requires good communication and a leader who solicits and responds to input from all partners.

Washington state provides the best case study of a HOPE-style program rolled out en masse. Within a few months, the state brought more than 10,000 offenders into the Swift and Certain program. Many of us considered this to be an impossible task and worried that law enforcement would be swamped. In HOPE, offending behavior tends to be front-loaded, and so staggered enrollment is better, so as not to overwhelm the system.

Washington experienced a few bumps along the way, but overall, its rollout was impressive. Support from leadership was essential to this success. Leaders at the Washington State Department of Corrections made a smart move early on: They created an implementation team of well-respected and dedicated community corrections professionals to assist with the rollout. The team operated as a mini think tank within the department and was responsible for designing many of the program's details and for training more than 100 field offices. Washington is still modifying the program as leaders learn more, but so far indications point to a successful implementation.

NIJ: Based on all the jurisdictions that are now trying this out, can you isolate some key factors that contribute to success? Are there any pitfalls that criminal justice officials should avoid?

AH: Successful implementation requires the full cooperation and enthusiasm of three essential partners: the designated HOPE judge, the probation department overseeing the HOPE caseload and law enforcement. For jurisdictions in which public defenders and prosecutors will be present for violation hearings, their support also is essential. Failure to secure the support of these key participants could bring HOPE court proceedings to a grinding halt.

Atmosphere matters. It is easier to implement HOPE well in a jurisdiction where the key players want to try something new and are enthusiastic about the behavior-change principles underlying the program.

Relationships matter. The probation office and the judge must have mutual respect. It is essential that other key criminal justice partners — prosecutors, public defenders, law enforcement officers — are brought into the conversation early on and offer their full support.

Communication matters. All jurisdictions will need to modify their programs as they learn from their implementation experience. All partners must be informed of changes and given a chance to weigh in on program reforms.

Discipline matters. HOPE is a program that relies on consistency and should be attempted only in jurisdictions where the judge and the probation office will implement the model with fidelity. Inconsistency in applying discipline undermines the model's behavior-change principles and can lead to resentment among practitioners and probationers. (See sidebar, "Five Things That Make HOPE Work.")

NIJ: What did you learn in your discussions with probationers and former probationers who were involved in the original HOPE program?

AH: HOPE is an adjustment for probationers as well as practitioners. Many probationers and parolees are used to supervision where sanctions are delivered sporadically. HOPE entails closer supervision and swift and certain delivery of sanctions. The sanction, however, is typically modest — a few days in jail compared with the many weeks, months or even years in conventional supervision. Once probationers become more familiar with the program, they tend to appreciate the consistency and predictability. In our interviews with probationers, the majority regarded HOPE positively and said that the rules were clear and the program was fair. Many also noted that the consistency and speed of the response to positive drug tests helped them stop their drug use.

NIJ: Do these programs work only with people who have drug problems?

AH: HOPE originally was tested on drug-involved probationers because drug test results provide a convenient measure to test behavior change. Offenders assigned to the HOPE program had dramatic reductions in drug use.

HOPE, however, is not a drug-offender-supervision model. It can be applied to all conditions of probation. In Oahu, all felony sex offenders and felony domestic violence offenders are now supervised under the HOPE model. In other jurisdictions, we are seeing HOPE applied to a broad range of offenders, either as a mixed caseload or, in some cases, through dedicated HOPE courts. For example, there is a dedicated HOPE domestic violence court in Travis County, Texas.

NIJ: What else should criminal justice officials know about these programs?

AH: There are now at least 40 replications of HOPE-style models on the mainland. Evaluations of these programs will help identify the local conditions required to implement HOPE successfully and the characteristics of offenders who respond to the threat of credible sanctions and those who do not. In Hawaii, offenders who are not able to stop their drug use under HOPE are moved into the drug court, which has been retooled to accept high-risk drug-involved offenders who otherwise were prison-bound. A jurisdiction considering a HOPE-style court might want to think about a systemwide approach that provides a continuum of supervision, reducing the intensity of supervision for probationers who demonstrate a willingness to comply and ratcheting up intensity for those who continue to violate.

Jurisdictions planning to implement a HOPE-style program will need to reorganize their current community-supervision practices substantially. Because these practices vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, an exact duplication of HOPE across jurisdictions is unlikely. But although the model might need to be tailored to each jurisdiction, it is essential that all programs mirror the model's essential features: a coordinated effort by all parties, increased efforts to detect probation violations, and consistency in responding to violations with swift and certain — but proportionate — responses.

About the Author

Beth Pearsall is the managing editor of the *NIJ Journal.*

For More Information

- Learn more about the HOPE program, the 2009 NIJ-funded evaluation, and the current BJA implementation/NIJ evaluation projects at NIJ.gov, keyword: HOPE.

Jurisdictions planning to implement a HOPE-style program will need to reorganize their current community-supervision practices substantially.

- Watch Judge Alm talk about his vision for HOPE at NIJ.gov, keyword: HOPE.

Notes

1. Hawken, Angela, and Mark Kleiman, "Managing Drug Involved Probationers with Swift and Certain Sanctions: Evaluating Hawaii's HOPE," Final report to the National Institute of Justice, grant number 2007-IJ-CX-0033, December 2009, NCJ 229023, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/229023.pdf.

NCJ 244148

LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRA
L E A A
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTIC
DEPARTMENT OF JUS
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PRO
QUI PRO DOMINA JUSTITIA SEQUITUR

WINNIE REED: MORE THAN 40 YEARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO NIJ

BY **NANCY RITTER**

Former NIJer Winnie Reed reflects back on her time at NIJ and describes the changes she has seen in criminal justice over the years.

In December, Winnie Reed retired after nearly 42 years with NIJ. We asked her to look back — from her first job right out of graduate school in the summer of 1972 to the last two-plus years as Director of the Crime, Violence and Victimization Research Division in NIJ's Office of Research and Evaluation.

NIJ: What was your first job at NIJ?

Winnie Reed (WR): Actually, it was called the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice back then, and my first job was writing abstracts for awarded grants. There weren't many people trained as criminologists or people with criminal justice degrees at that time. I was hired because I had a master's degree in international relations, but when I walked in the door, I really knew nothing about crime and criminal justice. I think I had just read one book! So, I started reading everything I could get my hands on.

NIJ: What motivated you to take the job?

WR: I wanted to use my degree, of course, but mainly, I was interested in public service and trying to make a difference. Plus, when I came for my interview, I found it to be a very homey place. I thought there was a good atmosphere.

