Street Gangs:

A Review of the Empirical Literature on Community and

Corrections-Based Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Strategies

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Overview of Gang Literature

The present study provides an overview of various street gang-related issues and offers

recommendations for addressing these gangs. The report outlines three main strategies that are

used to reduce or eliminate gangs from our communities and correctional facilities: (1)

prevention programs are intended to discourage at-risk youth from joining a gang in the first

place, (2) disengagement programs are intended to encourage gang members to abandon the

lifestyle of the gang, and (3) suppression strategies are intended to use the full force of the law to

deter and contain gang activity. Where possible, the report indicates whether specific programs

and strategies target youth or adults and whether they are community- or institutionally-based.

Street gang research has produced a number of findings regarding the impact of different risk

factors on the likelihood of a young person joining a gang:

- Individual risk factors

  Increased number of identified individual risk factors increases the likelihood of gang

  membership. Early drug use, sexual promiscuity, low self-esteem, feelings of alienation,

  the need for recognition, status, power, and excitement, all increase the likelihood that an

  at-risk youth will join a gang and become mired in the gang lifestyle.

- Family risk factors

  Gang youth often come from disadvantaged homes. Poverty, child abuse and neglect,

  poor parental supervision, parental attitudes supportive of violence, as well as gang

  involvement by family members, are all predictive of gang membership (Wyrick &

  Howell, 2004).

- Community risk factors

  The subtle interplay of area poverty, high crime rates, under-resourced communities, racism, intergenerational gang traditions, the easy availability of drugs, can all combine to influence young people to join a gang (OJJDP, 1994).

- Peer group risk factors

  Research shows that rejection by peers at a young age, resulting in low self-esteem and unhappiness can elicit aggressive behaviour, a condition that creates a higher risk for gang involvement (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith, and Tobin, 2003). Moreover, a young person can have friends who are gang members, which is a condition that also increases the risk of gang membership.

- School risk factors

  A young gang member is likely to do poorly in school (Wyrick & Howell, 2004). Poor school achievement, in turn, is related to low academic aspirations and commitment to school. Doing poorly in school can make the young person feel miserable and different, feelings which create a higher risk of joining a gang. Another school-related risk factor is feeling unsafe or unaccepted in school. This may be particularly true for ethnic minorities. Belonging to a gang can give the person a feeling of empowerment, a sense of belonging, and common identity.

In addition to having a sense of the various individual and social factors that encourage youth to join gangs, it is also important to know the structural/organizational characteristics of a community's gangs. For example, some gangs that are formed along racial lines are primarily status or defensive orientated (Spergel, 1995). Their primary purpose is not to generate income, but to provide members with a community within which they can feel accepted and safe. On the

other hand, other gangs are gain orientated where material gain is *the* strongest motivational and rewarding element drawing individuals to the gang.

Responses to a local gang problem focus on prevention, disengagement, and suppression strategies. One well-received prevention project is The Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program. GREAT is a cognitive-based program that helps middle school students develop the knowledge and skills that are needed to resist joining a gang in the first place. Although this program may be described as a prevention strategy, it is included in intervention section. During the course of the program, students learn how drugs, violence, crime, and racism hurt their community; students are taught to improve their problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. Many schools are also committed to prevention efforts by creating a safe, positive environment for students and by acting as a portal linking at-risk students to the programs and services they need to deal with their problems. Mentoring programs such as Gang Rescue and Support Project (GRASP) use small group meetings and peer mentoring to give at-risk youth the opportunity to learn from the experiences of former gang members. In evaluating GRASP, Hritz and Gabow (1997) observe a number of improvements including decreases in gang involvement and arrest rates and improvements in school and employment performance.

Disengagement strategies seek to help the gang member break their ties with their gang and successfully work their way back into the conventional world. Although research indicates that some gang members feel safe in walking away from their gang (Gordon, 1994), others fear retaliation and, therefore, their most immediate need is to have a safe place to go while preparing to make the transition back into the conventional world. For example, The Circle of Life Thunderbird House in Winnipeg, Manitoba, has developed the Paa-Pii-Wak program that provides a safe house for those who want to leave their gang. At the safe house, the ex-gang

member can also receive the additional support (i.e., family or substance abuse counseling) that they may need to avoid returning to the gang lifestyle.

A recent conference outlined some important strategies to direct youth away from gang-related activity. This Winnipeg conference, entitled Expanding Prairie Horizons Vision 2020, stressed the importance of what has come to be known as 'safe houses.' A good example of a safe house in Winnipeg is The Rossbrook House. In addition to providing young people with a safe haven, Rossbrook House offers a host of other services that include the following: healthy meals; a drop-in centre, where members can entertain themselves by playing pool, cards, or surfing the Internet; an Employment Co-ordinator, who can help youth find work or learn more about job training opportunities. Simply put, the Rossbrook House provides young people with opportunities for socialization, recreation, crisis intervention, and personal development through encouraging education and job training. Major funders of the House include the Rotary Club, the United Way of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, and City of Winnipeg.

In addition to providing shelters or safe houses, the community can reach out to gang-youth in other ways. Education and job training can provide gang members with the skills they need to find a job and leave their gang (Huff, 1998). Individual and family counseling can be used to treat a host of problems (e.g., substance abuse, anger management, poor parental management) that make leaving one's gang more complicated and difficult (Wyrick & Howell, 2004). Schools can also play a critical role by developing disengagement programs for those who are in the grips of the gang lifestyle (OJJDP, 1994). Youth outreach workers can help gang members deal with their problems and counsel gang members about ways to leave their gang. They can also be called on in times of crisis, such as an arrest, and can act as mediators to settle gang disputes (Arbreton & McClanahan, 1998).

Suppression strategies use the full force of the law to deter and control a community's gang problem. Police can use targeted patrols and arrests, intelligence gathering, stakeouts, and surveillance techniques to suppress gang activity. Specialized gang prosecution units and task forces are used to improve how gang members are prosecuted and to increase arrest and incarceration rates. Anti-gang legislation is also used to improve the ability of the police and courts to arrest and prosecute gang youth (Miethe & McCorkle, 2002).

Many of the above strategies are used in correctional settings. Institutional programs that reflect the needs of gang members (e.g., remedial education, anger management, substance abuse, family violence, gang awareness) can prepare offenders for noncriminal behaviour upon re-entry into the community. Aggressively monitoring and prosecuting gang activity while in prison and improving race relations can help reduce a facility's gang problems (Knox, 1999). Since prison gangs form a cohesive structure, a useful strategy to weaken the common ties and objectives that exist among gang members may simply involve dispersing gang members among different facilities (U.S. Department of Justice). In a similar vein, Knox (1999) observed that many correctional administrators believe that collecting gang leaders in a central/national federal unit can be a useful way to restrict gang activity. Housing gangs members in a central facility can can be helpful in at least two ways: (1) a gang's ability to recruit new members from among the general prison population is restricted, and (2) central units can provide an opportunity for greater institutional control and suppression of gang-related activity. While institutional treatment programs can reach gang members while they are in a facility, aftercare programs can be later used to sustain improvements once offenders are released back into the community (Gies, 2003). Successful aftercare programs combine social control (e.g., contact with parole

officers, electronic monitoring) and intervention strategies (counselling, employment training) when working with offenders.

Recommendations

A review of the preceding literature gives rise to the following commentary and recommendations to address the problem of street gangs in our communities.

Background to Recommendation 1

The initial priority should be consensus of definition. The definitional issue is important because non-consensus of definition will have practical implications. For example, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (1997) has noted, "Because of the diversity of gangs and their activities, many communities have trouble defining, or even recognizing, their gang problems. Some communities deny having a problem" (p. 7). Furthermore, an ill-defined gang problem or incident may set off an over-reaction involving a heavy suppression effort where none is needed. In the context of prison, Kassel (2003) observes that mislabeling an offender as a gang member may have serious implications such as denial of privileges and early release options.

Recommendation 1

A uniform definition and identification strategy should be established and applied accurately and consistently amongst correctional officers, policy-makers, law enforcement personnel, and all other key stakeholders who deal directly with gangs. In Canada, a gang member can only be identified through the courts. Therefore, agencies should adopt the legal definitions and protocols for gang member identification.

Background to Recommendation 2

As described by Gaes, Wallace, Gilman, Klein-Saffran and Suppa (2001), the Federal Bureau of Prisons in the U.S. has implemented a national gang database that provides staff with access to

information on gang members and gang activities by closely monitoring the behaviours, patterns, and trends within prison gang populations. Unfortunately, such a service is not readily available in Canada.

Recommendation 2

The development of a national gang database, accessible within both adult and young offender institution, would provide a consistent means of monitoring and addressing the security threat posed by gang members and should be investigated with other agencies and levels of government.

Background to Recommendation 3

As noted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2000b), "No assumptions about presumed gang problems or needed responses should be made before conducting a careful assessment" (p. 53). The initial needs assessment will include information about the personal and social characteristics of gang members, patterns of gang activity, gang organization, program objectives and needed responses, as well as current resources that are available in the community. In addition to conducting a needs assessment, it is also important to conduct an outcome evaluation in order to determine whether and the extent to which participants are changing in the desired direction.

Recommendation 3

Comprehensive needs assessments involving key stakeholders, such as teachers, frontline workers, police, correctional workers, parents, and gang members, should be conducted in individual communities to identify the needs, gaps in services and resources that are required to implement direct services for gang reduction in an effective manner.

Background to Recommendation 4

Although gang members may receive institutional treatment, they may also need a full menu of services (e.g., substance abuse, anger management, family violence, education and job training) once they are released back into the community. Unfortunately, although gang members often require support in the various risk/need domains, access to the support they need is often limited or non-existent. The need for intensive aftercare programs may be especially important for those gang members who are judged to be most likely to recidivate.

Recommendation 4

Multidimensional approaches to therapy and supervision, like MultiSystemic Therapy, should be adopted as an intensive treatment option for the reintegration of gang members back into the community.

Background to Recommendation 5

As observed by Spergel and Grossman (1997), the first and fundamental realization about gangs must be that "No single agency, community group, discipline, or approach alone is sufficient to successfully address a complex problem as gang crime" (p. 469). A possible first step to attracting the attention of the community is to create a "steering committee" or "gang task force unit" that could both raise the community's awareness of its gang problem while mobilizing those key organizations and institutions (e.g., police, courts, governments, health services, schools) that have the expertise and resources needed to address their community's gang problem.

Recommendation 5

Community partnerships should be created or strengthened through the creation of community "steering committees" among key stakeholders.

Background to Recommendation 6

Gang members, especially chronic or long-term gang members, are often the most behaviourially and socially maladjusted and, as a result, need a great deal of specialized assistance before they can function effectively in society. Providing programs and services that help gang members to improve themselves (e.g., their social and cognitive skills), change their attitudes (e.g., by teaching them about the consequences of gang life), and deal with their personal problems (e.g., substance abuse) has been shown to have a positive impact on gang member's willingness to leave their gang (Department of Justice Canada, 2003).

Recommendation 6

A formalized commitment should be made by youth- and adult-serving agencies to provide the services that are necessary for gang-involved youth and adults to effect the disengagement process. In the event that no commitment for services can be identified from existing agencies, alternative services should be located or developed to support the disengagement process.

Background to Recommendation 7

Young people often join gangs because of their desire for social prestige and income. Huff (1998) reports that many gang members are willing to leave their gang even for wages that are only slightly higher than minimum wage. Thus, providing gang members with an opportunity to improve their education and train for a job can also encourage them to abandon the gang lifestyle.

Recommendation 7

Since successful disengagement strategies rely on providing meaningful opportunities to develop skills and competencies necessary to compete in the labor market and since denying gang members access to such programs is counterproductive to their

disengagement, an effort should be made to break down the barriers to such programs for gang members and alternative programs that provide gang members with direct educational and employment opportunities should be sought.

Background to Recommendation 8

The full force of the law can be used to help maintain public safety and order. The law enforcement-dominated approach can include (1) police responses (e.g., targeted patrols, intensive surveillance and intelligence gathering, (2) prosecution strategies (e.g., specialized prosecution units that follow a case through the judicial process), (3) correctional responses (e.g., housing gang members in separate facilities, aggressive prosecution of gang-related activities in a facility), as well as (4) anti-gang legislation that strengthens the ability of the police and the courts to prosecute gang members. However, since such suppression strategies can be the most costly and ineffective means of addressing a gang problem, it is commonly recommended that they be used as a last resort, or used to facilitate other strategies, such as disengagement (Bjerraagard, 2003).

Recommendation 8

Suppression efforts should be used only after all other prevention and intervention strategies have failed to elicit the desired outcomes, and then only in combination with other strategies, such as disengagement, so that these other strategies may be undertaken more effectively.

Background to Recommendation 9

Aboriginal people are a particularly high-risk/need population for gang involvement. It has become a truism to suggest that Aboriginal peoples be provided with culturally appropriate programs and services. It has also become routine to suggest that such programs are best

delivered by qualified and trained Aboriginal people (Mecredi, 2000). It is also important to

remember that Aboriginal peoples do not form a single, homogeneous group. Different

Aboriginal peoples such as First Nations, Metis, and Inuit, may have unique programming needs

that are not shared by all groups (Mileto, Trevethan, & Moore, 2004).

Recommendation 9

Since culturally-based programs have produced positive outcomes with Aboriginal

populations and since ethnicity constitutes an important responsivity factor in offender

treatment, Aboriginal community members should be engaged at all levels of a gang

reduction strategy.

Background to Recommendation 10

The best way of dealing with a gang problem is to prevent it from occurring in the first place.

In fact, the most supported approach endorses the use of prevention strategies that try to help at-

risk youth before they are recruited into a gang (Decker & Curry, 2000). Unfortunately, despite

the overwhelming support for gang prevention strategies, such strategies tend to be under-used at

both the community and custody levels (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001).

Recommendation 10

With the growth of gangs in Canada lagging behind their proliferation in the U.S., Canada

remains in a strong position to explore the best approaches to prevent the expansion of

gang membership in its communities. Research should be undertaken on the growth,

development, and membership of gangs in Canada and program evaluation studies should

be conducted to assess the impact of prevention, suppression and correctional strategies.

1. 0 Introduction, Terms and Definitions

The gang phenomenon has intrigued researchers for many decades. The earliest works in North America date back to the 1920's with contributions from Frederick Thrasher who studied the gangs in Chicago (Bjerregaard, 2002). Despite the enormous body of gang research and literature at the international level, surprisingly little work has been done on gangs in Canada. As a result, there are limited available resources that explore gang issues, including evidence-based, best practices for addressing gang-related issues from a Canadian perspective. A preliminary exploration of various responses to gangs would indicate that law enforcement strategies, which are primarily focussed on suppression, have been given the highest priority in Canada. This is evidenced by the establishment of street crime units in all major urban centers. The limited number of specific gang-related programs and services, both in the community and correctional facilities, also serves to support this assessment of the Canadian response to gang activity. This review of recent literature focuses on the nature of 'the gang problem.' It also explores best practice measures that have been identified as being effective for work with gangs in other regions, primarily in the United States.

The strategies and program models that were surveyed include areas of (1) prevention, primarily with youth, (2) intervention and (3) suppression, both within the community and custody facilities. These strategies have provided specific programs and approaches that have been deemed effective in addressing gang problems in other areas. We suggest that all three strategies be simultaneously employed to establish sustainable long-term solutions for the gang phenomenon. Based on the exploration of existing literature, we posit that collaborative efforts between law enforcement, policy-makers, community members, front-line workers, as well as gang and former gang members, are all necessary for effective measures in gang reduction.

A survey of evidence-based practices on gang reduction provides an interesting perspective on the current state of gang reduction strategies. By far, most of the major explorations of street gangs have focussed on youth. Consequently, the main focus of this study is based on the evaluation research that has been conducted on youthful street gangs. When available, gang literature on adult populations, particularly prison-based studies, is presented and noted accordingly. However, the lack of evidence-based research on gang reduction among adult populations will be quite apparent. Recently, George Knox (2004), the president of the National Gang Crime Research Centre, made the same point. "As a generalization, it is safe to say that the literature has yet to reveal any evaluation research of any kind on the level of effectiveness of these kinds of programs" (p. 1). This lack of evaluation research clearly demonstrates the need for more research literature devoted to effective gang reduction strategies within adult populations.

1.1 The Power to Name: Defining the Gang

The dilemmas associated with defining the terms 'gang,' 'gang member,' and 'gang-related' have been extensively explored within the social science literature (Spergel, 1995; John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001; Esbensen, Winfree, He & Taylor, 2001; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2004a, 2004b; Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon & Tremblay, 2002). The preoccupation surrounding these issues is warranted as inconsistent definitions significantly alter estimates of the number of gang members in a community. Gang member identification methods can be either too inclusive, resulting in an exaggerated number of gang members or too exclusive, which can minimize the extent of a gang problem. Moreover, different definitions or the lack of a sound definition make it difficult to replicate research and service delivery because different definitions will significantly alter the representation of the target population, as well the

findings, recommendations and subsequent responses to gang-related issues (Spergel, 1995; Esbensen, Winfree, He & Taylor, 2001). Similarly, the North Carolina Criminal Justice Investigation Centre (2000) noted the following:

> Disparate definitions directly affect the extent to which gangs are perceived as being problematic, a slight nuisance, or even existent. Consequently, how a jurisdiction defines gangs directly affects the level of gang related crime and in turn can influence local policy and financial and resource allocations (p. 1).

Therefore, many researchers have recommended developing a consistent means of defining a 'gang,' 'gang member,' and 'gang-related' (Spergel, 1995, Jackson, 1999; Bjerregaard, 2002). "This would not only aid law enforcement, legislatures, and those who tackle the problem firsthand but would also assist criminologists interested in developing effective strategies to prevent gang involvement" (Bjerregaard, 2002, p. 32). In contrast, it has also been suggested that it is impossible to provide a universal profile of a gang or a gang member due to the unique characteristics and activities that gang members possess in different geographical locations (Shelden, Tracy & Brown, 2001; Petersen, 2000).

The nature of the gang problem is typically derived from the source that is exploring the issues (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001). In Canada, with the primary focus having been on suppression, the most commonly used definition of a street gang is derived from a law enforcement perspective. "'Street gang' is a term that law enforcement traditionally used to categorize crime groups that consisted predominantly of young males from similar ethnic backgrounds that were usually engaged in a low level of criminality, often based within a specific geographical area" (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2004, p.29).

On June 13, 2001, Canada's most aggressive anti-gang legislation was passed through the House of Commons. Bill C-24, *Amendments to the Criminal Code*, was developed to provide legal direction for dealing with 'organized crime,' including gangs, as well as to provide law enforcement officers with more judicial powers to address organized crime in Canada. Earlier attempts through Bill C-95 evoked strong opinions amongst various sectors of the legal community. One of the primary concerns for both Bill C-95 and Bill C-24 has been the legal immunity for activities that would otherwise be considered illegal that was offered to law enforcement officials while they investigate criminal organizations (Civil Liberties Association, November, 2000).