NIJ: What kinds of changes have you seen in criminal justice over the past four decades?

WR: Where do I start? Certainly, one of the biggest changes has to do with technology — with maybe the biggest being DNA and its use in solving crimes. But there are others, like surveillance technology, both in corrections and in city centers, such as in parking lots and shopping malls. Another significant change is that crime has dropped since the mid-1990s. And I also have to mention the victims movement, which has been very important in influencing the way the entire criminal justice system responds to violence against women, especially intimate partner violence. (See sidebar, "Reflecting on Winnie Reed's Time at NIJ.")

NIJ: You have mentioned that some of your most meaningful work has been in the field of evaluation — what do you regard as especially significant about evaluations?

WR: To me, it's essentially about the fact that the government is spending money on programs, and it makes sense to understand how the programs work or don't work. Years ago, people seemed to

"When I was working on an evaluation, being able to observe a program and speak with those involved, even for a short time, gave me a deeper and wider understanding of the program."

look at "evaluation" as just being a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down." People didn't focus on possibility of *improvement* — and I guess I always thought, "Why wouldn't you want to improve?"

NIJ: Have you seen a shift in attitude about evaluations between then and now?

WR: Most definitely. Back then, I think there were some who wanted to avoid evaluation — or at least not have an *independent* evaluation. Now, of course, there is much more emphasis on evidence, and being subject to an evaluation is much more of a standard practice.

NIJ: Can you give an example of one evaluation you were involved in?

WR: I worked on the first evaluation of G.R.E.A.T. — Gang Resistance Education And Training — which is a gang prevention program delivered in the classroom, mostly to middle-school students by law enforcement. NIJ's longitudinal study of G.R.E.A.T. found that, at the two-year follow-up, there was no difference between kids in the experimental group and kids in the control group. At that time, the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), which ran G.R.E.A.T., said, "Well, if it's not working, I want to improve it," so he supported a study group. NIJ brought researchers and practitioners together to make recommendations on ways to improve the program, and the ATF revised the entire curriculum, trained law enforcement officers on the new curriculum and fielded it. Now NIJ is just finishing a second evaluation. [*Ed. note:* The results of this evaluation will be released soon.]

NIJ: What, particularly, excites you about this?

WR: Well, I think that this is a good example of the best thing that really can happen with an evaluation: that the results are used in practice and make a difference in terms of policy.

NIJ: Speaking of policy, what kinds of things, generally, have you been involved in over the years?

WR: When new bills are written on the Hill, they may be sent by Department of Justice officials to NIJ for comment. For example, I responded to proposed anti-gang legislation frequently and was involved in implementing some of the work on the major Crime Act bill in the 1990s, which brought a lot of policing research work to NIJ.

NIJ: What would you say were the major factors that kept you at NIJ for so long?

WR: One thing was that, for the most part, I had very good supervisors. Two I would mention are Richard Barnes and Richard Linster — the two Richards — both of whom were very intelligent and just had a good sense of how to work with people. I learned a lot from them.

NIJ: In the "olden days," you were able to go out into the field much more than federal workers do now — can you describe some of the ways that impacted your work?

WR: [Laughing.] Well, it makes a *huge* difference. You are much more involved in the project, say, sitting in with researchers when they are developing their survey instruments — and that can be very important, of course. Also, in terms of managing taxpayer dollars, I think I had a better, more sensitive understanding of what it took to implement a research project ... what some of the pitfalls were and what to look for. When I was working on an evaluation, being able to observe a program and speak with those involved, even for a short time, gave me a deeper and wider understanding of the program. Of course, it's also important to have a strong relationship with our

Reflecting on Winnie Reed's Time at NIJ

Betty Chemers arrived at NIJ within a few months of Winnie Reed in 1972, and she worked with Winnie in several capacities over the years: as special assistant to the NIJ Director, as Director of NIJ's Evaluation Division, and during a stint at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. After her retirement from the Department of Justice, Chemers joined the National Academies, where she worked until her recent second (and final) retirement.

BY **BETTY CHEMERS**

It's hard to paint the picture of how different NIJ was when Winnie and I were hired in the early 1970s. For one thing, the technology program consisted of three people who met periodically with the Director, who demanded that they come up with innovative ideas. Of course, there were no computers — only electric typewriters — so, needless to say, we used a lot of whiteout in those days. And whoever controlled the Xerox machine basically controlled the world!

Smoking was allowed everywhere in 1972, and some folks had ashtrays the size of dinner plates. The dress code had only recently been changed to allow women to wear pantsuits.

In the beginning, Winnie and I were both program people without specific training in criminology. But the fact is that, in the '70s, few people knew much about criminal behavior or the criminal justice system. There were maybe a handful of criminology programs in universities. But none of that stopped Winnie. She kept expanding her substantive knowledge by taking courses and moved beyond her formal education by simply talking to people who were trying to ask the right questions and determine how best to arrive at the answers.

I read recently in *The New York Times* that "science" was selected as Merriam-Webster's 2013 Word of the Year. Usually, the Word of the Year is some trendy new term, but I think it's fitting that "science" won this year, because Winnie Reed has spent her entire career trying to improve the science of crime and justice. To that mission, she brought her intelligence, her humanity, her loyalty to friends and family, and something that *anyone* who has worked with Winnie over the past four decades would note: her objectivity and calmness.

Those traits were no small thing in the burgeoning field of criminal justice research. People feel utterly comfortable talking with Winnie, asking questions, exploring ideas, voicing opinions. In fact, Winnie, always so modest and unassuming, has been slow to understand the influence she has on people. She has always been hugely approachable, nonjudgmental and fair-minded. If you wanted to get a fair assessment of an idea, Winnie was the one to go talk to. That is her legacy at NIJ — and I have no doubt that those attributes will serve her well as she leaves NIJ to embark on the next leg of her journey.

research partners when NIJ is answering questions from the Hill or the press; you can just be so much more responsive than if you only know about a project from reading reports or emails or talking to people on the phone.

NIJ: What do you think are NIJ's greatest challenges over the next few years?

WR: Getting better data! Our Uniform Crime Reporting data leaves out a lot of information. Also, the National Crime Victimization Survey is, at present, a national sample, which means that localities basically have to do their own surveys to understand their crime, what their hot spots are. We do have some data, of course, but it's just not as good or thorough as it could be.

NIJ: Why should taxpayers care about that?

WR: If you think of different kinds of cybercrime or white-collar crime, for example, there are not very good data on the *types* of crime, let alone how extensive they are across the country. There is some surveillance information on intimate partner violence and sexual violence being developed now by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but before, we never had good information. We don't even have very good information on the gang situation in our country. The National Gang Center collects data from law enforcement, but it's variable in terms of how agencies collect it and how often they purge it. For example, do they go back and look at an individual and say, "Well, this person is no longer a gang member, so we're going to take him out of our database"? Basically, if you don't even know the extent of the problem, how are you going to know how to respond to it?

NIJ: What other major criminal justice challenges do you think we face?

WR: We certainly need better diversion programs. If we're not going to be sending as many offenders to prison, we need to have effective diversion programs that cost less and also keep society safe.

NIJ: What are some of your hopes for NIJ's future?

WR: You know, NIJ's mandate is so broad that I think, historically, we've had a problem saying no to a particular topic area. But I do hope that NIJ is able to develop a fuller range of research projects in white-collar crime and cybercrime. One area where we do now have a really strong portfolio is elder abuse, but I remember being shocked when I first learned that the National Institute on Aging didn't do much research in that area. So NIJ has developed this portfolio, and I hope that will continue.

NIJ: What one or two projects stand out in your mind over the years?

WR: I think our police officer fatigue and shift-length studies have been very useful to law enforcement agencies. And certainly another big area has been our tribal, Indian Country research, which I worked on for 10 years or so.

NIJ: Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently?

WR: I did wonder if I might have done things in reverse order, early on. I mean, why wasn't I a police officer or a probation officer first? I could have gone back to school and gotten a Ph.D. and taught, but it never really worked for me to do that, logistically. So I stayed here — and I must say that this job has never been dull. It's always been challenging, and that makes a huge difference. That, plus the opportunity to make a difference, is very important.

NIJ: What are you going to miss most about the work?

WR: Beyond the people, I would say the substance. Whatever the subject area, the idea has been improvement, and I think that's a good thing: Help people in the field stop doing things that aren't useful and start doing things that are. It makes life better for everybody.

About the Author

Nancy Ritter is a writer and editor at NIJ.

NCJ 244152

NIJ BROADENS ITS REACH VIA CHALLENGE.GOV

To seek the best and brightest ideas from a broad range of disciplines, NIJ issued the Department of Justice's first Challenge.gov competition. Challenge.gov is a Web-based platform supported by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

In the two-phase Challenge, NIJ asked for innovative, nondestructive approaches to determine whether in-use body armor retains its ballistic performance over time. The final prize was awarded to a team from Purdue University's School of Aeronautics and Astronautics Engineering.

"Because the winning proposal came from an aeronautics team, this first competition demonstrated that the Challenge's innovative approach draws out fresh ideas from disciplines outside of the traditional criminal justice research community," said NIJ Acting Director Greg Ridgeway.

NIJ expects to announce winners soon in Challenges on:

- Determining costs and benefits of sex offender notification
- Increasing access to mobile broadband services for law enforcement
- Developing ultra-high-speed apps that improve criminal justice and public safety services and operations

---

Learn more at Challenge.gov.

Challenge.gov

T-gen
Y
father
Q
M
X
DNA

SOLVING COLD CASES WITH DNA: THE BOSTON STRANGLER CASE

BY **PHILIP BULMAN**

NIJ funding helped the Boston Police Department solve a rape and murder case almost 50 years after the crime.

This was a ghastly crime.

Nineteen-year-old Mary Sullivan had just moved from Cape Cod to Boston, where she rented an apartment in the bustling Beacon Hill neighborhood. Within a few days of her arrival in January 1964, she was found dead. Her attacker raped her and strangled her to death.

Sullivan was one of 11 women whom Albert DeSalvo — known as the Boston Strangler — would later confess to killing. However, he then recanted, leaving lingering doubts about the possibility that the real assailant had eluded capture.

DeSalvo was never convicted of any of the Strangler killings, but he was sentenced to life in prison on other rape charges. Fellow inmates stabbed him to death in 1973. For decades after his death, experts argued about whether he really was the Strangler or whether someone else committed the crimes and got away.

Evidence that finally linked DeSalvo to the Sullivan assault emerged in July 2013.

DNA Provides Answers

Over the years, NIJ has funded the examination of "cold cases" across the country through its Solving Cold Cases with DNA program. The funding helps police departments identify, review, investigate and analyze violent crime cold cases that could be solved through DNA analysis. Sometimes the cases are so old that DNA testing did not yet exist when the crimes were committed, and testing biological evidence now might show a match with a suspect.

In 2009 and 2012, the city of Boston received competitive grants under NIJ's cold case program. The Boston Police Department's cold case squad decided to use some of the NIJ funding to test DNA from a nephew of DeSalvo's and look for a match with seminal fluid that had been found on Sullivan's body and on a blanket at the crime scene. When forensics experts ran the test, they got a hit.

The match was possible because of tests that zero in on short tandem repeats (STRs), which are patterns found on DNA strands. Forensic scientists use a specialized test that focuses on male (Y) chromosomes. Y-chromosome DNA comes from fathers who pass their Y-STR DNA profiles to their male offspring. Barring a mutation, the profiles remain unchanged. Every male in a paternal lineage has the same Y-STR DNA profile. This includes fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, nephews and a wider group of male relatives, even out to third and fourth cousins.

NIJ's Research on the Y Chromosome

Y-chromosome DNA testing examines the male-specific portion of biological evidence. This can be especially important in cases in which a small amount of male DNA is recovered in the presence of a large amount of female DNA, such as in sexual assault evidence.

For more than a decade, NIJ has funded research and development projects on the Y chromosome. These projects include:

- Validation of Y-STR multiplex kits
- The development of a DNA typing system targeting the male-specific portion of the human genome and a database of Y-chromosome markers in the U.S. population
- The development and maintenance of the U.S. Y-STR Database
- An evaluation of alternative strategies to improve the detection of male DNA

To read more about these and other NIJ-funded Y-STR projects, go to NIJ.gov, keyword: Y-chromosome.

NIJ has funded research on Y-STRs for years, believing that it would give forensics experts a powerful and important tool in certain cases (see sidebar, "NIJ's Research on the Y Chromosome").

Testing of Y-STRs in the Mary Sullivan case showed a match between DNA from the crime scene and DeSalvo's nephew. According to Boston officials, this match implicated DeSalvo and excluded 99.9 percent of the male population. But because a Y-STR profile is common to a group of male family members, it does not yield the more precise match to a particular individual available in other DNA tests.