Bill C-24: A Criminal Organization Definition:

> (1) a group, however organized, that is composed of three or more persons
>
> and;
>
> (2) that has as one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or
>
> commission of one or more serious offences;
>
> (3) that, if committed, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of
>
> a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any one
>
> of the persons who constitute the group.
>
> It ***does not*** include a group of persons that form randomly for the
>
> immediate commission of a single offence (Edmonton Police Service, No
>
> date, p. 1).

Within the federal corrections institutions in Canada, identified gang members were denied access to rehabilitative programming that was available to nongang inmates (Mecredi, 2000). Similar experiences were reported by Kassel (2003), who also indicated that nongang inmates

were often denied access to privileges for merely associating with gang members. Many of these participants expressed concerns over the subjectivity of gang identification procedures that are currently being employed (Kassel, 2003). Therefore, it is important for officials to maintain strict adherence to these identification criteria because the recognition of being a gang member has serious implications, primarily punitive and restrictive, for any individual who is identified as a gang member (Mecredi, 2000; Kassel, 2003). In Canada, the adoption of Bill C-24 requires that gang identification is to be determined by the courts. Therefore, it is important for agencies to follow legislative procedures, including legal definitions, in order to avoid a proliferation of multiple definitions and to minimize the misidentification of gang mambers.

1.2 Understanding the Gang: Implications for Addressing the Issues

There have been several theoretical explanations for the development of gangs. These theories related to the development of gangs are primarily derived from a criminological perspective. Frederick Thrasher, who supported social disorganization theory, produced one of the earliest works of gang research. Social disorganization theory indicates that crime and delinquency occur primarily in poor areas that lack social cohesion within a community (Linden, 1996). Spergel (1995) defines social disorganization as "…the lack of integration of key social institutions including youth and youth groups, family, school, and employment within a local community (p. 61). When social disorganization exists in a community, the rates of crime and delinquency will rise within the community (Linden, 1996). One of the criticisms of the application of social disorganization theory to the development of gangs is that most children and youth located in these communities do not become gang members (Esbensen, 2000). "The reality of life in a gang-infested neighbourhood is that every boy and girl must, by necessity, associate with gang members because gang members are their classmates, their neighbours, their relatives"

(Harowitz, 1993, p. 29). Another popular explanation offered by 'strain theorists' is that the lack

of meaningful opportunity within a community serves as a foundation for creating a gang

(Merton, 1957). This lack of opportunity results in frustration and unrest, which creates the need

to pursue illegitimate opportunity through gang membership. Despite the efforts to create distinct

boundaries amongst these theories, the most useful approach to understanding the development

of gangs within a community is to utilize each theory to address the issues surrounding crime and

delinquency (Linden, 1996).

The issues of gangs and gang-related violence are not a new phenomenon in Canada. As the

violent crime rates amongst youth continue to rise, there is an increased urgency to understand

the nature of the crimes in order to address the individual and societal risks associated with

increased violence. In 2003, "[t]he Saskatchewan youth violent crime rate increased by 21%,

while the youth property crime was up by 14%, and the "other" *Criminal Code* crime rate

increased by 11%" (Saskatchewan Justice, 2004, p.1). Whenever increases in the crime rate are

reported in the media, there is a warranted response of societal concern and call for action. When

these increases pertain to violent crime, media attention is particularly prominent and can create a

sense of panic in the mainstream population (National Crime Prevention Center, 1999).

The term "gang" evokes highly negative connotations that are most often associated with

criminal activity (Craig et al., 2002). However, a gang generally poses less of a threat than what

is perceived by mainstream society. "The basic premise surrounding a moral panic is that the

concern for a deviant behaviour or deviant group is disproportionate to the immediate threat

posed. Also included is the notion that moral boundaries have been drawn between right and

wrong, "us" and "them" (St. Cyr, 2003, p. 27). Moral panic, which is often intensified by

negative stereotypes, impedes the development of effective policies for addressing gang

problems (Bjerregaard, 2003). The John Howard Society (2001) explained the reactive responses

created by the moral panic surrounding gangs in Canada:

> Media reports largely influence public perception, promoting fear and concern
>
> among individuals. In return, these fears and concerns from the public leads to
>
> demands for law enforcement services to get gang members off the streets. Law
>
> enforcement looks to governments for additional funding to reduce the "out of
>
> control" gang phenomenon (p. 12).

Since social policy development is strongly impacted by public perception, the common

portrayal of gangs in the media through sensationalized and isolated acts of violence has served

to intensify gang policies (Shelden, Tracy & Brown, 2001).

There is a sense of urgency to develop effective and coherent policies and programs relating

to gang membership (Eitle, Gunkel & Gundy, 2004). Since many of the programs and policies

surrounding gangs have been reactive (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001; Kassel, 2003),

they have not always been supported through existing evidence-based research. Such actions

could unknowingly produce negative outcomes for the programs or policies that are developed in

this manner (Kassel, 2003). The Office of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

(2004) has compiled a series of programs that were deemed to be effective violence prevention

programs in the United States. The Blueprints for Violence report identifies model programs that

were shown to reduce violence. In this report, the OJJDP (2004a) concluded that those programs

developed through rigorous clinical trials have been proven to be the most effective in working

with gang related problems in comparison to programs that are not supported by evidence-based

theory and practice.

In order begin to develop effective strategies for addressing the 'gang problem,' policy-makers must move beyond the stereotypical rhetoric surrounding gang membership (Mecredi, 2000). The ways that agencies and policy-makers perceive gang membership is pertinent to the strategies that will be employed to address gang-related problems (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999). "The success or failure of community-wide attempts to address gang problems is likely to rest, in part, on how the problems are understood and diagnosed" (US Department of Justice, 1999, p. xiv). Researchers agreed that effective law enforcement and correctional approaches for gang interventions must be created through accurate knowledge of the 'gang problem' (Kassel, 2003, Fulcher, 2000). Within a democratic society, it may be helpful to utilize the insights and recommendations derived from gang members as a starting point for policy development. "This approach not only goes to the source for answers, but inarguably is the best way to discover ways of preventing gang delinquency" (Petersen, 2000, p. 142).

The lack of uniformity surrounding the definition of a gang has the potential for negative results for gang members, especially those who have been misidentified through more inclusive definitions of a member of a criminal organization. A continued lack of standardization will only be harmful to offenders and counterproductive for correctional agencies. Despite the potential threat that gangs pose to the community, many measures to address the real issues created by the presence of gangs have not been supported through evidence-based practices available in other areas. If any significant strides towards effective gang reduction strategies are to be made, then it is important to explore the existing knowledge and practices that have demonstrated effectiveness through scientific evaluation.

Recommendation 1

A uniform definition and identification strategy should be established and applied accurately and consistently amongst correctional officers, policy-makers, law enforcement personnel, and all other key stakeholders who deal directly with gangs. In Canada, a gang member can only be identified through the courts. Therefore, agencies should adopt the legal definitions and protocols for gang member identification.

Recommendation 2

The development of a national gang database, accessible within both adult and young offender institutions, would provide a consistent means of monitoring and addressing the security threat posed by gang members and should be investigated with other agencies and levels of government.

2.0 Gang Prevention: A Proactive Approach

The area of prevention, though well supported through research, is often overlooked and underdeveloped by policy-makers, politicians, and community organizations that are seeking to reduce the personal and societal risks commonly associated with the presence of gangs. Many of the policies and procedures that have been developed and remain in practice may be described as 'reactive,' as they focuss primarily on antagonistic measures to 'get tough on crime' (Petersen, 2000, p. 139). While such approaches may create the illusion of safety that is often required to win political support, these efforts fail to address the root causes of gangs. The result is most often a vicious cycle of reactive responses, and subsequent hastily developed policies and strategies that fail to address the growing gang problems in Canada and elsewhere. While there may be a multitude of conflicting definitional issues and theoretical perspectives on the development of gangs, research has overwhelmingly supported that prevention is the most effective and cost efficient means for reducing the growing number of gangs (Spergel, 1995; Petersen, 2000; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2004a; John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001; Shelden, Tracy & Brown, 2000; Decker & Curry, 2000; Howell, 2000).

Despite the demonstrated level of effectiveness, the area of gang prevention is underserved within Canada. Between 2000 and 2003, $883 million dollars was given to the Department of the Solicitor General to directly support efforts to eradicate various kinds of organized crime, including gangs. These resources were primarily allocated to support the activities of the RCMP, with their main focus being on gang suppression. (Nathanson Centre for Organized Crime in Canada, 2000). Not surprisingly, minimal resources have been allocated for gang prevention efforts (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001). Bjerraagard (2003) reported on anti-gang legislation in California. Findings from her study not only concluded that California antigang

legislation may be challenged under the United States Constitution, she also found that these

efforts were proving to be ineffective at addressing the root causes of gang membership.

Bjerregaard (2003) recommended:

>   Current gang initiatives should decrease the emphasis on suppression by
>
>   increasing the commitment to prevention. It is vitally important to utilize
>
>   research to identify the factors that place a juvenile at risk for gang
>
>   involvement and to initiate programs to help control these factors (p. 189).

Having an intimate understanding about the known risk factors of gang membership allows one

to develop strategic prevention efforts (Petersen, 2000). This knowledge should be supported

through the scientific studies directly relating to the targeted area of prevention. Decker and Curry

(2000) argued that contrary to mainstream beliefs, youth street gangs are not highly organized

structures. They concluded that there was significant movement between gangs often occurring

within the first year. This is not indicative of organized crime structures, which generally have

stable memberships over extended periods of time. Additionally, Huff (1998) interviewed over

400 gang and non-gang members between the ages of 12 and 24. The researchers found that

contrary to mainstream assumptions, there was little reprisal for youth who refused to join a gang.

These findings contribute significantly to the areas of prevention as the perceived risk of

retaliation for resisting gang involvement appears to be less than expected (Huff, 1998) and the

threat of violence for those who did not join a gang was minimal (Decker & Curry, 2000). Based

on the available crime patterns of gang members that were tracked for his study, Huff (1998) also

reported that prevention efforts and intervention strategies were most effective prior to gang entry

and during the initial arrests of a newly identified gang member. These findings are supported by

Spergel (1995), who indicated that the individuals most likely to leave a gang were peripheral

gang members. Therefore, gang prevention and intervention strategies should be most intensive during the early stages of gang entry (Huff, 1998), a fact that is most likely to be relevant in the assessment of offenders' likelihood of responding to intervention efforts..

Prevention strategies for gang membership are often limited within the helping professions (Maxon, Whitlock & Klein, 1998). "Prevention is problematic in that it requires accurately predicting who is likely to become a future gang member and an understanding of the exact conditions under which gangs arise (OJJDP, 2004, p. 19-20). In addition to these limitations, prevention efforts targeting youth at risk for gang membership have not been as thoroughly evaluated in comparison to prevention strategies within other target populations (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999).

2.1 Risk Factors Contributing to Gang Membership

The early identification of risk factors associated with gang membership allows for service providers to establish prevention efforts before a youth becomes actively involved in a gang (Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin-Pearson, 1999). "Risk and protective 'factor' frameworks provide useful summaries of the relationship between violence and individual, social, family, and community influences" (Jenson & Howard, 1999, p. 230). By identifying the risks attributed to gang involvement, programs and services can be provided to establish protective barriers for children and youth

Research conducted in various sites in the United States have reported that gang members have more risks factors in several domains than their nongang member counterparts (see Hill et al, 1999; Barton, Watkins & Jarjoura, 1997). In the Rochester Youth Study, a sample of 1000 boys and girls, beginning in the sixth and seventh grades, were interviewed in six-month intervals over a 4-year time span. While the results revealed that the total gang population in the sample

was 30%, gang members were responsible for 60% of the delinquent acts that were reported (Thornberry & Burch, 1997). Given the common definitions of gangs, it is hardly surprising that these results and the findings of other studies report higher incidents of delinquency amongst gang members (Spergel, 1995; Hill, Howell, Hawkins, Battin-Pearson, 1999; Huff, 1998, Li et al., 2002). "Although delinquency, violence, and substance abuse are not synonymous with gang membership, predictors of these behaviours provide a starting point for examining the predictors of gang membership" (Hill, Howell, Hawkins, Battin-Pearson, 1999, p. 302). In the same vein, Esbensen (2000) speculated that it might not be necessary to study the gang phenomenon separately from the study of delinquency. However, further explorations in this area are warranted.

Risk factors associated with gang membership fall into the following four general domains: individual, familial, community and school. All must be considered to thoroughly assess and understand the reasons for a youth being at risk for gang involvement. These four domains include a number of individual risk factors that are summarized below.[1] A more detailed analysis of each domain will follow.

Individual Risk Factors:

- Previous acts of delinquency
- Negative peer associations
- Pro-violent approaches to conflict resolution
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of attachment to ethnic background

Family Risk Factors

- Poor family management
- Low level attachments and supervision

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[1] For a more detailed description of these risk factors see: Li et al, 2002; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2004a; Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin, 1999; Maxon, Whitlock & Klein, 1998; Dukes, Martinez & Stein, 1997; Huff, 1998; Eitle, Gunkel & Van Gundy, 1999).

- Violent siblings
- Parental involvement in violent activities
- Abuse and maltreatment

Community Risk Factors

- Increased levels of criminal activities
- Gang presence
- Lack of opportunities, including economic, social and recreational
- High drug trafficking areas

School Risk Factors

- Weak attachments to schools, including teachers
- Negative teacher perceptions on the student
- Low achievement
- Learning disabilities
- Negative labels on student

2.1.1 Individual Risk Factors

Several studies comparing gang members to nongang members within similar geographical locations have consistently reported that gang members have more identified risk factors than their nongang counterparts (see Thornberry, Huizinga, Loeber, 2004; Hill et al., 1999; Eitle, Gunkel & Van Gundy, 2004). Researchers have indicated that prior acts of delinquency were significantly correlated with a youth's decision to join a gang (Lahey et al., 1999; Craig, Vitaro, Gangnon & Tremblay, 2002). These acts of delinquency increase with gang membership and decrease after one leaves the gang (Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon & Tremblay, 2002). Not surprisingly, previous association with antisocial peers has also been attributed to gang membership (Howell, 2000; Lahey et al., 1999). In comparison to nongang members, gang members have been consistently found to resort to acts of violence (i.e. physical confrontations) when dealing with conflict (Maxson, Whitlock & Klein, 1998). Although not fully articulated, a noteworthy finding by Maxson, Whitlock and Klein (1998) is that gang members more often than non-gang members reported an increased amount of unstructured time spent with peers. However, gang members

perceived this social interaction with their peers as "unproductive" (p. 75). No explanation is

provided as to why gang members might describe such time as unproductive, but if this is a

sound finding, it does suggest a possible target for intervention.

A negative self-concept has been identified as significantly contributing to gang involvement

(Maxson, Whitlock & Klein, 1998; Dukes, Martinez & Stein, 1997). "Gang members tended to

be persons with identity problems who did not feel good about themselves, had less confidence in

their academic abilities, had lower feelings of purpose in life, and had weak attachments to their

ethnic group" (Dukes, Martinez & Stein, 1997, p. 152). Researchers exploring the individual risk

factors associated with gang membership have also indicated similar findings (Thornberry &

Burch, 1997; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000).

2.1.2 Family Risk Factors

There are several family risk factors that have been identified as contributing to delinquency

and gang membership. Li, Stanton, Pack, Harris, Cottrell and Burns (2002) reported that youth

who were exposed to violence and emotional distress in their childhood were more likely to

become involved with gangs. These findings have been supported through earlier studies

(Maxson, Whitlock & Klein, 1998; Eitle, Gunkel & Van Gundy, 2004). "Overall, youth with

gang involvement (current to former), compared with nongang youth showed significantly lower

social problem-solving skills, lower family involvement, lower open family communication, and

diminished parental monitoring" (Li et al., 2002, p. 183).

The level of parental monitoring and involvement has also been identified as a significant

factor in predicting gang membership. Thornberry, Huizinga and Loeber (2004) reported that low

levels of parental monitoring and supervision are factors contributing to gang membership.

These findings have been supported in previous research (Lahey et al., 1999). Studying features

of gang membership among current, associate and former gang members, Decker and Curry (2000) reported that the amount of time spent with family decreased with increased gang involvement. Of interest to the issue of prevention and intervention, this study indicated that a minimum of 88% of the participants from each sample stated that they did not want their children to join a gang despite their own personal gang involvement.

Inconsistent conclusions have been reported on the level of family income in predicting gang involvement. Some studies have found that low family income is a risk factor for gang entry (Thornberry & Burch, 1997; Spergel, 1995). However, Lahey et al. (1999) did not find any significant correlation between gang membership and lower income families. Similarly, Maxson, Whitlock and Klein (1998) did not find any significant variations in family income between gang and nongang participants in their study. Based on information in the areas of identified family risk factors, researchers have recommended that prevention efforts that encourage parents to develop or enhance positive parenting approaches for the entire family, as well as provide programs and services to younger children in the home environment, would help to establish protective factors to prevent gang membership at an earlier age (Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin-Pearson, 1999).

The Seattle Social Development Project (Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin-Pearson, 1999) reported that having siblings who show antisocial behaviours and parents who were in support of violent actions were significantly predictive of gang membership amongst children as young as ten years of age. These findings concluded that prevention efforts should include the entire family as a means restructuring the maladaptive values and beliefs that are being supported within the family unit.

2.1.3 School Risk Factors

The Seattle Social Development Project found that learning disabilities, negative labelling by teachers, low achievement, and lack of commitment were predictive of gang membership (Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin, 1999). These factors have also been linked to gang involvement in separate research studies (Howell, 2000; Huff, 1998). Due to the negative outcomes associated with these findings and the significant impact that the school environment has on a child's developmental trajectory, prevention efforts should target the provision of opportunities for greater success within a learning environment. These efforts should be undertaken with involvement from the child's family (Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin, 1999).

2.1.4 Community Risk Factors

Community factors associated with gang membership is the most frequently studied risk domain (Esbensen, 2000). Communities that have been identified as high drug trafficking areas show an increased risk for gang involvement (Howell, 2000). Many researchers have argued that gangs are the result of a lack of access to resources within particular geographic locations, primarily inner city neighbourhoods (Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995). A study conducted by David Eitle, Steven Gunkel and Karen Van Gundy (2004) explored risk factors associated to gang membership, focussing specifically on stressful life events. Financial difficulties and hardship, most often created by blocked opportunity, were deemed significant to adolescent ganging. These findings are significant because they move beyond the 'surrogate family' theories, to include lack of opportunity to adequate resources as a contributing factor to gang membership (Eitle, Gunkel & Van Gundy, 2004). However, although these theories may be persuasive, they do not account for the majority of children and youth who reside in these areas and do not join

gangs (Esbensen, 2000). Therefore, more research should be directed at exploring the characteristics of youth that choose not to join a gang.