Armed with the Y-STR testing results, Boston authorities went a step further and exhumed DeSalvo's body in July 2013 so they could conduct a confirmatory test using a DNA sample directly from DeSalvo. DNA extracted from a femur and three teeth yielded a match — specifically, DNA specialists calculated the odds that a white male *other* than DeSalvo contributed the crime scene evidence at one in 220 billion — leaving no doubt that DeSalvo had raped and murdered Mary Sullivan.

NIJ's Solving Cold Cases With DNA Program

Since 2005, NIJ has awarded more than $73 million to more than 100 state and local law enforcement agencies through its Solving Cold Cases with DNA competitive grant program. This funding has allowed the agencies to review more than 119,000 cases. The funding has also facilitated the entry of almost 4,000 DNA profiles into the FBI's Combined DNA Index System, yielding more than 1,400 hits.

The program has given agencies the opportunity to put resources toward solving homicides, sexual assaults and other violent offenses that otherwise might never have been reviewed or reinvestigated. Crime scene samples from these cases — previously thought to be unsuitable for testing — have yielded DNA profiles. And samples that previously generated inconclusive DNA results have been reanalyzed using modern technology and methods.

Thanks to these cold case funds and the latest Y-STR technology, the Boston Police Department was able to solve the mystery surrounding Mary Sullivan almost 50 years after her death.

About the Author

Philip Bulman is a former NIJ writer and editor.

For More Information

- Read more about NIJ's Solving Cold Cases with DNA program at NIJ.gov, keywords: cold case.
- To learn more about STR analysis, read "STR Analysis" from issue 267 of the *NIJ Journal* at NIJ.gov, keyword: STR.

NCJ 244151

NOW AVAILABLE: PRACTICES MODULES ON CRIMESOLUTIONS.GOV

NIJ's CrimeSolutions.gov uses rigorous research to determine what works in criminal justice, juvenile justice and crime victim services.

Now the database includes sections on more than a dozen practices that are based on a scientific method called "meta-analysis." These new practices modules combine multiple evaluations of similar programs to render powerful findings on what kinds of programs and practices work.

Check them out at CrimeSolutions.gov.

PALO ALTO
POLICE
DIAMONDBACK

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES MAY MAKE SAFE COMMUNITIES: PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION

BY **SARAH SCHWEIG**

Police chiefs, public health directors and researchers are establishing innovative public health/public safety collaborations to fight crime.

Most people may not think of jogging and biking as crime reduction strategies, but in neighborhoods in East Palo Alto, Calif., with the highest levels of shootings, law enforcement officers and residents are coming together and engaging in these types of outdoor activities to combat crime.

The East Palo Alto Police Department's Fitness Improvement Training (FIT) Zones are part of an innovative initiative aimed at testing whether improvements in community health can help increase community safety in the city's most dangerous neighborhoods. The FIT Zones implement health-related programs in public spaces that have been underused by residents and overtaken by gang members. The idea is that as residents increase outdoor physical activities like power walking, yoga and Zumba dancing, they will increase their presence in public spaces, improve their health, and regain control and ownership of their neighborhoods.

According to Ronald Davis, director of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and former police chief of the East Palo Alto Police Department, "The greatest deterrent to crime and violence is not a community saturated with cops — it is a neighborhood alive with residents. The concept is that a healthy community would be, in fact, a safe community."

"Whoever controls a neighborhood's public spaces controls the quality of life in that neighborhood," he added. "That control must rest with the residents."

The FIT Zones are just one of a handful of new approaches that use public health strategies to solve community problems. These approaches tend to treat crime and violence like contagious diseases and look for innovative ways to prevent these "diseases" from spreading. Many involve partnerships between public health and public safety agencies and show promise in reducing and preventing crime and violence.

What Is the Public Health Approach?

The public health approach to solving problems consists of four basic elements:

- **Define and monitor the problem:** The first step in preventing violence is to understand the "who," "what," "when," "where" and "how" associated with it. This involves analyzing data from police reports, medical examiner files, vital records, hospital charts, registries, population-based surveys and other sources.
- **Identify risk and protective factors:** Understanding what factors protect people or put them at risk for experiencing or perpetrating violence is also important. Risk and protective factors help identify where prevention efforts should be focused.
- **Develop and test prevention strategies:** Research data and findings from needs assessments, community surveys, stakeholder interviews and focus groups are useful for designing prevention programs. Once programs are implemented, they are evaluated rigorously to determine their effectiveness.
- **Ensure widespread adoption:** Once prevention programs have been proven effective, they must be implemented and adopted more broadly. Dissemination techniques to promote widespread adoption include training, networking, technical assistance and evaluation.[1]

Public Health Approaches to Violence Prevention

A 1979 Surgeon General's report made one of the first explicit links between public health and law enforcement: It identified violent behavior as a significant risk to health. Four years later, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established the Violence Epidemiology Branch, which later became the Division of Violence Prevention.[2]

Since then, law enforcement and public health agencies have increasingly recognized a shared interest in poverty, violence and other societal problems. Both fields respond to existing problems while also taking a preventive approach, stopping problems before they start. Public health and public safety agencies have started to adopt similar strategies and tools — many of which emphasize data analysis, collaboration, community engagement and problem solving — to combat problems facing communities. (To read about NIJ's long-standing commitment to public health-public safety collaborations, see sidebar, "NIJ's Investment in Public Safety and Public Health Partnerships.")

Violence prevention lends itself to a public health approach for a number of reasons. Violence shares many of the "special characteristics of epidemics," according to Gary Slutkin, an epidemiologist and the founder of the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention's Cure Violence (formerly Chicago CeaseFire) program. For example, violence is said to be "infectious," but rather than being transmitted by a vector, such as bacteria, it is transmitted through behavior, such as modeling (for example, a parent modeling behavior for a child) or social pressure.[3] In addition, crime mapping uses many of the techniques originally developed to study disease patterns, and when researchers map incidents of violence, they often find that geographic clusters of crime closely match geographic clusters of disease.[4]

Today, one of the most visible programs to take a stated epidemiological approach to violence is the Cure Violence model. This model enlists members of the community, including former gang members, to serve as "violence interrupters," who hold community demonstrations and counsel those affected by gun violence in an effort to halt the cycle of violence and retaliation after a shooting occurs.[5]

Other models, like the Cardiff Model for Violence Prevention and the Homicide Review Model, emphasize sharing data to identify opportunities for prevention efforts.