2.1.5 Reasons for joining a gang

When the fundamental needs of youth are not being met, many youth will seek to develop their own strategies to meet their basic needs. Although, there is an abundance of gang-specific literature that have identified key factors in the decision to join a gang, research indicated that there is usually multiple factors associated in a youth's decision to join (Decker & Curry, 2000). Studies have cited numerous reasons for gang membership, including status and respect (Decker & Curry, 2000), safety and protection (Decker & Curry, 2000), family connections (Decker & Curry, 2000), power (Ezarik, 2002), love and belonging (Ezarik, 2002), lack of cultural identity (Dukes, Stein & Martinez, 1997), and excitement (Linden, 1996). Barton, Watkins and Jarjoura (1997) suggested the following:

>We believe that attacking problems in isolation is ineffective because it ignores the considerable overlap among the causes and occurrences of youth problem behaviours. Research over the past few decades has clearly identified risk factors for these behaviours, many of which are implicated in several behaviours (p. 483).

Many researchers, advocates, and other interested stakeholders are demanding a paradigm shift that extends beyond the conventional unilateral approaches to addressing the specific issues that are faced by youth at-risk for gang involvement (Hill, Howell, Hawkins & Battin-Pearson, 1999). These demands included prevention programs and policies that foster and encourage positive identities for youth with more emphasis on their developmental assets (Barton, Watkins & Jarjoura, 1997). Brendtro and Larson (1997) argued that despite great trauma, youth could lead productive and fulfilling lives

when they are surrounded by supportive individuals and provided with meaningful ways

to develop strengths and positive values. When youth are given the opportunity to

develop competencies in several areas, including education, vocational training, and

social opportunity they will be more likely to become intrinsically motivated to develop

and to sustain a new lifestyle (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Brockern, 1999).

2.2 Effective Community-Based Prevention Programs

   Community-based programs that provide youth with meaningful opportunities, encourage

prosocial skills and development, and establish healthy attachments to social institutions are

crucial to gang reduction (Shelden, Tracy & Brown, 2001). The objective of any prevention

program is to reduce the risks factors within a population to the degree that was present before

the onset of a problem. Therefore, the goal of a gang prevention program is to help eliminate or

reduce risk factors by establishing protective barriers within identified risk domains for gang

membership. Prevention strategies are generally divided into three categories:

Universal or Primary Prevention: This form of prevention targets the entire population, which

could include a school or community. The goal of a universal prevention strategy is to help

establish protective factors before a problem develops (Ripple, 2004). "Universal interventions

are attractive because the cost per individual is low and there is no stigmatizing effect on the

individuals" (Williams & Van Dorn, 1999, p. 212). These strategies would be directed towards

enhancing protective factors within the identified risk domains for gang membership including

school, community, family and individual.

Selected or Secondary Prevention: This prevention strategy is purposively aimed at

populations that have been identified as having a higher degree of risk factor than the average

population (e.g., inner city children and youth). Similar to universal prevention strategies,

selected prevention efforts seek to reduce these risk factors by actively developing protective factors (Ripple, 2004). Therefore, selected gang prevention efforts would be aimed at individuals who may be susceptible to join a gang or demonstrating early signs of gang involvement.

Indicated or Tertiary Prevention: This prevention strategy is directed at high risk populations such as peripheral gang members who are currently exhibiting signs of distress (e.g., court-involved or known associations with active gang members). "Tertiary prevention is sometimes compared to treatment because of the higher level of problems among the target group, and because more intensive services are needed" (Ripple, 2004, p. 28). This prevention effort would serve to prevent any further progression into the gang lifestyle.

The programs that are highlighted in this chapter often have considerable overlap amongst the targeted prevention environments and community stakeholders (i.e. GREAT is program delivered by law enforcement officers but delivered in a school environment). In these cases, overlap reflects the collaborative efforts between interested community stakeholders and the environments that are most vulnerable to gang presence or have a great deal of accessibility to the target population. Although many of these programs were not developed specifically to prevent gang membership, these programs have been deemed effective in reducing a number of risk factors that have been attributed to the activity of joining a gang.

2.2.1 Individual Prevention Programs

Individually based prevention programs seek to develop and enhance social competencies to prevent, encourage, or develop prosocial behaviours for youth. These programs target personal behaviours, challenges, cognitive patterns, and lifestyle patterns in order to establish positive characteristics and skills that are necessary to successfully remain out of the gang lifestyle. These programs usually target several risk domains within a single program.

Multi-Systemic Therapy

Individual and family counselling approaches that address the risk factors associated with gang membership have demonstrated effectiveness and subsequently identified as model programs for violence and delinquency reduction (Office of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2004a). Multi-systemic therapy (MST) is a prevention strategy targeted at youth who are at risk of entering residential or correctional facilities due to serious antisocial behaviours, including violence, aggression and delinquency (Institute for Families in Society, no date).

Multi-systemic therapy is based on the belief that there are complex interactions between a youth, family and the community. This highly intensive, prevention model attempts to address multiple risk factors faced by a youth through education and development of prosocial skills, including communication and anger management (US Department of Justice, 2004). Multi-systemic therapy involves a therapist with a small caseload of youth and families providing a minimum of 60 hours of treatment over a four-month period. This time frame could be extended for youth experiencing more serious difficulties. Therapist utilizing this approach would be accessible to the youth and their family 24 hours a day, seven days a week (US Department of Justice, 2004). One of the most innovative features of this therapy model is that the services are provided in the natural environment of the youth, as opposed to more conventional office or institution based settings (Institute for Families in Society, no date).

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (1998) evaluated this program for cost effectiveness. The results demonstrated that MST had the highest net gain per participant based on evaluations of 16 different programs. The program costs approximately $4,500 (US Funds) per participant. However, it has been empirically demonstrated to reduce felony offending by 44%, which subsequently saves an estimated $12, 381 per participant in future criminal justice

costs. Overall, it is estimated that Multi-systemic therapy provides a net gain of $21, 863 per participant with combined criminal justice costs and crime victim benefits (p. 6).

Multi-systemic therapy is currently being implemented in parts of Ontario. The preliminary results of the effectiveness of MST within Ontario have not produced results as favourable as their U.S. counterparts. In fact, the implementation of MST did not significantly lower the recidivism rate relative to routine services (Cunningham, 2002). One of the arguments presented for this finding is that the Canadian control group was already receiving more rehabilitative services than the U.S. control group. In addition, Cunningham (2002) indicated that other Canadian locations interested in implementing MST should include a larger sample of participants. The Ontario study of MST included 400 participants, whereas Cunningham recommends that a randomized study should use at least 800 participants to produce more definitive results.

2.2.2 Law Enforcement Prevention Programs

Prevention programs have not been the primary focus of law enforcement agencies, whose attention and resources are primarily devoted to suppression and intervention strategies. However, the knowledge and expertise of law enforcement officers in the area of effective gang strategies and current activities is critical to the development process that is essential to crime reduction. Carrington and Schulenberg (2003) reported that 40% of Canadian police officers felt that primary strategies for youth crime were reactive. Those agencies that had youth squads were less likely to lay charges than agencies without these types of specialized units. Youth-dedicated police officers are in a strategic position to enhance the area of gang prevention. Their experiential knowledge and position in the community could serve to develop positive relationships with youth before youth become involved in the legal system.

GREAT: Gang Resistance Education and Training

Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) is a school-based universal prevention effort that targets middle year students to prevent gang involvement. This program is currently being implemented throughout various parts of the US. GREAT entails a series of one hour sessions over a period of nine weeks. The curriculum focussed on the effects of drugs, conflict-resolution strategies, cultural sensitivity and understanding racism, decision-making and interpersonal skills. GREAT is a unique approach to gang prevention because it is a classroom-based program that is instructed by trained law enforcement officers (Esbensen et al., 2002). GREAT is a cognitive-based program that attempts to help students develop knowledge and skills to assist in preventing gang membership. It also serves to engage students in a positive relationship with local police officers, as opposed to contact with law enforcement only during suppression efforts (Esbensen et al., 2002). Although a preliminary 2-year evaluation of this program did not report any significant reduction in at-risk behaviours, a 4-year follow up evaluation reported that those youth that had participated in the program were identified as having more prosocial skills than those who had not (Esbensen et al., 2002).

Dana Petersen (2004) discussed the results of a multi-site survey delivered amongst teachers, administrators, counsellors and support staff in schools that had active GREAT programs within their school curriculum. This survey was used to measure staff perceptions of the effectiveness of GREAT programs. The results from this study were favourable, indicating that both staff and students reported that having a uniformed police officer in the school served to improve student perception of law enforcement. In addition, 39% of staff in high crime neighbourhoods believed that this program was useful in reducing crime. In comparison, 46 % of staff from schools where gang activity was minimal perceived GREAT as instrumental to gang reduction in their

neighbourhood. According to the results of this study on school-based prevention, a majority of the respondents believed that the presence of law enforcement officials in the school environment and the decision of schools to engage actively in prevention strategies for gang reduction are instrumental to the future of collaborative prevention efforts (Petersen, 2004). The program costs and evaluations are not known.

2.2.3 Schools

Schools are invaluable to efforts aimed at gang prevention. The areas of gang prevention found within a school setting are focussed primary on education, staff training and awareness directed at staff, parents and students. The high involvement that teachers have with children at risk for gang membership allows for increased prevention efforts without identifying specific children and youth at risk for gang involvement (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1999). The constant relationship between schools and children provide a natural environment to implement effective prevention programs and services.

Developing Safe School Communities: Professional Development

As a member of the Winnipeg Gang Coalition for Healthy Communities, the Winnipeg School Division offers professional development curriculum for teachers and parents to create a safe school environment. The curriculum includes a wide range of topics and issues that support learning environments in reducing violence, creating positive school climates, and enhancing professional skills to successfully implement services and programs within each school.   A part of this professional development curriculum is devoted to creating awareness about the gangs located in Winnipeg. Teachers are provided with gang awareness workshops in areas including gang definitions, reasons for joining a gang, identification strategies, as well as interventions and strategies used to address the problems of gangs at various levels of the community. In addition

to providing awareness workshops for teachers, there are also workshops hosted by the Winnipeg

Police force that offer parents with similar awareness components, as well as strategies to help

keep their children from becoming involved with gangs. The program costs are not known and

empirical evaluations have not been conducted at this time (Winnipeg School Division, 2004).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The Olweus Bullying Prevention program is a universal prevention program targeting

elementary and middle year schools (up to age 15). This program was first developed in Norway

in 1991 after the suicides of several children who were victims of bullying. The goals of this

program are to prevent the onset of serious crime and substance abuse commonly experienced by

both the victim and victimizer of childhood bullying by actively addressing this issue during the

developmental years when early signs of delinquency and antisocial behaviours are becoming

more apparent (Fox et al., 2003).

The Blueprints for Violence exercise, a review of programs by the US Office of Juvenile

Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2004a), identified the Olweus Bullying Prevention program

as a model program. This program focuses on changing the school climate through teacher,

parent, and children involvement. The program begins with a survey related to the prevalence of

bullying within the school and is followed by training workshop for all staff. Each classroom

actively participates in bullying education and rule development promoting prosocial behaviours

and problem solving skills. These topics are also introduced to the parents during conferences

(OJJDP, 2004). It has been successfully implemented in schools throughout Norway, Germany,

England, and the United States demonstrating a significant reduction in vandalism, fighting,

aggressive attitudes and behaviours commonly associated with bullying. The total one time cost

for this program is approximately $200 (US Funds), which includes a questionnaire and CD-

ROM (Fox et al., 2003). It is quite possible that this program would serve as a cost-effective

measure to reduce various kinds of risk factors. Although antibullying programs do not

specifically address gang involvement, many of the known risk factors associated with gang

involvement are also found in children who bully. These risk factors include aggressive

behaviours, lack of school attachments, and proviolent attitudes (Bosworth, Espelage & Simon,

no date).

2.2.4 Community-Based Prevention Programs

Community-based prevention programs are often difficult to evaluate. The reasons for these

difficulties are most commonly associated with the high costs of evaluations and the difficulty of

isolating factors, especially within multi-service agencies that contribute to the success/failure of

a community-based program. Therefore, very few community-based programs have been

empirically identified as effective prevention programs (Office of Juvenile Justice and

Delinquency Prevention, 2004a). This does not imply that the programs are not successfully

addressing social issues, rather that there are several barriers to scientifically validating these

types of programs.

JUMP-Juvenile Mentoring Program

Mentoring programs have been successfully implemented as both a universal (primary) and

selected (secondary) prevention strategy to reduce the risk factors associated with crime and

delinquency. JUMP (Juvenile Mentoring Program) created in 1996, is a national American

funding organization implemented under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to

provide support to mentorship programs. These programs target youth at risk for school failure,

crime and delinquency, and gang membership by establishing positive relationships with an adult

volunteer, preferably one from the same ethnic background. By June, 1999, there were a total of

164 funded mentoring programs operating under the JUMP initiative that were receiving funding

of up to $210, 000 (US funds) each. Some of the funded programs included Targeted Outreach

for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Virginia Department of

Corrections, Visalia, California Community Service and Employment Training (OJJDP, 2000).

In 1997, a national evaluation of funded programs was conducted to determine the perceived

benefits for both youth and mentors. Based on youth responses, the results from this evaluation

indicated that their participation in the program helped 'a lot' in staying away from gangs

(67.6%), avoiding fights (57.4%), attending classes regularly (64.3%), not using guns or knives

(68%), and getting along with family (61.6%; OJJDP, 1998, p. 36). Based on these results, the

Office of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Centre (1998) recommended that this

approach was an effective means of establishing protective factors within at-risk/high-risk youth

and is appreciated by service users. Furthermore, this national funding body allows for each

community to respond to the specific needs within its own community. There is no known

cost/benefit analysis available for this program at this time (OJJDP, 1998).

Anti-Gang Advertisements

The media, though highly criticized for its contribution to negative stereotypes of gang

members (Schissel, 1997; St. Cyr, 2001; John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001), can nonetheless

be instrumental in facilitating anti-gang advertisements. Although the effectiveness for anti-gang

advertisements has not been thoroughly researched (Chapel, Pearson & Joseph, 1999), several

other advertisements, including Smoky the Bear for fire prevention, Mothers Against Drunk

Drivers campaigns, and the McGruff, the Crimedog series, have been effective in various areas of

prevention (Chapel, Pearson & Joseph, 1999). Studies on the effectiveness of anti-gang

advertisements were conducted with adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 who were

identified as being at high-risk for gang membership or who were active gang members. The

results of the study indicated that anti-gang advertisements were deemed as useful only when the

following criterion was met within the advertisement: The most influential messages were the

ones in which the source of the ad was a gang member. Ironically, the study reported that the

youth participants did not perceive the advertisements to be of direct benefit to them. However,

all participants, including active gang members, felt that younger children needed to hear the

messages to avoid becoming involved in gangs (Chapel, Pearson & Joseph, 1999).

2.2.5 Family-Focussed Prevention Programs

Disruptions in the family structure, including divorce, death and changes in income levels,

have been strongly correlated to gang membership (Maxon, Whitlock & Klein, 1998,

Thornberry, Smith, Rivera, Huizinga, Stauthamer-Loeber, 1999; Spergel, 1995). Thornberry et

al., (1999) contended that prevention efforts should be directed at establishing protective factors

in youth and families who are experiencing difficulties in reducing the negative outcomes, such

as delinquency, that are associated with family disruptions. The following family-focussed

prevention programs have been demonstrated to be effective at preventing multiple risk factors

associated with gang membership.

Nurse-Family Partnership

The Nurse-Family partnership was developed by David Olds more than over twenty years

ago. It is a selected prevention effort that targets first time, pregnant women (16 to 27 weeks

gestation) who are living at or below the poverty line. The goals of the Nurse-Family partnership

are to improve prenatal health, to improve child health and development, and to improve

economic conditions of the family. This home-based program is delivered by trained nurses

through on-going home visits providing education, awareness and support to targeted new

mothers for duration of two years (Sacramento County Department of Health and Human

Services, no date).

The Department of Justice (2004) in the USA has identified Nurse-Family Partnership as a

model program as it has consistently demonstrated effectiveness in reducing pre-natal risks such

as smoking and drug/alcohol consumption, as well as reducing the number of reported incidents

of child abuse, and an increase in sustained employment. Finally, the long-term results indicated

a decrease in juvenile delinquency and violence. The Nurse-Family partnership has been

successfully implemented in over 200 sites across the United States. This program has also

demonstrated consistently proven to be cost effective. A report conducted by Glazner, Bondy,

Luckey and Olds (2003) indicated the following:

> Over the first 15 years of the study child's life, the nurse-visited group used $56,000
>
> (2001 dollars) less per family in government services than did the non-visited group.
>
> The visited group also paid $8,300 more per family in taxes than did the non-visited
>
> group. This resulted in a 393 percent recovery of the amount invested in the nurse-
>
> visitation program by the study child's 15 year. (p. 12).

Similarly, Canada has widely adopted the KidsFirst program, which is comparable to the

Nurse-Family partnership. These types of family-based programs have been deemed effective in

violence reduction amongst high-risk family units (Glazner, Luckey & Olds, 2003).

The Incredible Years: Parent, Teachers, and Children Training Series

The award winning program, The Incredible Years, is a prevention and intervention program

that targets children between ages 4-8 who have exhibited or are at risk for conduct problems.

These programs are based on videotaped curricula aimed at enhancing social competencies and

prevent, reduce, and treat aggressive behaviours. There are training modules for the parent,

teacher, and child to help reduce the multiple risks factors that contribute to violent and delinquency, as early conduct problems have been identified as being predictive of future violence and delinquency. This program is unique in that it simultaneously incorporates the teacher, parent, and child within active learning processes. The cost for all available resource material and curriculum is approximately $8,000 (US funds) (The Incredible Years, 2003).

The Incredible Years has been identified as a model program by the U.S. Department of Justice for empirically based evidence of effectively reducing violence and delinquency (US Department of Justice, 2004). This program has been successful replicated in hundred of agencies in 43 states across the United States, as it has been deemed effective in reducing proviolent behaviour in children (Webster-Stratton, 2000). Webster-Stratton (2000) reports that the Incredible Years has been undergoing randomized clinical trials for 17 years. These studies have consistently concluded that children who went through the Incredible Years show a significant reduction in behavioural problems into the normal range. These behavioural changes were maintained after a one year follow-up assessment. The overall operating costs and long term cost reduction benefits of adopting this program are not known.