Sharing Data and Creating Solutions

Tight budgets make it necessary to maximize existing resources and share information across sectors. By analyzing data in new ways, overstressed police departments can target interventions more precisely.

For example, when Jonathan Shepherd, an emergency department physician, raised concerns that most assault-related injuries coming in for emergency services in Cardiff, Wales, were not reflected in crime data, the Cardiff Model for Violence Prevention was born. The Cardiff Model is a multiagency partnership that combines anonymous data from hospitals with law enforcement data to guide violence prevention. Reception staff in emergency departments are trained to ask basic questions about the nature and location of the violence, the date and time of the incident, and the weapon type. This information is stripped of identifiers, entered into a database and shared with a crime analyst, who then combines the information with police data to generate maps and summaries of violent incidents.

Sharing data can lead to strategic operational adjustments: In Cardiff, police can patrol routes and use closed-circuit television systems in the most problematic areas. Buses can make more frequent late-night stops to avoid overcrowding at certain locations. Local authorities can require a construction site near an alcohol outlet to secure pallets of building supplies that are being used as weapons. According to researchers, after implementing these relatively modest interventions, Cardiff saw a significant (32 percent) relative reduction in assault-related injuries recorded by police over the study period of more than four years when compared with 14 similar cities.[6] A recent cost-benefit analysis completed by the CDC and Shepherd further found that the Cardiff Model resulted in significant cost savings — substantially exceeding the costs of implementing the program — for the health services and criminal justice systems.

Bringing Two Fields Together

Police chiefs, public health directors and social science researchers are just beginning to truly understand the potential of public health-public safety partnerships. To further understand and encourage such collaborations, the COPS Office, The California Endowment and the Center for Court Innovation brought together police chiefs, public health experts, researchers and grant-makers from around the U.S. for two roundtable discussions. Roundtable participants agreed that, as budgets are tightening across sectors, the traditional ways of fighting crime are changing.

The first roundtable identified opportunities for collaborations between law enforcement and public health officials. Afterward, The California Endowment invited participants to apply for mini-grants of $10,000 for crime and violence prevention projects involving collaborations between the two fields; ultimately, nine programs were awarded funding.

The second roundtable was held to share some of the results of the nine mini-grant projects. Some projects partnered with researchers to document early results; others focused on creating new tools that precincts and health departments can use to analyze data across sectors. Below is a brief look at two of the projects.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

According to Mallory O'Brien, a researcher and epidemiologist, the first step in public health and public safety collaborations is to get public health officials and law enforcement to agree that violence is preventable.

O'Brien is the founding director of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission, a collaboration of criminal justice professionals and community service providers that regularly exchanges information about the city's homicides and other violent crimes to identify methods of prevention from both public health and criminal justice perspectives.[7] With funding from The California Endowment, the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Medicine and Public Health, the commission created a first-of-its-kind data hub where researchers and law enforcement can look holistically at individuals and neighborhoods that have frequent contact with the criminal justice system. The hub currently houses arrest, pretrial and health department data from the city of Milwaukee. Its design allows for regular feeds of updated data as well as new data sets, such as workforce development and department of corrections data.

"Once we have the data, we want to be able to share it with the community and with jurisdictions to help

NIJ's Investment in Public Safety and Public Health Partnerships

By Katrina Baum

NIJ has a long-standing commitment to spur innovative solutions to violence through collaboration. Some of NIJ's early work in public health came through partnerships with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For example, in the 1990s, the agencies worked together on the National Violence Against Women Survey[1] to better understand intimate partner violence and measure the rate of injury, the use of medical services and the criminal justice system's involvement. Over the years, this partnership has continued to provide research on the consequences of intimate partner violence, now measured by the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.[2] And just recently, NIJ and CDC jointly published *Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership,* a book that describes key principles in preventing youth from joining gangs.[3]

For the last three years, NIJ has also been a sponsoring organization for the Forum on Global Violence Prevention in the Institute of Medicine at the National Academies. The Forum draws together a diverse set of stakeholders representing philanthropy, science offices within the National Institutes of Health and CDC, and other federal partners to discuss the best science has to offer on violence prevention. To date, the Forum has held six two-day workshops, bringing together hundreds of participants, including some who tuned in via a free webcast. The workshops focused on:

1. Preventing violence against women and children
2. Social and economic costs of violence
3. Communications and technology for violence prevention
4. Contagion of violence
5. Evidence for violence prevention across the lifespan and around the world
6. Elder abuse and its prevention

The workshop proceedings are available for free download at http://www.iom.edu/Activities/Global/Violenceforum.aspx.

The Forum is unique in that its reach is multidisciplinary and international. NIJ does not have the statutory authority to conduct research outside the United States, yet the findings of its research often have implications for victims around the world. This partnership has allowed NIJ-funded research on understanding, preventing and responding to violence — along with relevant research from the health, social work, education and development fields — to reach a large audience across the globe.

One of the challenges facing both public safety and public health is how to not only get evidence into the hands of practitioners around the world, but also ensure that programs are implemented with fidelity. These implementation challenges were raised in a recent discussion paper released by the Institute of Medicine, "Violence Prevention: Moving From Evidence to Implementation."[4] One of the tools highlighted in the article is CrimeSolutions.gov. This site, which is managed by NIJ, aims to help practitioners and policymakers understand what works in justice-related programs and practices. Identifying programs is not sufficient; practitioners need resources to ensure that interventions can be evaluated when they move from their places of origin to new settings and populations.

To learn more about NIJ's investment in these and other public health-public safety projects, visit NIJ.gov, keywords: public health.

About the Author

Katrina Baum is a former senior research officer at NIJ.

Notes

1. Tjaden, Patricia, and Nancy Thoennes, "Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey," Final report to the National Institute of Justice, grant number 93-IJ-CX-0012, July 2000, NCJ 181867, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/181867.pdf.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey,* Atlanta, Ga.: Author, 2011, available at http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs.
3. Simon, Thomas R., Nancy M. Ritter, and Reshma R. Mahendra, *Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2013, NCJ 239234, available at https://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/239234.pdf.
4. Baum, Katrina, Katherine M. Blakeslee, Jacqueline Lloyd, and Anthony Petrosino, "Violence Prevention: Moving From Evidence to Implementation," Washington, D.C.: Institute of Medicine, 2013, available at http://www.iom.edu/Global/Perspectives/2013/ViolencePreventionImplementation.aspx.

identify opportunities for interventions and then assess if they're working," O'Brien said.

Because one challenge to data sharing is ensuring individual privacy, all of the data are stripped of identifiers and made anonymous, as in the Cardiff Model's approach. Each data provider sits on a governance committee that determines what kinds of data can be shared across sectors.

The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission recently received a grant from the COPS Office to provide technical assistance to cities interested in implementing this collaborative approach, such as Chicago, New Orleans and Indianapolis.

East Palo Alto, California

In planning East Palo Alto's FIT Zones, Davis brought in researcher Sarah Lawrence from the very beginning.

"One of the good things about this project is having a researcher at the table from the beginning, playing a role in shaping it and also an evaluative role in finding outcomes," said Lawrence, director of policy analysis at the University of California (UC), Berkeley, Law School's Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy.

"The FIT Zone project would not have been successful without having a research partner at the table during each stage of the project," Davis said. "UC Berkeley's involvement in the FIT Zones helped make the project successful and its results credible."

East Palo Alto's approach is both grounded in and continually shaped by research. In 2010, the city's violent crime rate was nearly 80 percent higher than that of the state of California overall, and there was a large disparity between the number of shooting incidents and actual calls to police.

"If you live in a community where you've been hearing gunshots every day, at some point you just stop calling because from your perspective, nothing really happens, and it just becomes, unfortunately, part of life," Davis said.

The East Palo Alto Police Department used a gunshot detection system to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the volume and nature of shootings, including the number of rounds fired, and the precise time and location of the incidents.[8] Using these data, the department worked with an epidemiologist from the local county public health agency to identify the areas with the most shootings. Ultimately, they chose two sites to pilot the project; 26 percent of the city's population lives in these two sites.

Before the FIT Zones started, Lawrence conducted a telephone survey of residents to establish a baseline. The survey asked residents about their levels of fear, their confidence in the police in their neighborhood, their use of public space and their general thoughts about health. Additional rounds of surveys are being conducted to assess whether those perceptions and opinions have changed since implementation of the FIT Zones.

Nine months into a one-year study, the two FIT Zones are yielding promising results. Since activities began, shootings in the two FIT Zones are down 60 percent and 43 percent, compared with a decrease of 30 percent in other areas in the city.[9]

Next Steps: Validating Results

Although some police departments and public health agencies have already partnered with researchers to show early results and successes when using public health strategies to solve community problems, others may need assistance to hone their approaches and document outcomes.

"Many of the community-based organizations we work with really don't have the capacity to know whether their strategies are successful," O'Brien said.

As Barbara Raymond of The California Endowment explained, research is key for these approaches to "make the leap into the mainstream and demonstrate that what makes us healthier also makes us safer." Researchers can not only document the promising results of new approaches — they can also act as intermediaries, helping to bridge the worlds of public health and law enforcement so that all stakeholders can understand what is working, what is not and why.

However, validating innovation can be complex. Budget savings, for example, can be a huge selling point for state and federal policymakers, but proving that expenditures were spared because of prevention efforts can be hard. It can also be difficult to share innovative concepts across sectors. Even when public health and law enforcement agencies share the same goal, differing values and vocabularies can undermine partnerships.

"The challenge of policing in the new economy," said Davis, "is not to do more of the same with less; it is doing more things differently based on evidence and science."

Public health and public safety collaborations have shown promise in reducing crime and violence. More research about these strategies is a necessary next step. That way, effective prevention strategies — instead of violence — can spread.

About the Author

Sarah Schweig is a senior writer at the Center for Court Innovation.

Notes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention," Atlanta, Ga.: Author, 2013, available at http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/publichealthapproach.html.
2. Dahlberg, Linda L., and James A. Mercy, *The History of Violence as a Public Health Issue,* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2009, available at http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/history_violence-a.pdf.

3. According to Slutkin, "The principal driver of violent behavior actually is whether you think that someone in your peer groups expects it of you"; from Slutkin, Gary, "Gary Slutkin: Disrupting Violence," videotaped presentation, PopTech Salon, Chicago, May 2010, available at http://vimeo.com/11841675.

4. Wolf, Robert V., *Law Enforcement and Public Health: Sharing Resources and Strategies to Make Communities Safer,* U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012, available at http://www.courtinnovation.org/research/law-enforcement-and-public-health-sharing-resources-and-strategies-make-communities-safer.

5. To read about an NIJ-sponsored evaluation of the program, see Ritter, Nancy, "CeaseFire: A Public Health Approach to Reduce Shootings and Killings," *NIJ Journal* 264 (2009): 20-25, available at http://www.nij.gov/journals/264/pages/ceasefire.aspx.

6. Florence, Curtis, Jonathan Shepherd, Iain Brennan, and Thomas Simon, "Effectiveness of anonymised information sharing and use in health service, police, and local government partnership for preventing violence related injury: Experimental study and time series analysis," *BMJ* 342 (2011): d3313, available at http://www.bmj.com/content/342/bmj.d3313.

7. An NIJ-funded impact evaluation showed that Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission interventions produced a statistically significant 52 percent decrease in the monthly homicide rate in the treatment districts. Researchers found a 9.2 percent decrease in the monthly homicide rate in the control districts. The interventions were associated with a noteworthy decrease in homicide. For more information, see Azrael, Deborah, Anthony A. Braga, and Mallory O'Brien, "Developing the Capacity to Understand and Prevent Homicide: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission," Final report to the National Institute of Justice, grant number 2005-IJ-CX-0005, January 2013, NCJ 240814, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/240814.pdf.

8. For more information, see *Geography & Public Safety,* an NIJ-COPS collaborative publication: Lawrence, Sarah, Chief Ronald Davis, and Brad Jacobson, "Using public health strategies to reduce violence in 'hot spots' in East Palo Alto, California," *Geography & Public Safety,* 3.2 (August 2012): 5-8, available at http://cops.usdoj.gov/Publications/e05122469c.pdf.

9. Author call with Chief Ronald Davis.

NCJ 244150

THROUGH THEIR EYES: HOW PRISONERS MAKE SENSE OF THEIR INCARCERATION

BY **NADINE FREDERIQUE** AND **LORI SEXTON**

The penal consciousness framework offers a new way to understand the experiences of punishment.

A new theoretical framework looks at punishment from the prisoner's perspective and reveals how the lived experience of punishment differs from the punishment conceived by lawmakers "on the books."