Functional Family Therapy

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is both a prevention and intervention strategy targeted at high-risk youth between the ages of 11-18. Functional Family Therapy provides youth and their family members with intensive counselling sessions to address issues within the family. This program adopts a family-focussed model that addresses various multisystemic and multilevel barriers to change. The FFT therapist works with the family to identify the most significant negative behavioural patterns and uses these identified behaviours to encourage change in other areas of their lives. The role of a FFT therapist is to help youth and their families to identify and

develop strengths of each individual. In addition, a FFT therapist works collaboratively with the

family unit to strengthen areas of challenging relationship and behavioural pattern within the

family.

FFT can be delivered within schools, clinical settings or various levels of justice. As a

prevention strategy, FFT can be adopted during early criminal justice involvement or as an

alternative to custody. FFT can also be used as an intervention strategy for recently released

high-risk offenders (Sexton & Alexander, 2000). The duration of this program is short-term,

lasting for approximately three months (12, 1-hour sessions). However, this could be increased

up to 36 sessions for youth who are more difficult to treat. The therapist caseload remains at

approximately 12 to 16 youth, which allows for intensive therapy and support (US Department of

Justice, 2004).

FFT has been implemented in several sites throughout the United States with the average cost

per participant being $2,100 (US Funds). Both trained therapists and court workers that received

the Functional Family Therapy training have delivered these programs to youth. Although some

of the service providers and programs were identified as 'not competent,' all evaluated programs

demonstrated cost benefits directly related to reducing recidivism rates (Washington State

Institute for Public Policy, 2004). FFT generates $10.69 in benefits per dollar spent. Based on

these results, FFT is an effective measure in both prevention and intervention strategies.

Preventing children and youth from actively engaging in the gang lifestyle is critical to

effectively addressing the gang phenomenon. The area of prevention, though largely excluded

from the predominant approaches to gang reduction, has been consistently identified in the

literature as the most effective way to address the devastating impacts that gangs have on the

community. The potential costs that gang involvement have on scarce resources and public safety

would indicate that gang prevention efforts are a sound investment for the future of our

communities.

Despite the delivery of efficacious prevention programs, some people will become involved

with gangs. These individuals will require more directed and intense programs and support to

assist in the difficult transition from active gang involvement to a more conventional lifestyle.

Disengagement programs and strategies build upon the areas of prevention to include programs

and services that offer meaningful opportunities to develop personal competencies, safe, secure,

and stable living arrangements, treatment for maladaptive coping mechanisms, and gainful

employment to successfully disengage from the gang lifestyle.

Recommendation 3

Comprehensive needs assessments involving key stakeholders, such as teachers, frontline

workers, police, correctional workers, parents, and gang members, should be conducted in

individual communities to identify the needs, gaps in services and resources that are

required to implement direct services for gang reduction in an effective manner.

Recommendation 4

Multidimensional approaches to therapy and supervision, like MultiSystemic Therapy,

should be adopted as an intensive treatment option for the reintegration of gang members

back into the community.

3.0. Disengagement Strategies: Leaving the Gang

Although an active gang member may want to leave the gang lifestyle behind, a successful transition out of the gang requires overcoming a number of obstacles. These may include the fear of retaliation from other gang members, the lack of education and training necessary to find employment, and, for those who have a criminal record, the problems of finding a decent job in the first place. Moreover, while some gang members can leave their gang quietly and safely, those who are deeply involved in their gang may not find leaving so easy. As observed by Ezarik (2002), "The more you stand out, the more you will be missed" (p. 21). Simply put, the more entrenched the gang member, the less likely it is that he or she will be able to leave the gang (Spergel, 1995).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2000a) observes that chronic or long-term gang members are often the most behaviourially and socially maladjusted (e.g., aggressive, show oppositional behaviour, inattentive and hyperactive). The literature suggests that the more risk factors that are present in a young person's life (e.g., low neighbourhood attachment, low family income, low academic achievement, early violence, antisocial beliefs), the more difficult it may be to leave the gang (OJJDP, 2000a). Therefore, although it is common for gang members to want to leave their gang after a relatively short stay, they often need extensive support to help them make a successful transition.

In addition to prevention strategies, it is important that service organizations, particularly those serving youth, employ disengagement strategies to address the gang phenomenon. Disengagement strategies seek to encourage and help gang members break their ties with their gangs and successfully work their way into society as law-abiding citizens. Since belonging to a gang satisfies any number of economic and social needs and since leaving a gang may require a

major life adjustment, it is clear that broad disengagement strategies must address these assorted

needs while acting as a link between the young person and the conventional world. A survey of

the relevant literature indicates that certain community initiatives can encourage disengagement

in a variety of ways.

3.1. The Need for a Safe Place to Go

According to Mallillin and Holden (undated), gang members may be quite willing to leave

their gang provided that their safety and the safety of their family is not compromised. Although

it is not uncommon for gang members to feel safe when walking away from their gang (Gordon,

1994), others may fear retaliation and, therefore, their most immediate need is to have a safe

place to go while preparing to make the transition back into the conventional world. According to

the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, the issue of having a safe place to go may

be particularly important to Aboriginal youth who may find the conventional/non-Aboriginal

world particularly unwelcoming. To help Aboriginal youth, The Circle of Life Thunderbird

House in Winnipeg, Manitoba has developed the Paa-Pii-Wak program that provides a 'safe

house' for those who want to leave their gang. At the safe house, the ex-gang member can also

receive the additional support (i.e., family or substance abuse counseling) that they may need to

avoid returning to the gang lifestyle.

A recent conference in Winnipeg, entitled Expanding Prairie Horizons Vision 2020 and

hosted by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, outlined several strategies to direct youth away from gang-

related activity. One important action has been to set-up safe houses, such as Rossbrook House in

Winnpeg. The House provides young people with many services. During times of crisis, it can be

a safe house. The House has a drop-in centre where young people can socialize and play games.

An Employment Co-ordinator is available to help young people find work or learn more about

education and job training opportunities. In summary, the House provides young people with a place to seek help during a crisis while simultaneously meeting their needs for socialization, recreation, and personal development. Major funders for the House include the Rotary Club, the United Way of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, and City of Winnipeg.

3. 2. Education, Training, and Jobs

Many young people join gangs simply because being in a gang allows them to earn money albeit illegally. Huff (1998) reports that many gang members are willing to leave their gang even for wages that are only slightly higher than minimum wage. Thus, helping gang members to improve their education and offering them training opportunities play important roles in helping gang members to leave their gang. Emphasizing education, job training and placement may be especially important for older gang members who are not in school but who are at the point where they want to leave their gang (Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 1993). The issue of education and job training is particularly acute for Aboriginal peoples who tend to show very high rates of unemployment.

3.3. Counselling and Health Services

Providing family and individual counseling may be helpful in encouraging young gang members to leave a gang. Key family risk factors for gang membership include the family structure (e.g., broken home), poverty, child abuse and neglect, gang involvement of family members (Howell, 2003a), as well as poor family management (Wyrick and Howell, 2004). However, as suggested by Wyrick and Howell (2004), poor family management, including poor parental supervision and control, is a risk-factor for gang membership that may be *the* most amenable to change through parenting classes and family counselling.

At the individual level, the lives of gang members may also be hobbled by a host of problems such as alcohol and substance abuse, antisocial attitudes (e.g., little respect for authority, admire the criminal mentality), anger management problems, and poor social and cognitive skills (e.g., poor communication/negotiation skills, poor sense of social competence, problem-solving skills, perspective taking), all of which impact on ones psychological well-being, while making ones desire to leave the gang more complicated and difficult. Some gang members may even suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder having witnessed various traumatic events (California Attorney General's Office, 2003). Long-term or chronic gang members may be particularly troublesome because they often experience the most behavioural and social maladjustment problems. Providing programs and services that help young persons to improve themselves (e.g., their social and cognitive skills), change their attitudes (e.g., by teaching them about the consequences of gang life), and deal with their problems (e.g., substance abuse) has been shown to have a positive impact on gang member's willingness to leave their gang (Department of Justice Canada, 2003).

3.4. School-based Interventions

Many schools, especially those in low-income and high crime areas, are touched by gang development. As observed by Spergel et al. (1994), "A youth gang member is likely to be a youth who has done poorly in school and has little identification with school staff. He does not like school and uses school more for gang-related than academic or social learning purposes"(p. 4). Doing poorly in school is one of the strongest risk factors for gang membership (Wyrick & Howell, 2004). Low school achievement is, in turn, related to low academic aspirations, a low degree of commitment to school, and teacher's negative labeling of students. Early tutoring and proper mentoring can help those students who are struggling to improve their chances at

academic success. Schools can also help students in other ways. They can provide positive activities (e.g., arts, sports) and after-school programs, and act as a portal linking young people and parents with the various social services that they might need (OJJDP, 1994). In addition, probation and youth services can be invited to schools to develop gang prevention and disengagement programs. One school-based program that has both a prevention and disengagement component is the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program noted previously.

The GREAT program was formed in Phoenix in 1991. The program is directed at middle school students and seeks to help students resist and reduce gang involvement. As initially created, eight lessons are provided in nine 1-hour sessions taught by trained law enforcement personnel (e.g., police officers). Classroom-based lessons include the following:

- **Introduction.** Students become acquainted with the program;

- **Crimes/victims and your rights.** Officers teach students about the impact of crime on victims and communities;

- **Cultural Sensitivity/prejudice.** Students learn about cultural differences and about how racism affects their community;

- **Conflict resolution.** Instructors teach students effective conflict resolution strategies;

- **Meeting basic needs.** Students are taught how to better meet their basic needs;

- **Drugs/neighborhoods.** Instructors teach students about how drugs are affecting their communities;

- **Responsibility.** Students learn about the varied responsibilities of individuals in their community;

- **Goal setting.** Officers teach students how to set positive, long-range goals.

A five-year longitudinal quasi-experimental evaluation of the program was conducted by Esbensen, Freng, Taylor, Peterson, and Osgood (2001). The evaluation began in 1995. Six U.S. cities were selected for the evaluation. The sample included a total of 22 schools, 153 classrooms and more than 3,000 students. Two groups of students were compared: those who had participated in the program, GREAT (G) students, and those who did not, non-GREAT (NG) students. Participants completed questionnaires prior to participating in the program and again within 2-weeks after completing the program. The survey measured a variety of attitudes and behaviours including attitudes toward police and gangs, self-esteem, risk-seeking, school achievement; the questionnaires also measured student involvement in school and community activities as well as gang membership and involvement in illegal gang activity. The same sample of students was surveyed in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999. Results are reported from the analysis of outcome effects 2 and 4 years after program completion. The evaluation team reports the following findings.

The first 2-year results of the evaluation did not reveal any significant differences between the G and NG groups in social attitudes and behaviour. The initial results suggested that the program did not successfully change several risk factors (e.g., peer group associations, attitudes toward gangs, the law, police and justice system) associated with delinquency; nor did the program appear to reduce gang membership and delinquent behaviour significantly.

However, despite this initial disappointment, after 4 years the program appeared to have a lagged effect. Four years after completing the program, GREAT students reported more positive social attitudes (e.g., more positive attitudes toward the police and school, greater willingness to associate with peers involved in prosocial activities, stronger negative attitudes about gangs) and greater awareness of the consequences of gang involvement. However, as with the initial 2-year

results, GREAT did not have a significant effect on reducing gang involvement and general

delinquent behaviours.

Although the results of the longitudinal study were mixed, GREAT has been judged by the

OJJDP to hold promise. To date, it has been implemented in seven Aboriginal communities in

the U.S. The impact of GREAT on the Aboriginal gang problem is awaiting evaluation.

However, implementing the program in Aboriginal communities may raise special issues and

concerns. The OJJDP (2004b) observes that, "Additionally, as the gang problem in Indian

country appears to be an extension of more serious problems, including poverty, substance abuse,

and unemployment, policies aimed at improving overall conditions in a community will most

likely have a concurrent and positive impact on the community's gang problem" (p. 1).

3.5. Targeted Outreach Programs

Youth outreach workers can engage gang youth individually and in small groups on the

street, at home, at recreational centres, in detention, at work, school and so on. Workers can

counsel gang members about ways to leave a gang safely and to help work out problems with

parents, wives, and girlfriends, peers as well as the police. They can counsel youth about the

educational and job training programs available to them. Youth workers can be called on in times

of crisis, such as when youth are homeless, depressed, injured, under arrest, or under pressure

from the gang, and act as mediators to settle gang disputes (Spergel, Wa, Choi, Grossman, Jacob,

Spergel, & Barrios, 2002). As an example of the potential effectiveness of a youth outreach

program, consider the following.

In the 1990s, the Boys and Girls Club of America (BGCA), with the support of the Office of

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), developed the Gang Intervention Through

Targeted Outreach (GITTO) initiative in areas with high rates of gang activity in several U.S.

cities (Arbreton & McClanahan, 1998). Gang youth were recruited into the program by direct

outreach and referrals from various agencies. More specifically, outreach was conducted by Club

staff as well as former gang members who were hired by the Clubs. Direct outreach at schools

was found to be particularly effective. With the permission of school administrators, outreach

workers went to schools and handed out flyers and told students about the various services

provided by the BGCA; students were also invited to open houses at the Club. The second

method by which Clubs recruited gang youth were referrals from several community agencies

and organizations. These included police, probation, schools, courts, corrections, families, social

services, counseling services, health services, employers, city and county agencies. Over a 10-

month period, 104 youth were recruited into the intervention/disengagement program. The youth

ranged in age from 9 to 18 years of age; 74% of youth were male. The ethnicity of the recruits

included African Americans (32%), White (6%), Hispanic (26%), Asian (24%), and Other

(12%).

The BGCA offered targeted youth a network of services involving drug treatment, tattoo

removal, remedial education, life skills and job training services; youth were given the

opportunity to participate in activities such as sports, field trips, shooting pool, playing games

and group meetings; adults acted as mentors while offering advice on various issues of

importance to recruits. Topics included how to get a job, how to locate a service, how to handle

conflict with peers, and deal with school pressures. Staff helped to take youth to court docket

dates and job interviews and helped to arrange family meetings. The club setting itself provided

target youth with a place where they could feel safe.

Of note is the fact that the BGCA evaluated the GITTO program to discover whether or not

the initiative was successful in changing various gang behaviors (e.g., engaging in gang-related

crimes, associating only with other gang members) as well as reducing gang involvement. The

evaluation involved three main outcome variables: (1) Changing levels of gang behaviour (e.g.,

flashing gang signs, wearing gang colours, preferring to associate with other gang members); (2)

Changing levels of contact with the juvenile justice system, and; (3) Changes in school

behaviours and achievement. To discover how youth changed, evaluators: (1) Administered a

questionnaire to target youth when they were recruited and again 12 months later; (2) Surveyed

club directors about the target youth, and; (3) Asked staff to track the youth's juvenile justice

system involvement (e.g., arrest and prosecution) and delinquent activity. The evaluation

included three Boys and Girls Clubs that used the disengagement approach. The three Clubs were

in St. Paul, MN, Fort Worth, TX, and Ventura, CA. The GITTO youth were compared with a

matched sample of non-GITTO youth. The evaluation of the GITTO reached the following

conclusions.

GITTO youth showed significant improvements in a range of school behaviours (e.g.,

decrease in skipping class, spending more time on homework, greater expectations of

graduating); 34% of the 104 GITTO youth reported leaving their gang over the 12-month period

from baseline to follow-up; GITTO youth also reported a reduction in gang-associated

behaviours (e.g., wearing gang colours, associating exclusively with other gang members); the

targeted youth were reported to have less contact with the juvenile justice system (e.g., lower

incidents of arrest and court appearances); targeted youth were also judged to show an

improvement in their use of leisure time (e.g., engaging in positive school activities); GITTO

youth were also reported to engage in fewer delinquent behaviours such as stealing, drinking,

vandalizing, and illegal drug use. Overall, the GITTO initiative was evaluated as being successful

at meeting its goals. The success of its outreach program has prompted the Boys and Girls Clubs

of America to implement GITTO in Aboriginal communities in Montana, South Dakota, and

New Mexico (OJJDP, 2000a).

The issue of Aboriginal gangs is particularly important on the Canadian prairie, where it

is estimated that there are between 800 to 1000 active gang members (Correctional Service of

Canada, 2001). However, it should be noted that these estimates include any individual that has

had suspected gang involvement and does not reflect the much lower number of legally identified

gang members. Although the BGCA Targeted Outreach program discussed above can be easily

tailored by Aboriginal community leaders to be sensitive to the special concerns of their

communities, the program must still incorporate the programs four objectives: community

mobilization, recruitment, mainstreaming and programming, and case management (OJJDP,

2004b).

Another outreach program for Aboriginal youth is the Spirit Keeper Youth Society (SKYS)

formed in Edmonton, AB in 2004 (Collison, 2004). An Edmonton-based task force has identified

12 Aboriginal gangs with 400 members and about 2000 known gang associates (Dolha, 2004).

SKYS provides a number of services. These include safe houses, job opportunities for Aboriginal

youth who want to leave their gang, intervention efforts aimed at discouraging young people

from joining a gang (e.g., workshops to reveal the ugly side of gang life), and 'relapse

prevention' to help ensure that those who leave a gang are not drawn back into the gang lifestyle.

In Saskatchewan, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) has formed the Youth

Gang Awareness Cultural Camp (Dolha, 2004). The camp gives youth an opportunity to interact

with elders and role models who work toward deglamourizing gang life.

On a slightly different note, in the same way that placing a youth organization such as the

Boys and Girls Clubs of America in a high-risk area can serve the needs of high-risk youth,

placing a police detachment in a high-risk area can also be helpful. For example, Saskatoon

police has its own detachment, Little Chief Community Station, located in Riversdale, which is

an area of the city with a high Aboriginal population. The Station increases police presence in the

area, which increases the public's sense of security while simultaneously providing a place to go

for those who want to leave a gang. A youth outreach unit can work in collaboration with the

police and serve a suppression function by providing police with information such as stopping

gang fights and arresting drug dealers. In return, police can provide youth workers with important

information such as the arrest history of youth.

3.6. Peer-Based Interventions

The Gang Rescue and Support Project (GRASP) was founded in Denver, Colorado, in 1991.

GRASP uses small group meetings and peer mentoring to encourage young people to live a more

positive lifestyle. During meetings, peers share their experiences in gang life, confront each

other's values, beliefs and attitudes, and offer helpful advice. Hritz and Gabow (1997) evaluated

the effectiveness of GRASP in reducing gang involvement, arrests, and in shaping a more

positive lifestyle, such as improved school attendance and employment. Thirty-seven (37)

participants completed a questionnaire both prior to and following intervention. The results

suggest a decrease in gang involvement and an increase in school involvement and employment.

While 22 participants had been arrested before joining GRASP, only 7 were arrested after

joining.

Another project where ex-gang members try to encourage active gang members to rethink

their lives and leave their gang involves The Youth Ambassador's Leadership and Employment

Project. The Canadian Training Institute (CTI) is in the process of developing and evaluating the

project in Toronto (Evans & Sawdon, 2004). The initial target groups for the demonstration

project were young men and/or women between the ages of 15 and 23 who are gang involved

and out of school. The youth participated in a 36-week leadership development and employment

preparation project consisting of five phases:

- Case management

  Participants worked with a case manager to develop a series of goals and activities to

  achieve them. This process may include support at court appearances, assistance in re-

  entering school, and assistance in dealing with family conflicts or finding proper housing;

- Skills Development

  During this phase, participants worked on their personal development, developing skills

  that would facilitate their leadership and employment activities;

- Practice and Integration

  At this point, participants practiced their skills and develop community presentations and

  outreach activities;

- Community Contacts and Outreach

  During this period, participants visited local community centres and other youth services

  to provide information about the program and solicit requests for presentations;

- Community Presentations

  During this phase, the participants, who are now considered to be ambassadors of the

  program, reached out to youth who are involved in gangs. During the community

  presentations, the youth ambassadors reflected on their own experiences with gangs and

  reasons for leaving the gang lifestyle behind. The ambassadors also discussed a number

  of other topics including violence, prejudice, racism, the myths of gang life, as well as

  responding to bullying.

The CTI is currently finding ways to increase funding to the program and developing those community and government partnerships that will allow the program to continue.

In summary, gang members often need help to make a successful transition into the conventional world. Depending on one's situation, this help may be as obvious as providing a safe house for those who feel in need of protection. Education and job training programs will help provide the ex-gang member with the skills he needs to function effectively in society. For others, family and individual counselling may be what is most needed. Schools can develop gang prevention programs for at-risk youth as well as disengagement programs for those who are in the grips of the gang lifestyle. And since low academic achievement is so strongly predictive of gang membership (Wyrick & Howell, 2004), early tutoring can improve one's chances at academic success. Youth outreach workers can be called upon to help gang members to deal with their problems and counsel gang members about ways to leave their gang. Similarly, peer mentoring gives gang members the opportunity to learn from those who have chosen to leave the gang lifestyle behind.

Recommendation 5

Community partnerships should be created or strengthened through the creation of community "steering committees" among key stakeholders.

Recommendation 6

A formalized commitment should be made by youth- and adult-serving agencies to provide the services that are necessary for gang-involved youth and adults to effect the disengagement process. In the event that no commitment for services can be identified from existing agencies, alternative services should be located or developed to support the disengagement process.

Recommendation 7

Since successful disengagement strategies rely on providing meaningful opportunities to develop skills and competencies necessary to compete in the labor market and since denying gang members access to such programs is counterproductive to their disengagement, an effort should be made to break down the barriers to such programs for gang members and alternative programs that provide gang members with direct educational and employment opportunities should be sought.

4.0. Suppression Strategies: Restraining Gang Activity

Suppression strategies use the full force of the law to deter and reduce the criminal activities of gangs and can be seen as the last resort to maintaining public order. Suppression programs often involve two dimensions: (1) Institutional responses involving police, prosecution, the judiciary, probation/parole, as well as corrections, and; (2) Community responses such as community agencies and service providers involved in the targeting, monitoring, supervising, studying, and counseling of gang members (Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 1993). The following review shows the wide variety and community responses used to suppress gang behaviour. Institutionally based suppression strategies are discussed in a later section.

4.1. Police Responses

The primary approach of law enforcement agencies is to use an aggressive gang suppression strategy. Typically, this involves surveillance, stakeouts, targeted patrols and arrest policies, follow-up investigations, and intelligence gathering (OJJDP, 1994). Below is a review of the police responses used in various U.S. cities.

In 1979, the Los Angeles Country Sheriff launched Operation Safe Streets (OSS). A team of gang investigators identified, investigated, and targeted the most active gang in a particular target area of the city. Gang members were subsequently arrested for their illegal behaviour. This suppression activity was combined with aggressive prosecution and intensive probation supervision. A subsequent evaluation of the program reported a 50% decrease in youth and adult gang activity in the targeted areas (OJJDP, 2000b).

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) supports a number of gang-related programs in various U.S. cities. These included both youth and adults. In 1996 and 1997, the Anti-gang Initiative in Dallas, TX, targeted seven of the cities most dangerous gangs. Three

main suppression tactics were used: (1) Saturation patrols/high-visibility patrols in target areas. Suspected gang members may be stopped, frisked and, if necessary, arrested; (2) Aggressive curfew enforcement of suspected gang members; (3) Aggressive enforcement of truancy laws and regulations. Subsequent analysis of the initiative showed that gang-related violence decreased significantly during 1996-97 in the target areas (OJJDP, 2000b).

The COPS office also supports the Youth Firearms Violence Initiative in four U.S. cities. In Milwaukee, WI, the Initiative sought to deter gun carrying in high-crime areas of the city.[2] Program components included: (1) Strengthening the police department's gang crimes/intelligence unit; (2) Enhanced curfew activities; (3) Saturation patrols. The Initiative was subsequently judged to produce a substantial decrease in firearm-related offences (OJJDP, 2000b).

In Salinas, CA, a team of 15 police officers used a variety of suppression tactics including aggressive patrol strategies, surveillance, probation/patrol services, traffic stops, raids, and search warrants to recover illegal firearms. The Initiative was subsequently judged to produce a substantial reduction in gun-related and violent crimes (OJJDP, 2000b).

A key component of the Initiative in Seattle, WA, was the creation of a system to track the city's 50 most violent juveniles and gang-members. Police and probation officers collaborated to increase surveillance of these youth and to enforce probation conditions. In addition, enhanced

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[2] In Saskatoon, on Sept. 21, 2004, a man and a woman walking together in a back alley in the city's south-end passed a young man who appeared to be hiding a shotgun under his clothing. The couple overpowered the 14-year old and flagged down a passing police car. The police seized a sawed-off, pump action 12 gauge shotgun. A Saskatoon police spokesperson suggested that the incident *may* have involved gang connections (Hall, Richard. (2004, September 22. Couple subdues teenager carrying sawed-off shotgun. The StarPhoenix, A6). The issue of gun violence is particularly important in Saskatchewan. According to Statistic Canada, Saskatchewan had the highest murder rate in Canada in 2003 with 41 of Canada's 548 homicides (includes first and second degree murders, manslaughter, and infanticide). Per capita this translates into 4.1 homicides per 100,000 which was more than double the Canadian rate of 1.7. In Saskatchewan, shooting was the most common cause of death, followed by stabbing, beating and strangling or suffocation (Pruden, J., & Adam, B.A. (2004, September 30). Sask. has highest murder rate. The StarPhoenix, A. 3).

prosecution was implemented. An overall decrease in weapons violations was subsequently
reported (OJJDP, 2000b).

4.2. Gang Prosecution Programs and Units

The main goal of designated gang prosecutors is the successful prosecution, conviction, and
incarceration of gang offenders. In 1979, the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office created
Operation Hardcore, a prosecutorial gang suppression program (OJJDP, 2000b). The program's
distinctive feature was vertical prosecution where the prosecutor who files a case remains
responsible for it throughout the prosecution process. It has been shown that vertical prosecution
can increase the rate of conviction and prosecution of gang members, reduce caseloads, improve
investigative support, and free-up resources to help victims (OJJDP, 1994). An evaluation of the
program showed fewer dismissals of cases involving gang members, more convictions or
adjudications, and a higher rate of State prison commitments or secure confinements. The
program was also judged to have "obtained demonstrable improvements in the criminal justice
handling of gang defendant and their cases" (Dahman, 1981: 303). In addition, the OJJDP (1994)
recommends that prosecutors: (1) Videotape pretrial testimony to avoid a victim or witness
recanting or forgetting their testimony; (2) Develop a program to protect victims or witnesses; if
necessary, provide relocation to a safe place; (3) Use police surveillance to prevent intimidation
of witnesses, and; (4) Recommend sentences based on a probation officer's pre-sentence
investigation, as well as the possibility that alternatives to incarceration, such as strict supervision
in the community and programming through remedial education and job placement, may be most
helpful to both the community and gang member.

Another study involving special prosecution units (as well as a specialized gang task force)
was conducted by Pennel and Melton (2002). The researchers evaluated a program targeted at

young gang members involved in drug use and sales. The JUDGE (Jurisdictions United for Drug Gang Enforcement) program was created in San Diego, CA in 1988. Headed by the District Attorney's office, the program's task force includes police and probation officers, as well as deputy district attorneys, all working together to target juvenile gang members on probation for narcotic offences, as well as street gang members not on probation but known to be involved in the use and distribution of drugs. The JUDGE program has three main components: (1) Vertical prosecution (examples of objectives include reduce caseload for prosecutors, increasing conviction rates and ensuring the most severe possible sentence); (2) The Probation Department's narcotic task force (examples of objectives include coordinating with law enforcement to identify probation violators and developing arrest strategies for drug offenders and parole violators), and; (3) Special enforcement operations conducted by the police (examples of objectives include increasing the number of arrests of individuals charged with drug offences and increasing the use of informants).

The evaluation examined the first two years of program operation, comparing the period before and after implementation. Central outcome variables included filing charges, convictions, and plea bargaining rates, custody prior to disposition, and recidivism. The evaluation reports the following findings:

- 68% of cases involving JUDGE targets led to conviction compared to 44% of cases before the program was implemented. Sentences involving JUDGE cases were more likely to result in sentences involving custody; about 33% JUDGE cases were sentenced to local custody compared to 16% of the pre-JUDGE cases. Time from arrest to disposition was shorter after JUDGE was implemented; 61% of the JUDGE cases were

processed within 30 days whereas 47% of the pre-JUDGE cases were processed as quickly.

- Recidivism measures suggested that although about 83% of JUDGE targets were rearrested within 2 years after JUDGE implementation, the mean number of arrests dropped slightly from 3.9 to 3.0. Furthermore, most of these arrests were for probation violations. Moreover, the proportion of rearrests for drug violations dropped significantly.

4.3. Anti-gang Legislation

Although many jurisdictions find traditional criminal law to be adequate in prosecuting gang-related offences, some jurisdictions have enacted special anti-gang legislation as well as special gang prosecution units (National Institute of Justice, 2002). In 1989 and 1991, Nevada enacted seven anti-gang statutes that addressed the following:

- Possessing a dangerous weapon on school property or in a vehicle at a school;

- Discharging a firearm out of a vehicle;

- Aiming a firearm at a person or discharging a weapon in a way that can be dangerous to a person;

- Imposing an additional penalty for the procurement of a minor to commit certain violations;

- Establishing additional penalties for committing certain violations at or near schools, bus stops, or recreational facilities;

- Creating penalties for felonies committed on a school bus;

- Increasing the penalty for felonies committed to promote the activities of criminal gang-activities.

Miethe and McCorkle (2002) evaluated the effectiveness of both gang prosecution units and anti-gang legislation in two medium-sized cities in Nevada. The overarching purpose of the evaluation was to examine how often Nevada's anti-gang legislation was used and the effectiveness of specialized prosecution gang units. Three types of data were collected: (1) Arrest reports, prosecutorial case files, and court records for gang and non-gang cases; (2) Field observations of the relationship between police and prosecution gang units, and criminal trials of gang members, and; (3) Interviews with police officers, prosecutors, defence lawyers, and judges in order to learn their opinions about the effectiveness of gang prosecution and anti-gang legislation. In assessing the effectiveness of gang prosecution units, the researchers compared the practices of the gang prosecution units with those of other track (general) units. As seen below, the results of the evaluation were mixed:

- Anti-gang legislation was most often used in cases involving firearm offences;

- There was not a significant difference in conviction and incarceration rates between defendants processed in gang prosecution units and those processed in other prosecution units;

- When asked for their attitudes about Nevada's anti-gang laws, most respondents gave favourable ratings to at least some aspects of these laws. For example, most judges believed that the laws were an effective tool. On the other hand, prosecutors gave a mixed review. While believing that gang sentencing enhancement statutes could be helpful, most prosecutors believed that enhancements linked to school-related crimes, firearm forfeitures or the use of a minor in criminal acts were not reducing gang crime. However, anti-gang legislation was seen as providing prosecutors with additional leverage in

prosecuting gang members; that is, the mere threat of conviction under a gang

enhancement statute can serve as an enticement for a guilty plea on other charges.

Another example of how legislation is being used to help deter gang activity involves the

Criminal Street Gang Abatement Act of 2004 tailored by Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY). The

Act has a number of goals including:

- Making gang recruitment a new crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison;

- Make committing 2 street gang crimes punishable by up to 30 years in prison;

- Giving the death penalty or life imprisonment to gang members who commit murder;

- Makes it easier for prosecutors to treat 16-year-olds as adults if they commit serious

  violent offenses like murder, manslaughter, carjacking, or armed robbery.

In Canada, federal action against organized crime groups also involves special criminal

organization (including gangs) legislation, specifically Bills C-24 and C-95 (Parliament of

Canada, 2004). Bill C-24 came into effect in 2002 and amended the *Canadian Criminal Code* to

include the following:

- Knowingly participating in a criminal organization, including a gang, is a criminal

  offence;

- An offence to use violence to intimidate people involved in the criminal justice system or

  a member of their family with the intention of impeding the administration of justice;

- Expands the proceeds of crime provisions so that they apply to most indictable offences.

Bill C –24 provides police agencies with increased powers in their fight against organized

crime groups such as a gang. Some of these enhanced powers include:

- Greater discretion in using electronic surveillance against gangs for up to 1 year;

- Expanded proceeds of crime laws;

- A peace bond targeted at gang leadership allowing a judge to prohibit associating or

  communicating with other gang members;

- Anyone charged with a gang-related offence can be held without bail until trial;

- Makes participation in a criminal organization an indictable offence, punishable by up to

  14-years in prison to be served consecutively;

- New sentencing provisions in the Criminal Code that delays parole eligibility for certain

  gang offences.

Despite these antigang legislative efforts, there is insufficient empirical research to suggest that

these sanction-based laws are, by themselves, effective in reducing the number of gangs or gang

members in the community (Bjerrgaard, 2002).

4.4. Developing a Multi-dimensional Approach: The Gang Violence Reduction Project

Although suppression approaches are often discussed individually, one does not want to be

left with the impression that, as a rule, each individual approach alone is *the* magic bullet in

suppressing/controlling gang behaviour. Spergel and Grossman (1997) make this point when they

write that "No single agency, community group, discipline, or approach alone is sufficient to

successfully address a complex problem such as gang crime" (p. 469). As the next study shows,

the trend is toward developing a multi-dimensional approach that draws from a number of

resources, agencies and organizations.

Spergel et al. (2002) evaluated the Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP). This multi-

dimensional approach consists of six interrelated strategies:

- **Community mobilization** involves local residents and groups, youth agencies, police and

  probation officers, as well as former gang members;

- **Opportunities provision** recognizes that gang members wanting to leave their gang often need special education programs, job training and placement programs;

- **Social intervention** consists of such services as crisis counseling, individual and family counseling, as well as referral for services and resources such as drug treatment, job training, education and recreational programs;

- **Suppression** may require the application of a number of formal and informal controls such as supervision and surveillance, arrest, probation, and imprisonment, as well as communication with youths and information sharing between agencies;

- **Organizational Change and Development** where units of workers learn to better collaborate across organizations in order to develop a common set of goals and strategies for reducing gang problems;

- **Targeting** youth who are high-risk, chronic gang members or particularly violent. Targeting a specific population of the most extreme youth also helps to conserve limited resources.

The Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP) was implemented in the Little Village community of Chicago in 1992. Little Village is a predominantly Mexican-American community of about 60,000 residents. The GVRP is perhaps the most comprehensive gang intervention program and multi-phased evaluation to be undertaken in the US. The evaluation drew data from three main sources over two or three time periods spanning two years:

- Three groups of male youth were assessed. The first goup was a "targeted" group. This group (n= 195) consists of youth who were at their peak of gang activity and who had the greatest need for the full range of services provided by the Project (e.g., individual and family counselling, school and job training, referral and job placement, athletic activities)

The second and third groups were "non-targeted" youth. One non-targeted group (n= 90)

received some services but not coordinated intensive service or program contact. The

other non-targeted group (n= 208) did not receive any services provided by the Project.

All members of the three groups came from the same two gangs. The second comparison

group was identified from police records as co-accused offenders of the target group. The

three groups did not differ in criminal history or age. The mean age of the participants

was 18 years of age, with a range of 12 to 29 years. Analyses included comparisons by

risk level (low, moderate and high) and by developmental level (the authors claim that

youth gang members fall into three age categories, 12 to 16, 17 and 18, and 19 and older).

- The primary focus was on gang youth between the ages of 17 and 24 years. Self-report

   data were collected from the youth about their perceptions of the neighborhood and gang

   structure, their family composition, their relationships with wives or girlfriends, their

   education and job status, their legal and illegal sources of income, and their self-reported

   offences and arrests. Respondents were interviewed at three points in time.

- Residents (N= 200) and local community organizations (N= 100) were surveyed at two

   points in time on their perceptions of the gang problems in their community. Examples of

   community organizations include churches, health agencies, employment and job training

   agencies, and political organizations.

- Police, court, detention, and tracking data were collected at three points in time.

The researchers reported the following outcomes and argued that they demonstrate the Project's

effectiveness.

   Between the first and third interviews, the targeted group of youth believed that their

community had improved. They were more satisfied about living in the community and were less

concerned about family victimization by gang crime, which they perceived as having been reduced. The targeted group members also reported that the quality of their relationships with their family, wives and girlfriends was either very or moderately positive. Although general gang crimes were seen as having been reduced, the target group did not believe that gang violence had decreased significantly. Targeted youth also reported an improvement in their educational and employment levels. Dropouts decreased from a high of 52.3% to a low of 25.8%. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who returned to school or graduated increased significantly. Employment for the targeted group jumped from 30.9% to 63.3%. As a result, individual-youth total (legal) income increased from about $9,200 per year up to $12,000 per year. There was a general reduction of frequencies and categories of self-reported offences and arrests of program youth between Times I and III: Total reported offences dropped in frequency from a mean of 52.7 to 9.4, while violent crime fell from a mean of 28.7 to 6.6. The most serious violent crimes (e.g., aggravated assault, armed robbery, homicides) fell from 18.5 to 3.6, while property crimes fell from a mean of 24.0 to 2.8 and drug selling from a mean of 4.1 to 2.8. All of these reductions were statistically significant except for the reduction in drug selling.

The results of the analysis of official police arrest data were similar to the self-reported data. From the first project year to the third project year, the average number of *all* arrests for the targeted group dropped significantly from 1.39 per youth to 0.65; the average number of serious offences (including robbery, aggravated assault, homicide) dropped from 2.6 to 0.19 per individual. The number of arrests for property crimes also decreased significantly from 0.61 per individual in the first project year to 0.06 in the third. However, the average number of arrests for individual drug-related offences from first to third project year did not change significantly.