While conducting dissertation research partially funded by NIJ at the University of California, Irvine, researcher Lori Sexton examined the experiences of 80 male and female inmates under direct and indirect supervision in three Ohio state prisons.[1] How do they understand and orient to being in prison? Do they interpret punishment in different ways? She used qualitative interview data to develop the "penal consciousness" framework. This new theoretical framework moves beyond the objective aspects of incarceration to help us understand the subjective experience of punishment, specifically how prisoners make sense of their time in prison.[2]

What Is Punishment?

Sexton first organized the punishments described by prisoners into two conceptual categories: concrete and symbolic. Concrete punishments — the presence or absence of concrete, material things — described by prisoners included the breakdown of amenities (for example, microwaves, televisions and recreation equipment); the denial of appropriate hygiene and personal grooming products; the removal of privileges; and the imposition of administrative sanctions, such as disciplinary tickets, "early bed" and "cell isolation."

Symbolic punishments are losses and deprivations representative of something larger. Nearly all prisoners interviewed agreed that simply being in prison was a big part of their punishment. In addition, four symbolic punishments loomed largest for prisoners: the related losses of autonomy, self and humanity — all connected to this loss of freedom — and the loss of family.

The Salience and Severity of Punishment

Sexton went beyond simply cataloging the array of punishments described by the 80 prisoners. She also looked at how the experience of punishment varies using two dimensions that arose inductively

from the data: severity (the punishment's intensity as experienced by prisoners) and salience (the importance of punishment in the minds and lives of prisoners).

Sexton found that the severity of punishment exists on a continuum, ranging from extremely low to almost unbearably high. Notably, concrete punishment (for example, a high-sodium diet or overpriced toiletries) tends to be relatively low in severity, whereas symbolic punishment (for example, loss of freedom or severed ties with loved ones) tends to be far more severe.

While severity of punishment reveals intensity, salience reflects how prominent punishment is in the daily lives and minds of prisoners. Like severity, salience exists on a spectrum from imperceptibly low to strikingly high. It depends not only on prisoners' experiences of punishment but also on their expectations of punishment. The distance between what a prisoner expects and what he or she experiences — what Sexton calls the "punishment gap" — largely determines the salience of the punishment. Expectations vary widely and are influenced by first-hand experience or vicarious accounts of what prison is like, as well as prisoners' knowledge of appropriate punishments for certain crimes and their sense of fairness or justice.

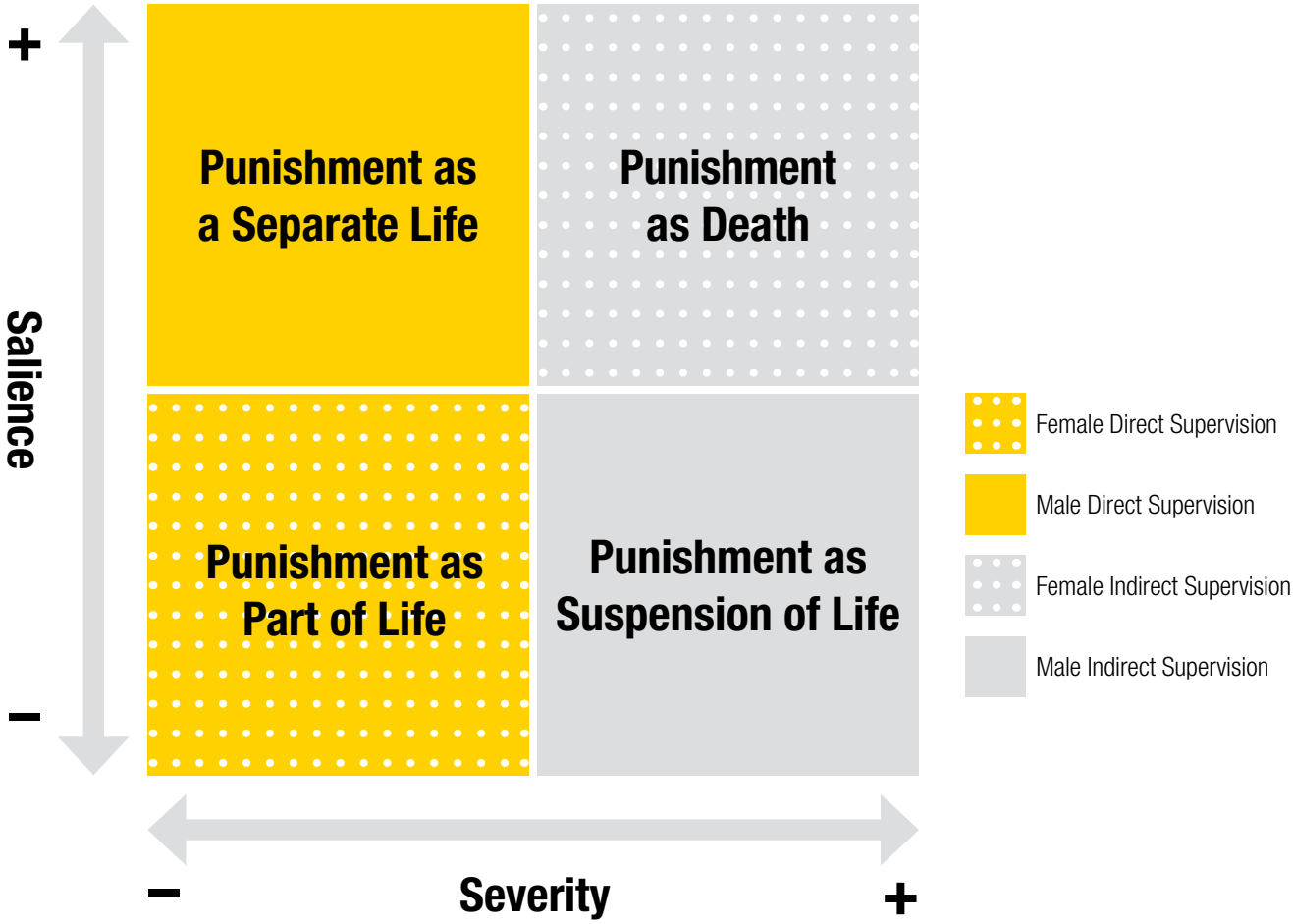
Narratives of Penal Consciousness

As Sexton examined the interplay between severity and salience, four unique narratives of penal consciousness — or stories that prisoners tell about the meaning and place of punishment in their lives — began to emerge from the data. These narratives do not describe types of prisoners; instead, they portray the different ways that prisoners situate punishment in the larger landscape of what they consider to be their "real" lives. Because punishment is constantly in flux and prisoners continually reconfigure their experiences and expectations, these narratives can shift over time. And because punishment is multifaceted and complex, prisoners may experience more than one narrative at the same time.

- *Punishment as part of life:* For prisoners experiencing this as part of their narrative, punishment fits seamlessly into the course of their real lives. They see punishment as one of many unique experiences that make up a complete life history. This narrative is associated with prisoners experiencing punishment low in both salience and severity.
- *Punishment as a separate life:* In this narrative, prisoners erect a boundary between their lives inside prison and the lives they lived on the outside. Life outside prison walls is rendered far less real as a result of prisoners' distance from it, while life inside prison becomes the only reality they know. Rather than being one chapter in the story of prisoners' lives, punishment forms a new story altogether.

  This narrative resembles the first narrative (punishment as a part of life) in many ways. For instance, in both, prisoners experience punishment low in severity. In punishment as a separate life, however, prisoners experience punishment high in salience and thus consider the punishment more real than the lives they left behind outside prison walls.
- *Punishment as suspension of life:* The study found that punishment that is low in salience and high in severity induces a feeling of stagnation and a sense of unreality in prisoners. For inmates experiencing this narrative, life outside prison continues under the auspices of "reality," while inside prison, reality and life are suspended. Punishment carries with it a skewed sense of temporality and a sensation of being stuck at a standstill while "real" life passes by in a blur outside prison walls.
- *Punishment as death:* Similar to those experiencing punishment as suspension of life, prisoners who express this narrative see punishment as incompatible with life. But unlike those for whom punishment is simply a physical distancing or removal from a life that continues without them outside prison walls, prisoners who experience punishment as death report an extinguishing of life altogether. These prisoners describe punishment as a physical, psychological or spiritual death, ending their lives as they knew them. In this narrative, which is associated with punishment high in both salience and severity, a life of punishment is no life at all.

How Gender and Supervision Style Shape Prisoners' Penal Consciousness



The Role of Supervision Style and Gender

Sexton next examined how gender and prisons' supervision styles shape prisoners' penal consciousness.

She found that the style of supervision used in a prison impacts penal consciousness in various ways. Direct supervision — designed to be a humane and humanizing form of incarceration — includes housing units with cells arranged around a common dayroom; commercial-grade fixtures inside cells and common areas; and amenities such as televisions, games, kitchen appliances and do-it-yourself laundry. These direct supervision housing units helped temper the symbolic punishments experienced as part of incarceration (such as the loss of freedom and family) and eliminated many of the concrete punishments entirely. The data showed that prisoners under direct supervision tend to experience punishment as part of life and punishment as a separate life — both associated with low-severity punishment. In contrast, prisoners in indirect supervision settings, which use traditional, linear-style cellblocks to house prisoners, tend to experience punishment as suspension of life and punishment as death, two narratives that portray incarceration as essentially incompatible with life.

As for gender, Sexton found that female prisoners often lamented the lack of consistency and routine in prison, and they most often expressed narratives of

punishment that were either low in both salience and severity (punishment as part of life) or high in both salience and severity (punishment as death). Male prisoners, on the other hand, said that prison staff and procedures often lacked respect and fairness. They most often recounted punishment that was a combination of high salience and low severity (punishment as a separate life) or low salience and high severity (punishment as suspension of life).

When looking at gender and supervision style in concert, Sexton discovered that each group — women under direct supervision, women under indirect supervision, men under direct supervision and men under indirect supervision — was most likely to express a particular narrative of penal consciousness. Women under direct supervision were more likely to experience punishment as part of life, whereas women under indirect supervision were more likely to experience punishment as death. Men under direct supervision were more likely to experience punishment as a separate life, whereas men under indirect supervision were more likely to experience punishment as suspension of life. (See "How Gender and Supervision Style Shape Prisoners' Penal Consciousness" graph.)

Potential Policy Implications

By studying the subjective experiences of prisoners, the penal consciousness framework allows us to understand variations in the lived experience of punishment and how punishment "on the ground" differs from the punishment conceived by lawmakers "on the books."

The gap between punishment on the books and punishment in action has potential policy implications. The criminal justice system is predicated on knowable, measureable penalties. But the subjective nature of punishment means that no single prisoner's punishment can possibly be known before it is experienced. As such, correctional officials may be able to develop management strategies that are attentive to differences in penal consciousness.

Reducing both the severity and salience of punishment as experienced by prisoners may be a viable way to achieve the rehabilitative goals of our correctional system. Sexton's findings suggest that direct supervision — which produces a low severity of punishment and is associated with the experience of punishment as compatible with life — has a normalizing, humanizing effect on prisoners. Whether this effect has lasting, positive outcomes for prisoner re-entry remains to be seen, but given our knowledge of the challenges of community re-entry, it offers a promising strategy to explore and research further.

About the Authors

Nadine Frederique is a social science analyst in NIJ's Justice Systems Research Division. Lori Sexton is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

For More Information

- To read the full report, *Under the Penal Gaze: An Empirical Examination of Penal Consciousness Among Prison Inmates,* go to NIJ.gov, keyword: 239671.

Notes

1. The sample included all male and female medium-security prisoners living in celled housing units (i.e., units that were not dormitory-style). To make comparisons across gender and supervision style, Sexton used a stratified random sampling technique to draw a representative sample of 100 prisoners from qualified housing units. Each sampling section represents one of the four possible combinations of gender and supervision style: (1) female prisoners in direct supervision housing units, (2) female prisoners in indirect supervision housing units, (3) male prisoners in direct supervision housing units, and (4) male prisoners in indirect supervision housing units. Complete rosters were obtained for each stratum; from these rosters, 25 prisoners were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. The

target sample for the research was 80 participants (20 from each stratum). An additional five prisoners were included from each stratum in anticipation of a less-than-perfect participation rate. Despite the relatively small sample size, Sexton notes in her report that she achieved her goal of obtaining a representative sample from each of the four strata. The entire sample, and each subsample, closely mirrored the population from which it was drawn with regard to standard demographic and sentence-related characteristics.

2. Sexton, Lori, "Under the Penal Gaze: An Empirical Examination of Penal Consciousness Among Prison Inmates," Final report to the National Institute of Justice, grant number 2010-IJ-CX-0002, September 2012, available at https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/239671.pdf.

NCJ 244149

ISSUE NO. **273**

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice

Washington, DC 20531

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300

PRESORTED STANDARD
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
DOJ/NIJ
PERMIT NO. G-19

NCJ 244144

NIJ