The perceptions of community residents and various local community organizations were also assessed. At their second interview, Little Village residents believed that their community's quality of life was improved (e.g., they were less afraid in their community); they perceived a significant reduction in gang and non-gang crime, and they believed that the police were dealing effectively with the gang problem. The organizations that were sampled also believed that the quality of life in the community had improved across the two time periods. Property and personal crime was perceived as having decreased significantly. Organizations believed that police gang-related activities had improved. They also reported a greater willingness to increase their contacts with other community agencies and organizations to address the gang problem.

In summary, suppression strategies, such as aggressive policing, gang prosecution programs, and anti-gang legislation are avenues of last resort in dealing with gangs. Given the costs of suppressing gang development and activity, it makes sense to discourage at-risk youth from joining a gang in the first place or to encourage them to leave their gang lifestyle behind once they have joined a gang. But, of course, the need for public order requires that strategies be developed to deter and reduce gang activity. Thus, aggressive police responses (involving, for example, surveillance, targeted patrols, and intelligence gathering) combine with specialized gang prosecution units, and anti-gang legislation to help maintain public safety. However, while there are those who prefer a "get tough on crime" approach, the literature clearly shows that the trend is towards using a multi-dimensional approach that draws from a number of resources including the police, courts, and corrections, as well as community responses intended to address the underlying factors and conditions that cause young people to join gangs in the first place and which mires them in the gang lifestyle. As noted previously, there is little or no research that demonstrates the impact of gang legislation on the presence of gangs in our society.

Recommendation 8

Suppression efforts should be used only after all other prevention and intervention strategies have failed to elicit the desired outcomes, and then only in combination with other strategies, such as disengagement, so that these other strategies may be undertaken more effectively.

5.0 Corrections-Based Responses to Gangs

Internal documents from the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) obtained by Sun Media show that by late 2003, CSC officials had identified 51 different gangs that were represented in Canadian federal penitentiaries. These included white supremacist, Asian, Aboriginal, cult, motorcycle, mob and terrorist groups. Collectively, more than 8% of the federal inmate population was identified as being affiliated with a gang (Sun Media, 2005), which is up marginally from the 7% reported a year ago (Correctional Service Canada, 2003). The rapidly growing gang population in CSC has created instability and increased violence within federal institutions. Due to the increased security threats posed by gang members and gang activity in these institutions, CSC is committed to developing evidence-based strategies to address gang memberships within custody facilities in an effective manner (Correctional Service Canada, 2003). "The greater the security threat posed by these groups, the more important it is that correctional authorities adopt effective approaches to dealing with them (Kassel, 2003, p. 242). Mackenzie (2001) suggests that all strategies employed by correctional facilities are best described as preventive because they are intended to prevent any further involvement with the justice system through successful rehabilitation efforts.

5.1 Gang Prevention Strategies

There is an increasing amount of literature that explores the best practice approaches for reducing criminogenic behaviour in both adult and youth populations. A meta-analysis of effective programs and services for adult and youthful offenders by Leschied and Cunningham (1999) concluded that those programs that address an entire risk domain, adopt scientific evaluation methods and support community-based collaboration have been consistently more effective in reducing crimonogenic behaviours. In addition, these types of programs have also

been identified as more cost efficient and yielding higher returns on investments than more

punitive-based approaches, such as incarceration only (Leschied & Cunningham, 1999).   These

forms of analysis serve as a starting point for exploring the limited evidence-based programs and

services that have been evaluated within the gang population.

   Although there is sufficient research to demonstrate that gang membership increases the

likelihood of violence within the community (Spergel, 1995; Curry & Decker, 2000), little

attention has been devoted to exploring the relationship between gang membership and prison

misconduct (Gaes et al., 2001). One study conducted by Gaes et al. (2001) examined the effect of

gang membership on the rates of prison misconduct. Data were obtained from an automated

information system of the US Bureau of Prisons. The Bureau of Prisons maintains a three-tiered

gang identification system that differentiates between members, suspects, and associates. A

member is a full-fledged core member; a suspect is considered to be a gang member whose

credentials have not been fully established; an associate is someone who may conduct business or

act on a gang's behalf but who nevertheless is not a member of the gang,. The number of male

inmates at the time of the study was 82,504, of whom 7,445 (9.04 percent) were identified as

gang affiliated. Gaes et al. (2001) concluded that incidents of violent prison misconduct

increased with the level of entrenchment in a gang. Similar to findings in street-based gangs,

hard-core gang members committed significantly more violent acts than peripheral members. In

addition, suspect gang members were involved in significantly more violent misconducts than

non-gang member inmates. Gaes et al. (2001) recommended future research would be beneficial

to understanding the relationship between rising numbers of gang members and the increasing

rates of prison misconduct in other regions.

It has been demonstrated that psychological treatment can significantly reduce prison

misconduct and recidivism rates amongst incarcerated gang members. In an important study

conducted at the Regional Psychiatric Centre, which is a Correctional Service of Canada facility

in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, DiPlacido, Simon, Witte, Gu, and Wong (2002) investigated the

effect of cognitive-behavioural treatment programming on high risk/high need adult offenders.

Participants were divided into four groups: (1) treated gang members (TG; n = 40); (2) untreated

gang members (UG; n = 40); (3) treated non-gang members (TNG; n = 40); and (4) untreated

non-gang members (UNG; n = 40). The majority of the gang members (n = 40 of 80) belonged to

an Aboriginal street gang, such as the Indian Posse or Manitoba Warriors. The TG and TNG

members participated in one of three programs (Aggressive Behaviour Control, Clearwater Sex

Program, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program) based on their risk, need, and responsivity

characteristics.[3]

Two outcome variables of interest included post-treatment recidivism (violent and non-

violent) and institutional offences. The researchers conducted two sets of survival analyses. The

base rates for non-violent recidivism were: UG = 53.3%, TG = 34.3%, UNG = 63.9%, TNG =

46.0%. The base rates for violent recidivism were: UG = 51.7%, TG = 27.8%, UNG = 44.4%,

TNG = 35.6%. As seen in Figure 1, there were significant differences between the groups for

non-violent recidivism. The TG group recidivated less than the UG and UNG groups (Wilcoxon

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[3]   Contemporary research in correctional programming suggests that the most effective treatment follows these three
principles (DiPlacido, Simon, Witte, Gu, & Wong, 2002):

1. The Risk Principle states that level of service must be matched to an offender's level of risk. Higher risk offenders
 require more intensive services than lower risk offenders;
2. The Need Principle states that services must address those criminogenic needs (e.g., procriminal attitudes,
 hostility, substance abuse) that are associated with changes in recidivism. On the other hand, treating non-
 criminogenic needs such as anxiety or self-esteem is unlikely to impact future criminal behaviour;
3. The Responsivity Principle makes the point that an offender's personality style and cognitive-behavioural
 characteristics can influence how they respond to treatment.

(Gehan) = 3.61, p < .06 and 9.42, p < .01, respectively). Moreover, the TNG group recidivated less than the UNG group (Wilcoxon (Gehan) = 8.02, p = .01). There was no difference between the TG and TNG groups (Wilcoxon (Gehan) = 0.44, ns) or between the UG and UNG groups (Wilcoxon (Gehan) = 0.92, ns). While the TG and TNG groups recidivated (or survived) at very similar rates, without treatment, the UG and UNG groups were virtually indistinguishable.

For violent recidivism, there was no overall significant effect between groups. As seen in Figure 2, the survival functions of the TG and TNG groups are quite indistinguishable from each other. Moreover, the treated groups, TG and TG, have flatter survival curves, indicative of less recidivism, followed by the UNG and the UG group, which has the steepest curve. The amount of time spent in prison prior to treatment was unrelated to outcome.

Turning to institutional offences, there was a significant difference between groups for rate of major offences (e.g., fights/threats, possession of contraband) per month post-treatment, $F_{(3, 146)} = 3.34$, p< .05. The UG group (M = 0.25, SD = 0.62) is significantly higher than the other three groups (TG, M = 0.08, SD = 0.11, p < .05; UNG, M = 0.04, SD = 0.08, p < .01; TNG, M = 0.04, SD = 0.10, p < .01). The rate of minor institutional offences (e.g., disobey written rule or order, possession of unauthorized item) is also significantly different between the four groups, $F_{(3, 146)} = 4.65$, p < .01. The TG group has the highest monthly rate (M = 0.29, SD = 0.39) followed by the UG group (M = 0.20, SD = 0.21), with the two NG groups at the lowest rates (TNG, M = 0.12, SD = 0.18): UNG, M = 0.10, SD = 0.16). There was no significant difference between the TG and UG groups. Both the TNG and UNG groups have significantly lower rates (p < .01 and p < .01 respectively) than the TG group. Impressed with the findings, the researches concluded that "appropriate correctional treatment that follows the risk, need, and responsivity

principles lowers the risk of recidivism in the community and institutional misconduct and should be the preferred approach to the rehabilitation of gang members" (p. 2).

Although they did not focus specifically on gang members, French and Gendreau (2003) also explores treatment benefits for reducing prison misconduct. The researchers conducted a meta-analysis on the effects of different prison-based treatment programs on inmate's misconduct rates. The researchers examined three treatment models: (1) behavioural (i.e., cognitive behavioural, radical behavioural, social learning, and punishment), (2) non-behavioural (i.e., non-directive therapy, psychodynamic, group milieu), (3) educational/vocational, and (4) a non-specific grouping. The researchers found that behavioural treatment programs produced considerably larger effect size estimates ($r = .26$) compared to non-behavioural programs ($r = .10$), educational/vocational programs ($r = .02$), and the non-specified group of treatments ($r = .02$). They also found that stronger research designs (those that use randomization of participants to a treatment group and untreated control group) were associated with greater reductions in prison misconduct than weaker ones. In addition, those programs that targeted the most criminogenic needs generated the greatest reduction in misconduct. The researchers also noted that institutional treatment pays dividends to the community; that is, the reduction in prison misconduct was seen to carry over into the community.

5.2 Corrections-based Disengagement Strategies?

Gang membership, with its heavy reliance on a collective identity, must be replaced by an equally meaningful identity (Kassel, 2003). For Aboriginal gang members, this means providing opportunity to develop or enhance a cultural connection (Mecredi, 2000). Closed custody facilities have the advantage of working with gang members who are not under the influence of drugs or alcohol and provide an opportunity to educate gang members about the alternatives to

their gang lifestyle. It is critical for correctional-based programs to address the faulty cognitions,

values, and behaviours that have been adopted by gang members. Therefore, uniform training

and awareness must be developed and maintained through the creation of 'gang committees' who

are knowledgeable in both gangs and culturally diverse approaches to address the gang mentality

(Jackson, 1999). Mecredi (2000) stressed the importance of traditional Aboriginal approaches for

effectively addressing the gang phenomenon:

> Aboriginal experts in both education and healing areas understand the
>
> value of traditional knowledge. For them, the paramount principle for the
>
> personal development and advancement for Aboriginal people is the active
>
> engagement of their students in both holistic education and personal
>
> healing and recovery (p. 10).

Therefore, evidence-based programs should be adapted to meet the culturally diverse needs of

the targeted population.

Understanding the gang phenomenon is a difficult process that requires intimate knowledge

of the unique characteristics of the gang on a localized level. Research must focus on the gang

population that is posing the greatest concern within the community in order to plan and develop

programs and services that are effective within that region. It is naïve to assume that programs

and services that have been effective in one region will be equally effective in others. Therefore,

these programs must be implemented and evaluated within the local community before assuming

that the results will be as favourable (Leschied & Cunningham, 2004). As Dickson-Gilmore and

Whitehead (2003) note:

> The question of aboriginal participation in what have been traditionally
>
> understood as 'organized criminal activities' has received limited attention in

Canada or the United States. In some respects, this is not surprising, insofar as

the field of organized crime in Canada in general suffers from limited

academic attention and analysis. And yet, given the ongoing concern about

rates of aboriginal crime and disorder, and the over-representation of First

Nations people in the Canadian criminal justice and correctional systems, it is

curious that this aspect of aboriginal conflict with the law has largely escaped

our attention. (p. 5).

Federal and provincial Canadian correctional facilities have adopted the Criminal Intelligence

Service Canada's (CISC) six-point criteria for gang identification within these institutions.

Adherence to these law enforcement procedures will produce a more consistent means of gang

and gang member identification throughout Canada. The CISC gang definition and six

identification criteria are as follows:

Gang Definition:

A group of persons consorting together to engage in unlawful activity.

Gang Criteria:

1.   Reliable source information (inside gang member/rival gang member, legitimate community resources, i.e. schools, business, citizen);

2.   Police information provided as a result of observed association with other known gang members, i.e. surveillance;

3.   Involvement (direct/indirect) in gang motivated crime;

4.   Admission of gang membership;

5.   Previous court findings that a person was a gang member;

6.   Common and/or symbolic gang identification, i.e. gang paraphernalia (tattoos, weapons, poems, induction rituals, clothing.

An offender must meet three of the six indicators to be identified as having gang involvement. However, similar to U.S. federal correctional institutions (Gaes et al., 2001), Canadian correctional facilities do not use Criterion 3 (determination of 'involvement' is the sole responsibility of the courts) as an indicator in the list of identification criteria. Consequently, correctional agencies' identification methods are used only to identify gang "associated" or "affiliated" members, as opposed to gang members *per se*. Moreover, by not being allowed to consider 'involvement in gang-motivated crime,' the five remaining criteria appear to be out of synch with other definitions of gang membership because they do not focus on illegal activity. Therefore, more exploration into the most appropriate means of addressing gang issues is necessary because the remaining criteria are process rather than action orientated. The over reliance on process orientated gang identification methods will result in an inflated number of gang members, which is then used in publicized statistics (Shelden, Tracy & Brown, 2001).

The literature on incarcerated gang members is growing and offers many helpful insights in dealing with inmates who are involved in a gang. For example, a study by Mallilan and Holden's (undated) provides valuable insight into the type of help incarcerated gang members may want in leaving a gang. The study was also helpful in identifying the differences between how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal gang members may react to various gang disengagement strategies. Therefore, it is reported in detail in spite of its small sample size (N = 20) of offenders.

The researchers compared the attitudes of incarcerated Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal gang members about the effectiveness of three types of gang disengagement strategies: (1) criminal justice and prison-based strategies (e.g., government prosecution of gang members, transfer to prison without gang members); (2) contextual-based strategies (e.g., lawful employment, education and skills training), and; (3) psychological-based strategies (e.g., counseling, cognitive

skills programs). However, since the sample size is quite small, caution must be exercised in the interpretation of their results.

Table 1 enumerates 38 criminal justice and prison-based strategies and compares the percentage of Aboriginal (A Group) and Non-Aboriginal (NA Group) participants who endorsed a particular strategy as being effective in encouraging gang disengagement. In general, the A group endorsed more gang intervention strategies. A between-groups comparison also shows that the A group endorsed several strategies that received no support from the NA group. Such strategies included *Leave gang without help of correctional staff* (45.5% and 0.0% for A group and NA group, respectively), *Inter-gang mediation from authorities* (50% and 0.0 % for A group and NA group, respectively), and *Government prosecution for gang members* (40% and 0.0% for A group and NA group, respectively). On the other hand, both the A and NA groups agreed that the most effective intervention strategy was *Transfer to minimum-security prison* (81.8% and 33.3% for A group and NA group, respectively).

It is also interesting to observe that the A group strongly endorsed receiving a *New identity* or *Secret identity* as an effective gang intervention strategy. These strategies highlight the idea that, when deciding to leave their gang, gang members are often concerned about their safety. Since fear of retaliation from other gang members can provide a powerful reason for continuing gang membership, providing disillusioned gang members with a new identity can strengthen their willingness to leave their gang. Although some strategies may appear to be rather self-serving for the A group (e.g., *transfer to minimum security prison*), there is a clear tendency for offenders to endorse service-oriented strategies (e.g., mediation), rather than sanction-oriented strategies (e.g., denial of various privileges).

Table 1

Perceived Effectiveness of Criminal Justice and Prison-Based Strategies in Facilitating Gang
Disengagement by Incarcerated Members of Aboriginal (A) and Non-Aboriginal Gangs (NA)

Criminal Justice and Prison-Based Strategies [1]	Aboriginal (n= 11) %	Non-Aboriginal (n= 9) %
Leave gang without help from correctional staff (*)	45.5	0.00
Ask help from correctional staff	36.4	12.5
Inter-gang mediation from authorities (*)	50.0	00.0
Government prosecution for gang membership (*)	40.0	00.0
Longer and tougher prison sentence	00.0	25.0
Administrative segregation	20.0	12.5
Transfer to minimum-security prison (*)	81.8	33.3
Transfer to maximum-security prison	20.0	12.5
Transfer to another unit	60.0	25.0
Transfer to prison where there were no gang members	50.0	25.0
Transfer to prison where gang identity is unknown	30.0	12.5
New identity	54.5	12.5
Secret identity	54.5	12.5
Deportation for gang members with immigrant status	9.1	22.2
Accelerated parole review	30.0	00.0
Denied full parole	40.0	2.5
Denied day parole	10.0	12.5
Denied statutory release	40.0	25.0
Denied any visit except from lawyers	20.0	12.5
Denied private family visits	10.0	00.0
Denied conjugal visits	30.0	25.0
Denied communication privileges	20.0	12.5
Denied recreational privileges	20.0	12.5
Denied unescorted temporary absence	10.0	12.5
Denied escorted temporary absence	20.0	12.5
Reduced sentence	20.0	12.5
Indeterminate sentence	40.0	14.3
Frequent random tests of illegal substances	30.0	12.5
Frequent random cell searches	30.0	00.0
Monetary fine for gang membership	30.0	00.0
Restitution (money or extended time in jail)	20.0	00.0
Charged for stay in jail (comparable to hotel costs)	30.0	00.0
All possession seized by authorities	30.0	11.0
Work in chain gangs	10.0	00.0
Increased prison duties	10.0	00.0
High profile community notification upon release	20.0	00.0
Electronic surveillance up to a year	10.0	00.0
Strict residency conditions imposed upon release	40.0	25.0

Note: [1] Mallillin, A, Z.C., & Holden, R.W. (undated), _Gang Members Are Willing to Leave Their Gang If Their Safety Is Not Compromised_ .(Bowden Institution and University of Alberta).

Note: Level of significance based upon Pearson chi-square statistic for 2x2 tables. *p< .05

Table 2 lists 8 contextual-based strategies. Interestingly, the A Group was more than 7 times more likely to suggest that *Lawful employment* could encourage gang disengagement than the NA Group. The, A Group was also significantly more likely to endorse *Involvement in activity centres* as being helpful in facilitating gang disengagement than the NA Group.

Table 3 lists four psychological-based strategies. The A Group was significantly more likely to endorse being *Shown how to live a prosocial life* in encouraging gang disengagement compared to the NA group. It is worth noting that both groups showed a high level of support for using *Counseling* as an effective gang disengagement strategy.

In summary, neither Aboriginal nor non-Aboriginal gang members endorsed punitive measures (e.g., prosecution for gang membership, increased prison duties, work in chain gangs) as effective gang disengagement strategies. Aboriginal gang members tended to recommend education, employment, and transfer to lower security facilities as potentially effective strategies; non-Aboriginal gang members preferred to seek counseling. Mallilin and Holden (undated) also highlight the importance of ensuring the safety of those gang members who want to leave their gang; that is, while gang members are often willing to consider leaving their gang, they do not want to do so at the risk of their lives or their family's safety.

Table 2

Perceived Effectiveness of Contextual-Based Strategies in Facilitating Gang Disengagement
by Incarcerated Members of Aboriginal (A) and Non-Aboriginal Gangs (NA)

Contextual-based strategies [1]	Aboriginal (n= 11) %	Non-Aboriginal (n= 9) %
Ask help from a former gang member	54.5	44.4
Mentor kids at risk of joining gangs	63.6	50.0
Lawful employment (**)	81.8	11.1
Lawful employment and adequate income as promised by government	54.5	37.5
Education and skills training	72.7	37.5
Support from human service providers	63.6	25.0
Involvement in activity centres (**)	60.0	00.0
Post-sentencing social services	20.0	25.0

Note: [1] Mallillin, A, Z.C., & Holden, R.W. (undated), Gang Members Are Willing to Leave Their Gang If Their Safety Is Not Compromised .(Bowden Institution and University of Alberta).

*Note: Level of significance based upon Pearson chi-square statistic for 2x2 tables. **p< .01.*

Table 3

Perceived Effectiveness of Psychological-Based Strategies in Facilitating Gang
Disengagement by Incarcerated Members of Aboriginal (A) and Non-Aboriginal Gangs (NA)

Psychological-based strategies [1]	Aboriginal (n= 11) %	Non-Aboriginal (n= 9) %
Counseling	70.0	75.0
Shown how to live a prosocial life (**)	72.7	12.5
Esteem-enhanced courses and alternative ways of living	70.0	44.4
Cognitive skills programs	54.5	37.5

Note: [1] Mallillin, A, Z.C., & Holden, R.W. (undated), Gang Members Are Willing to Leave Their Gang If Their Safety Is Not Compromised .(Bowden Institution and University of Alberta).

*Note: Level of significance based upon Pearson chi-square statistic for 2x2 tables. **p< .01.*

Recent research profiling federally sentenced gang members provided valuable insights to program development for federal inmates. Nafekh and Stys (2004) examined 1,955 inmates who had been identified as being a gang member or affiliate. A comparison sample of non-gang member inmates, who were matched on race and time of admission, was drawn to examine risks, needs, rates of prison misconducts, and recidivism rates of federally sentenced gang members. Incarcerated gang affiliates were more likely than incarcerated non-gang offenders to be rated as having a high risk to re-offend and having low reintegration potential and low motivation levels. Turning to dynamic factor identification, the researchers observed that the prison gang affiliates differed sharply from non-affiliates in certain ways. For example, they were more likely to have employment problems and to prefer associating with those who shared similar criminal attitudes and values. When considering prison misconduct, Nafekh and Stys (2004) observed that prison gang affiliates were more likely than non-affiliates to be involved in assaults on staff and other inmates and in alcohol seizure.

The report also examines reconviction rates in the sample released and available for a three year follow-up period. Prison gang members were more likely to be reconvicted of violent offences. As might be expected, they were more likely to be re-convicted of offences for which they were originally incarcerated (i.e., gang related offences). When discussing intervention or programming strategies, although the researchers did not delve into specifics, they concluded that gang strategies must not take a 'one size fits all' approach that seeks to accommodate all gang subtypes (e.g., prison gang, motorcycle, aboriginal, Asian); instead, strategies must be directed to meet the specific needs of each subtype in the areas of employment, family/marital relations, substance abuse, community functioning and personal/emotional orientation.

The Means to Effective Community Living is a proposed program that was presented to Stony Mountain Penitentiary as a viable gang intervention strategy within a correctional setting (Foss, no date). This program seeks to address the most pronounced criminogenic factors for medium and high risk offenders. However, this program is unique in that it is designed to address criminogenic needs specifically in the context of gang membership (see below). The Means to Effective Community Living program (Foss, no date) focuses on the following four areas:

- Family/Community of Origin. This area is designed to encourage gang members to address the impacts of family dynamics and community influences on their belief systems.

- The Cognitive Behavioural Chain. This component is used to establish empathy for others, including the impact of their gang involvement within community, family and self. In addition, gang members gain insights to the connections between their worldviews, values, beliefs, and actions.

- Moral Reasoning/Development. This component is designed to help gang members develop prosocial values and belief systems that would serve to decrease impulsivity, anger, aggression and future criminal behaviour.

- Community Involvement. The final stage for treatment is to develop and encourage meaningful community involvement with family, friends, spiritual leaders, and others. These community-based connections are sought in order to reduce the likelihood of an offender to recidivate.

Aggressive Replacement Training (ART)

Aggressive Replacement Training (ART) is a multimodal intervention design to change the behaviour of chronically aggressive youth and has been identified as a successful intervention

with youth gangs (Goldstein & Glick, 1994). ART uses a psychoeducational approach consisting

of three major components: (1) skill streaming uses modeling, role-playing, performance

feedback, and transfer training to help participants deal with their stress and anger and to set

appropriate goals for themselves; (2) anger control training teaches participants to identity anger

triggers, use "anger reducers" (e.g., deep breathing, imagining a peaceful scene), and to monitor

and self-evaluate their reactions to frustrating events; and (3) moral education is a set of

procedures (e.g., presenting youth with moral dilemmas, modeling, role-playing) intended to

improve the young person's moral reasoning ability and sense of fairness and justice (Goldstein

& Glick, 1994). ART is available to young offenders in Saskatchewan at the Paul Dojack Youth

Centre, although the moral education component was discontinued in 2001 because of its highly

value-based content. The basic program, which is delivered by contracted counselors or trained

staff, consists of a 10-week program with three 1-hour long sessions per week for a group of 8 to

12 youth. The average cost per youth is $745 (US funds) (Washington Institute for Public

Policy, 2004).

    Goldstein and Glick (1994) reviewed the application of the model to a gang intervention

project in Brooklyn, NY. Thirty-eight young gang members were randomly assigned to the ART

group and 27 were assigned to a No-ART control group. Desired outcomes included skills

acquisition and performance, improved anger control, decreased acting-out behaviours, increased

frequency of prosocial behaviours, and lower re-arrest rates. A comparison of the experimental

and control groups revealed that the ART participants showed a significant post-treatment

improvement in a number of skill categories: Advanced social skills, aggression and stress

management skills, as well as goal setting and planning skills. Arrest data showed that five of the

38 ART participants (13%) and 14 of the 27 no-ART control group (52%) were rearrested during

the study's 8-month tracking period. Goldstein and Glick (1994) concluded that the potency of ART "appears to be sufficiently adequate that its continued implementation and evaluation with chronically aggressive youngsters is warranted" (p. 9).

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2004) conducted a cost-benefit analysis on the implementation of ART programs within youth custody facilities in Washington. Since the ART program has been offered in a wide a variety of sites, an overall cost-benefit analysis of this program was warranted. The fact that specialized training in delivering ART programs is not offered by a national organization highlighted the need for this systematic evaluation. Although some of the evaluated ART programs were not deemed to be competent, the overall evaluation results were favourable. On average, the return across all programs was $6.71 (avoided crime costs) for every dollar spent on the program. This included ART programs that were described as having 'incompetent service delivery'. When competent service providers delivered the program, the average return was $11.66 in benefits for every dollar spent. This program demonstrated a reduction in felony recidivism of 24% over 18 months when ART was competently delivered (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).

5.3 Gang Suppression Strategies

One of the consequences of effective suppression efforts through increased policing is the increased number of active gang members within custody facilities. For example, the Correctional Service of Canada (2003) has reported that the number of gang members has tripled over the last three years within its correctional facilities. Therefore, these strategies pose a significant challenge for correctional officials, as many institutions have not been fully equipped to handle the huge influx of gang members within these facilities. The Correctional Service of Canada (2003) reported that many institutions have attempted to remedy the instability created

by gang members by increasing the number of transfers to other institutions across Canada.

Isolation and Segregation

The use of isolation and segregation is a common suppression strategy used to reduce the amount of gang violence within prisons (Kassel, 2003). Consequently, the increased number of gang members within Canadian correctional facilities has resulted in an increased use of segregation within maximum-security penitentiaries for identified gang members, including its use for their personal safety. Unfortunately, the establishment of specialized segregation units and supermax prisons has not been based on reliable scientific evidence (Mackenzie, 2001). To the contrary, these approaches have been identified as detrimental to reducing the number of gang members and subsequent rates of prison misconducts (Mackenzie, 2001; Kassel, 2003). The Massachusetts Correctional Institution-Cedar Junction (MCI-CJ), which is a maximum-security prison, adopted policies that permit the use of isolation and segregation as a response to gang violence (Kassel, 2003). In a study of this facility, Philip Kassel (2003) discussed the impact of prolonged solitary confinement on the inmates at MCI-CJ:

> A significant number of prisoners report that confinement in the gang
> blocks brought on mental health problems for the first time, or
> exacerbated existing conditions. Prisoners often complain about
> insomnia, depression, nightmares, violent mood swings, anxiety attacks,
> claustrophobia, paranoia, hallucinations, and generalized feelings of
> nervousness, irritability, and anger (p. 230).

Furthermore, suppression policies, including isolation and segregation, have been reported to strengthen the cohesiveness of a gang, both in the community as well as prisons. Kassel (2003) also suggested the following:

Although opportunities for interaction are limited, gang-labelled

prisoners commiserate during out-of-cell periods and communicate to

some extent between cells while they are locked up. They are forced to

rely on each other for human contact and support. By putting alleged

gang members in this position, the DOC encourages the gang identities

of marginal, aspiring and entirely misidentified prisoners alike (p. 235).

Finally, since a gang member's sense of identity and self-esteem is often tied to status in a

gang, the use of isolation and segregation may translate into notoriety and esteem amongst gang

members (Kassel, 2003).

Managing prison gangs present difficult problems in correctional facilities. For example,

gang-related activities, such as smuggling contraband into an institution, drug trafficking,

physical and sexual assaults, and intimidation, are routine in Canadian prisons (Criminal

Intelligence Service of Canada, 2003). In addition, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian

Nations (2003) observed that adult and youth facilities are prime recruiting grounds for many

Aboriginal gangs. Clearly, attempts must be made to control gang activities within correctional

facilities. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (1991), controlling the prison gang

problem may involve any number of options. Five possibilities are presented below.

One, **housing options** can involve housing gang populations in separate facilities within the

correctional system or isolating individual gang leaders in special housing units within the

facility to restrict their ability to communicate with other gang members. In 1991 the Arizona

Department of Corrections adopted The Security Threat/Gang Program. The mandate of the

program is to minimize the threat that gangs or gang-like activity poses to the safe and efficient

operations of institutions (Arizona Department of Corrections, 2001). If an offender is validated

as a gang member (To be validated, there must be an accumulation of at least 10 points in two or more categories of objective validation criteria, e.g., tattoos, gang paraphernalia, associating with known gang members, etc.), he will be removed from the general prison population and placed in a super-maximum Special Management Unit (SMU). Evaluation findings show that SMU placement can have a definite "incapacitating effect" on the violent and disruptive behaviour of these inmates. Rates of assault, drug violations, threats, fights and riots all dropped by over 50% following SMU placement. Although other types of violent violations (e.g., loss/destruction of property, and weapons violations) increased following placement, these types of violation are considered to pose less of a threat to inmate and staff safety. An assessment of the perceptions of prison administrators found that, even though the administrators believe that the gang problem can never be eliminated, the STG program was successful in reducing gang violence and gang related activities in the SMUs.

The Colorado State Penitentiary (CPS) is a maximum administrative segregation facility that has developed a program titled Quality of Life Behavioral Modification Program to reintegrate high-risk offenders within the general prison population. These inmates are removed from the general inmate population due to serious or repeat offences within the federal institution. Hence, program admission is involuntary and determined by local administration. The objective for this program is to provide immediate response to negative behaviors, as well as cognitive restructuring resources to ensure long-term sustainability. This program was designed to provide "supermax" inmates with access to much needed programs, as current practices in the United States provide limited, if any programming to this particular inmate population (Ploughe, Wright & Lehman, 2000)

According to Ploughe, Wright and Lehman (2000), the Quality of Life Behavioral

Modification Program is based on a level system that allows for inmates to be closely monitored

and supervised throughout the duration of the program. Each inmate must successfully complete

each level before being considered for return to the general prison population. One of the

strongest advantages of this program is that inmates are able to develop a positive outlook

towards their situation; as well the onus is on the individual to maintain their eligibility for

reintegration.

Phoughe, Wright and Lehman (2000) highlighted the program as follows. The initial phases

of this program requires an inmate to maintain stable and appropriate behavior over a period of at

least three months as well as active participation in available programming. An inmate cannot

have been convicted of a serious disciplinary violation within the past 12 months. These

conditions are reviewed by a multidisciplinary classification committee, including mental health

providers, case managers, front line workers, managers and security threat group coordinators. In

addition, inmates are required to commit to the program through letters that outline their

intentions and reasons for applying to the program. Upon approval, an inmate undergoes an in-

depth evaluation and assessment of his or her needs, behavior, and commitment to the program.

After these requirements are met, an inmate receives intensive programming that includes

cognitive, educational, vocational, and mental health programs. During this phase inmates are

encouraged to begin a journey of self-reflection. These programs are designed to provide inmates

access to small group activities. This group interaction allows staff to assess an inmate's behavior

within a closely monitored environment. "Of the 226 inmates assigned to the PRO Unit, 188

successfully completed the program. As of March 2000, the recidivism rate for the unit was 3.7

percent. This reflects a return of seven inmates from the 188 progressed to less secure facilities"

(Ploughe, Wright & Lehman, 2000, p. 104). The results of this program have demonstrated a high level of effectiveness at the Colorado State Penitentiary.

Two, **out-of-province/facility transfers** of gang members may help to stop or interrupt prison gang activity. However, a cautionary note must be added: As observed by Warick (2004), dispersing gang members to different facilities may have the unfortunate effect of providing gang members with fresh recruiting grounds.

In addition to transferring gang members to different facilities, others go so far as to argue for the development of a central, national unit that specializes in housing gang members. For example, Knox (1999) surveyed 133 correctional administrators in the U.S. and asked: "Do you believe gangs could be more effectively controlled if gang members could be transferred to a central-national federal unit?" About 30% of the respondents supported the idea.

Three, **targeting individual gang members** can involve: (1) Identifying those gang members who might be vulnerable to leaving a gang or who might be useful as informants; and (2) Making day-to-day life less comfortable for targets. This might mean curtailing their contact with other gang members and restricting their privileges (e.g., non-contact rather than contact visits, preclude individuals from furloughs (temporary absences), controlling access to jobs);

Four, **prosecuting gang-related activity** can make gang membership seem less attractive that is, if a gang member knows that if he commits a crime, punishment will be swift and severe, he may realize that it is not in his best interest to commit crimes. As Lakoff (2002) put the matter: "It is a consequence of Moral Self-Interest that people act in their own self-interest; hence, people will commit crimes if it is in their interest (that is, if punishment is lenient) and won't commit crimes if it is not in their interest (if punishment is harsh). Thus, the argument goes

that aggressively prosecuting gang-rated crimes and tougher sentencing laws may make joining gangs seem less rewarding and appealing.

Five, **improving race relations** inside institutions is often recommended. It is routinely observed that racial disturbances and gang disturbances often go hand-in-hand. Knox (1999) surveyed 133 correctional administrators in the U.S. on this issue. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the respondents believed that developing programs that improve race relations among inmates could reduce gang violence in their facility.

Despite the lack of evidence-based strategies for gang reduction, the increasing numbers of gang members within correctional facilities has established a sense of urgency among correctional administrators to deliver programs and services to gang-involved inmates. "The anticipation of greater problems to come may well be averted, or at the very least contained, if effective interdiction and /or intervention techniques are found" (Foss, no date, p. 11).

5.4 Aftercare Programs

Although developing strong aftercare programs is essential for the rehabilitation of adult and youth offenders, it may be difficult to provide services to identified gang members, or even associated gang members, within a community setting due to the "zero tolerance" policy commonly adopted by many community-based organizations towards gangs. This approach may account for the absence of research on the effectiveness of aftercare services for gang members. Despite the absence of specific aftercare services for gang members, these services are critical for sustaining successful disengagement efforts. Gies (2003) discussed the importance of aftercare programs in reducing youth-crime by establishing aftercare programs as soon as a youth enters a custody facility. "Effective aftercare requires a seamless set of systems across formal and informal social control networks. It also requires a continuum of community services to prevent

the recurrence of antisocial behavior, and it can involve public-private partnerships to expand the overall capacity of youth services" (Gies, 2003, p. 1). It is commonly held that successful aftercare programs combine social control (contact with parole officers, electronic monitoring, urine testing, employment verification) and intervention strategies (counseling, behavioural programs, restitution, probation, employment, vocational and academic programs) when working with young offenders who have been released into the community (Gies, 2003).

According to the OJJDP (2000c), the best available evidence indicates that a combination of restraint and treatment offers the most promise in effectively reducing juvenile recidivism. The Intensive Aftercare Program model supported by the OJJDP has five elements: (1) Risk assessment and classification with a focus on high-risk offenders; (2) Individualized case planning that incorporates family and community perspectives. Institutional and aftercare staff jointly identify the treatment and service needs of an offender on commitment to a facility and plans how these needs will be met during incarceration and upon release; (3) A mix of intensive surveillance and services; (4) The model encourages the graduated use of sanctions to punish inappropriate behaviour and rewards to encourage compliance; (5) Links with community resources and social networks. The model requires that alliances be made with a host of agencies and organizations and it is consistent with the message that is derived from the literature on intervention strategies with adult gang members.

In conclusion, the development of effective programs and services that serve to prevent, to disengage, and to suppress gang activities, is clearly a priority within Canada. The alarming increase in the number of gang members, both in the community and custody facilities, demonstrates the need for concerted efforts to implement programs and services that reflect the needs of gang members and extend beyond the over-reliance on suppression as the prime strategy

to reduce gang violence. More specifically, with respect to Aboriginal gangs, it is crucial for the justice community to collaborate with Aboriginal Elders, stakeholders, community members, and educators to develop services that are meaningful and reflective of Aboriginal traditions, philosophies and worldviews (Mecredi, 2001; Nafekh, 2002). Borum (2003) summarized an effective approach stating:

> The key is to adequately assess the offender's risks, needs, and strengths;
> to choose treatment targets that are related to offense risk; and apply
> proven interventions—especially those that are theoretically grounded and
> that use cognitive behavioral methods—to address those problems. And if
> we reserve intensive interventions—both monitoring and treatment—for
> the highest risk cases but apply it there with rigor and fidelity, we will
> prevent much more overall crime and violence. The verdict is in:
> Evidence-based intervention works" (p. 130).

Recommendation 9

Since culturally-based programs have produced positive outcomes with Aboriginal populations and since ethnicity constitutes an important responsivity factor in offender treatment, Aboriginal community members should be engaged at all levels of a gang reduction strategy.

Recommendation 10

With the growth of gangs in Canada lagging behind their proliferation in the U.S., Canada remains in a strong position to explore the best approaches to prevent the expansion of gang membership in its communities. Research should be undertaken on the growth,

development, and membership of gangs in Canada and program evaluation studies should

be conducted to assess the impact of prevention, suppression and correctional strategies.

6.0 Summary and Recommendations

Theories abound that try to understand and explain the gang phenomenon. These explanations range from "big picture" sociological perspectives involving social and economic instability concentrated in small geographic areas to familial deficits in the family of origin and even to individual psychopathological explanations. While these explanations may be persuasive, the complexity surrounding the etiology of gang involvement and its propagation dictates that a comprehensive, multidimensional approach is required to prevent youths from joining a gang, to encourage them to leave a gang once they are actively involved, and to suppress and restrain on-going gang activity in order to provide immediate public safety. Our review of the best practices literature leads to the following commentary and recommendations to address gangs and gang members in Saskatchewan.

The lack of a unified definition of a gang member poses several challenges for successfully implementing policies, programs and procedures directly related to field personnel from various agencies, including police, corrections and social welfare. Definitional issues make it difficult to explore existing research, as inconsistent definitions will significantly alter the target population, and consequently produce different results (Spergel, 1995; Esbensen, Winfree, He & Taylor, 2001). These disparate definitions and identification strategies of a 'gang' and a 'gang member' will continue to impede progress in research and service delivery for this target population.

As outlined in Bill C-24, those individuals charged with a gang-related offence are subjected to harsher sentencing practices and less access to early release incentives available to non-gang member offenders (Parliament of Canada, 2001). Therefore, it is critical to the integrity of Canada's legal system for policy-makers, correctional institutions, law enforcement, and frontline workers to adhere to consistent definitions and identification strategies. In addition to

the legal ramifications of identifying, or more importantly misidentifying individuals of gang members, research has demonstrated that gang members have less access to available resources to assist in their rehabilitation process than non-gang members (Kassel, 2003, Mecredi, 2001).

Recommendation 1: A uniform definition and identification strategy should be established and applied accurately and consistently amongst correctional officers, policy-makers, law enforcement, and all other key stakeholders who deal directly with gangs. In Canada, a gang member can only be identified through the courts. Therefore, agencies should adopt the legal definitions and protocols for gang member identification.

The development of a gang database within correctional facilities offers real time access to pertinent information surrounding gang activity. As described by Gaes et al. (2001), the Federal Bureau of Prisons in the U.S. has implemented a national gang database providing trained staff access to information on gang activity as well as inmate information. This database is being used as a tool to increase safety within these institutions by closely monitoring the behaviours, patterns, and trends within prison gang populations. In addition to the potential security benefits, these databases provide researchers access to valuable information. Such a service is not readily available or consistently maintained to address the gang phenomenon in Canada.   In support of recommendations from CSC to develop a gang database (CSC, 2003b, p. 31), the need to develop a uniform definition and strategy for identifying gang members is further emphasized.

> *Recommendation 2: The development of a national gang database, accessible within both adult and young offender institutions, would provide a consistent means of monitoring and addressing the security threat posed by gang members and should be investigated with other agencies and levels of government.*

A community response must begin with a thorough assessment of a community's gang problem and end with an evaluation of the planning process and its outcomes. As noted by the OJJDP (2000): "No assumptions about presumed gang problems or needed responses should be made before conducting a careful assessment" (p. 53). The initial assessment will include information about the personal and social characteristics of gang members, patterns of gang activity, causes of gang problems, program objectives and needed responses, as well as current resources available in the community. It is also important to conduct an outcome evaluation. Programs and the provision of services should lead to improved levels of accomplishment and reduced gang involvement. As a result, an evaluation of a program's outcome is necessary to demonstrate that program recipients are being changed and improved. An outcome evaluation can involve varying levels of complexity. For example, an evaluation might simply compare the performance of those in a program with those who did not receive its services. A more complicated evaluation would attempt to show that the delivery of a program or service *caused* positive change among its recipients.

Evaluations offer a rational process of assessing needs, measuring the implementation of programs to meet those needs, evaluating the achievement of objectives, and assessing costs, all of which provides information from which to develop program improvements. *(See Appendix B for a brief example of the assessment process.)* In addition, there have been recent questions

surrounding the differences in developmental trajectories between gang members vs. chronic or

violent offenders. Future research should seek to identify whether there are indeed differences

that support unique treatment approaches for gang members, as opposed to chronic or violent

offenders since there is no corrections-based research that has addressed this question in a direct

and scientifically sound manner.

Recommendation 3: Comprehensive needs assessments involving key stakeholders, such as

teachers, frontline workers, police, correctional workers, parents, and gang members, should

be completed in individual communities to identify the needs, gaps in service, and resources

that are required to implement direct services for gang reduction in an effective manner.

There is an overwhelming need to develop multi-systemic programs and services that seek to

support gang members who wish to leave the gang lifestyle. Currently, there are no locally

identified programs that offer services specifically directed at identified gang members. To the

contrary, the adoption of "zero tolerance" policies by many social- and youth-service agencies

that prohibit access to the agencies by gang members leave gang members without access to

services readily available to non-gang members. Although evidence-based best practice measures

have indicated that gang populations require extensive support in every risk domain (Decker &

Curry, 2000; Howell, 2003b), there is limited, if any, access to programs and services that offer

the high level of support that is required to assist in this difficult transition. Moreover, assuming

that gang members constitute a high risk group of offenders, and most descriptive studies of gang

members routinely describe them as such (e.g., Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon & Tremblay, 2002;

Spergel, 1995), this practice is contrary to the risk principle, specifically, that higher risk

offenders should be targeted for more, not less, programs and services that are designed to address their criminogenic needs (Andrews & Bonta, 2003).

The implementation of a program like MultiSystemic Therapy would serve to provide gang members with the high level of clinical supervision and intense therapy that has been identified as pertinent to developing a healthy lifestyle trajectory. Evidence of its cost effectiveness (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 1998) and empirically based success rates (US Department of Justice, 2004) support the implementation of this much-needed service for gang members. In addition, MultiSystemic Therapy would provide the high levels of supervision and monitoring of gang members that are traditionally provided by law enforcement and court workers, but would do so in a non-threatening manner. These therapists would also in a position to provide increased levels of support to social institutions, such as schools, to help facilitate successful transitions within various community settings.

> *Recommendation 4: Multidimensional approaches to therapy and supervision, like MultiSystemic Therapy, should be adopted as an intensive treatment option for the reintegration of gang members back into the community.*

Community mobilization is critical for developing effective responses to gang reduction strategies. The process requires collaborative relationships between the many individuals and community organizations that have diverse interests and expertise and can contribute to understanding and addressing their local gang problem. As observed by Spergel and Grossman (1997), the first and most fundamental realization about gangs must be that "No single agency, community group, discipline, or approach alone is sufficient to successfully address a complex problem as gang crime" (p. 469).

This literature review indicates that the most effective way to tackle a community's gang problem is by drawing from the full range of resources available in the community. A possible first step to attract the attention of a community is the creation of a 'steering committee' or 'gang task force unit' that could initiate the process of raising the consciousness of the community about its gang problem and mobilize key groups that have the resources needed to deal with the gang problem (OJJDP, 2002). From a practical standpoint, mobilizing the community involves working with numerous criminal justice system agencies (police, probation/parole, courts, judges, prosecutors, corrections), schools (superintendents, principles, counselors, teachers), community-based mental and physical health services, grass-root organizations, and government.

> *Recommendation 5: Community partnerships should be created or strengthened through the creation of community 'steering committees' among key stakeholders.*

Responses to gangs must include the identification of organizations that provide or could provide any of the services needed to assist or rehabilitate gang members. According to the OJJDP (1994), the social intervention approach asserts that young gang members can be changed through social intervention steps such as counseling and social service referrals. The approach emphasizes youth outreach work with street gangs. For example, as described in the report, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America have implemented the Gang Intervention Through Targeted Outreach (GITTO) initiative in several U.S. cities. Youth are recruited into the program by direct outreach and referrals from various agencies. Once in the program, youth gain access to a variety of services involving drug treatment, tattoo removal, remedial education, life skills and job training services. Youth also gain access to family and individual counseling services and are

given the opportunity to participate in activities such as sports, field trips, shooting pool, playing

games and group meetings. Moreover, adults have the opportunity to act as mentors while

assisting recruits in many ways. This includes how to find a job or locate a service, how to handle

conflict with peers, and how to deal with school pressures. The club setting itself can also

provide youth with a place where they can feel safe.

Recommendation 6: A formalized commitment should be made by youth- and adult-serving

agencies to provide the services that are necessary for gang-involved youth and adults to effect

the disengagement process. In the event that no commitment for services can be derived from

existing agencies, alternative services should be located or developed to support the

disengagement process.

In addition, a successful exit strategy requires having the kind of meaningful economic and

social opportunities that are gained from special education and job training/placement programs.

Young people join gangs for any number of reasons including the desire or need for money (e.g.,

through shared profits from drug trafficking and other activities). But even though a gang

member might want to leave their gang, he or she might lack the social competency or skill set

that is required to make a successful transition away from the gang lifestyle. As a result, the

opportunities provision strategy focuses on the importance of education, social skills training, as

well as job training and placement. Those students who are struggling in school should receive an

enriched curriculum that provides them with basic academic and work-related problem-solving

skills (OJJDP, 1994). Youth gang members who want to leave their gang but who are not in

school may require remedial education and job apprenticeships in order to ease their transition

out of their gang.

Recommendation 7: Since successful disengagement strategies rely on providing meaningful opportunities to develop skills and competencies necessary to compete in the labor market and since denying gang members access to such programs is counterproductive to their disengagement, an effort should be made to break down the barriers to such programs for gang members and alternative programs that provide gang members with direct educational and employment opportunities should be sought.

The presence of gangs poses an on-going threat to the community and prison populations. Although suppression may be the most costly and ineffective means of addressing the root causes of gang membership (Bjerraagard, 2003), the full force of the law, through a combination of police, prosecution, and incarceration can be used to address the immediate security threats that are associated with the violence and other criminal activity of gangs. Since gang youth are often involved in criminal activity and often present a danger to the public, community protection is also a key goal. Vigorous law enforcement is required where gang members are prosecuted and removed from the community. The law enforcement-dominated approach might include the following strategies:

- Police responses can involve sweeps, "hotspot" targeting, intelligence gathering, and intensive surveillance, using geotracking systems to track the location of gangs as well as the location of existing youth services. The research suggested that targeting specific gang crimes, locations, and members is the most effective suppression tactic (OJJDP, 2000);

- Prosecution strategies can involve the formation of specialized prosecution units that follow a case through the judicial process. Vertical prosecution has been shown to

increase the prosecution and conviction rates of gang members, while reducing caseloads

and freeing-up resources for victims (OJJDP, 1994);

- Correctional responses can involve a number of approaches including the following:

   housing gang members in separate, centralized facilities (or specialized units within a

   facility); using out-of-province transfers; aggressively prosecuting gang-related activities

   in a facility; and providing psychological treatment (e.g., anger management, substance

   abuse, cognitive skills development);

- Anti-gang legislation can seek to suppress gang activity in a number of ways, such as

   increased sentencing for those who encourage a minor to commit a gang-related crime or

   increased sentencing for the commission of serious gang-related violent offences.

- Much of the suppression literature contends that common suppression strategies involving

   arrest, prosecution, imprisonment, and close supervision of gang youth are not sufficient;

   that is, suppression strategies must be connected to other community-oriented strategies.

   This could mean that local groups (e.g., community-based youth agencies) collaborate

   with criminal justice agencies in patrolling, conducting surveillance and sharing

   information to assist in the overall protection of both youth and the community.

Recommendation 8: Suppression efforts should be used only after all other prevention and

intervention strategies have failed to elicit the desired outcome, and then only in combination

with other strategies, such as disengagement, so that these other strategies may be undertaken

more effectively.

According to Correctional of Service Canada (2001), Aboriginal gangs in Canada include

800 to 1000 active members located mainly in the three Prairie provinces. In 2001, about 250

Aboriginal gang members were incarcerated in federal institutions. Gang reduction strategies

directed at Aboriginal peoples must be developed within a culturally relevant framework

(Mecredi, 2000; Nafekh, 2002). Culturally appropriate institutional programs (e.g., participation

in Aboriginal ceremonies, culture and language studies, Elder services, family violence

programs, substance abuse programs, anger management) can help Aboriginal offenders turn

their lives around. This is evidenced in a study by Heckbert and Turkington (2001), who reported

that two-thirds (65%) of the Aboriginal ex-offenders who were interviewed for the study readily

suggested that the Aboriginal programs that were offered to them in the institution were helpful

in getting their lives on track. In addition, Aboriginal programming that takes place within a

facility can help to reduce rates of institutional offences and subsequent non-violent recidivism

(Novack, 2004).

　　Of course, providing culturally relevant programs requires an intimate understanding of

Aboriginal issues and history, knowledge of legislative provisions specific to Aboriginal peoples,

an understanding of Aboriginal values and spirituality, beliefs about healing, recovery and

personal growth. It is important for service providers to be sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal

peoples and to understand the value of traditional knowledge. Therefore, programs and services

must be delivered by qualified and trained Aboriginal people (Mercredi, 2000). It is also

important to remember that Aboriginal peoples do not form a single, homogeneous group.

Specifically, different Aboriginal peoples such as First Nations, Metis, Inuit, may have unique

program needs that are not shared by other Aboriginal groups (Mileto, Trevethan, & Moore,

2004).

　　Anti-gang efforts that rely primarily on suppressive/punitive measures will be met with

resistance by Aboriginal peoples who emphasize restorative justice as opposed to retributive

principles (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 2003; Mecredi, 2000). As suggested by

Mallilin and Holden (undated), offering counseling, education, treatment, and employment

opportunities to Aboriginal gang members was deemed more acceptable to Aboriginal peoples

than punitive-based measures. Therefore, policy-makers and program developers should actively

consult with all major Aboriginal territorial, provincial and national organizations with the goal

of involving Aboriginal groups in developing policies, programs and services that are meaningful

to Aboriginal people.

Recommendation 9: Since culturally-based programs have produced positive outcomes with

Aboriginal populations and since ethnicity constitutes an important responsivity factor in

offender treatment, Aboriginal community members should be engaged at all levels of a gang

reduction strategy.

The most advantageous and well-supported approach for addressing the gang phenomenon is

the use of prevention strategies (Decker & Curry, 2000; Spergel, 1995; Esbensen, 2000; Howell,

2000). Prevention efforts that target an entire risk domain, such as family focused prevention,

have been identified as the most effective means of reducing a wide range of negative outcomes,

including the rising numbers of gangs. Despite, the overwhelming support for gang prevention

strategies, this area continues to be underserved at both the community and custody levels (John

Howard Society of Alberta, 2001). In addition, prevention efforts are the most cost efficient

means of addressing the gang problem. Therefore, targeting at-risk children and youth, as well as

first time offenders, would serve to address the issue before the onset of serious delinquency and

the behaviour problems that are likely to make a youth a candidate for recruitment into a gang.

One specific approach would be to conduct Canadian-based research to investigate the differences in developmental trajectories between active gang members and associate members. This would be useful in identifying prevention and intervention strategies that could serve to reduce the number of active hard-core gang members. As highlighted by Craig, Vitaro, Gagnon and Tremblay (2002), active gang members reported more social problems in all risk domains than peripheral gang members. This suggests that there are different developmental trajectories that exist at different levels of gang involvement. By understanding the differences associated between active and peripheral gang members, prevention and intervention strategies could more accurately reflect the unique characteristics associated with becoming a hard-core gang member.

Recommendation 10: With the growth of gangs in Canada lagging behind their proliferation in the U.S., Canada remains in a strong position to explore the best approaches to prevent the expansion of gang membership in its communities. Research should be undertaken on the growth, development, and membership of gangs in Canada and program evaluation studies should be conducted to assess the impact of prevention, suppression and correctional strategies.

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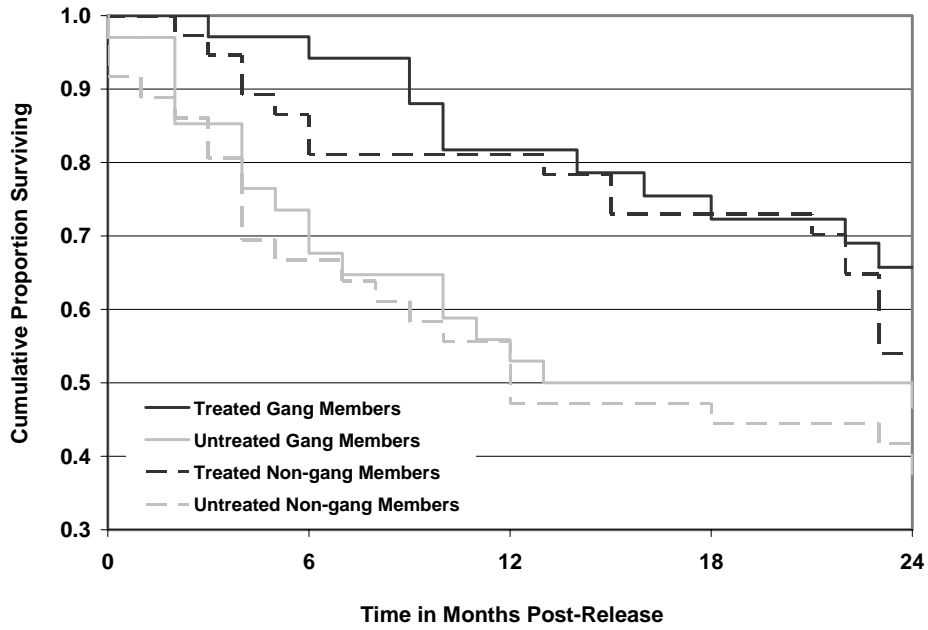
Appendix A

**Survival Rates and Comparison of Institution Offences**

Figure 1

Survival Analysis for Non-violent Recidivism by Group

Source: Di Placido, C., Simon, T., Witte, T., Gu, D., Wong, S. (undated). *Treatment of gang members can reduce recidivism and institutional misconduct*. Regional Psychiatric Centre. Saskatoon, SK., Canada. 1-30.
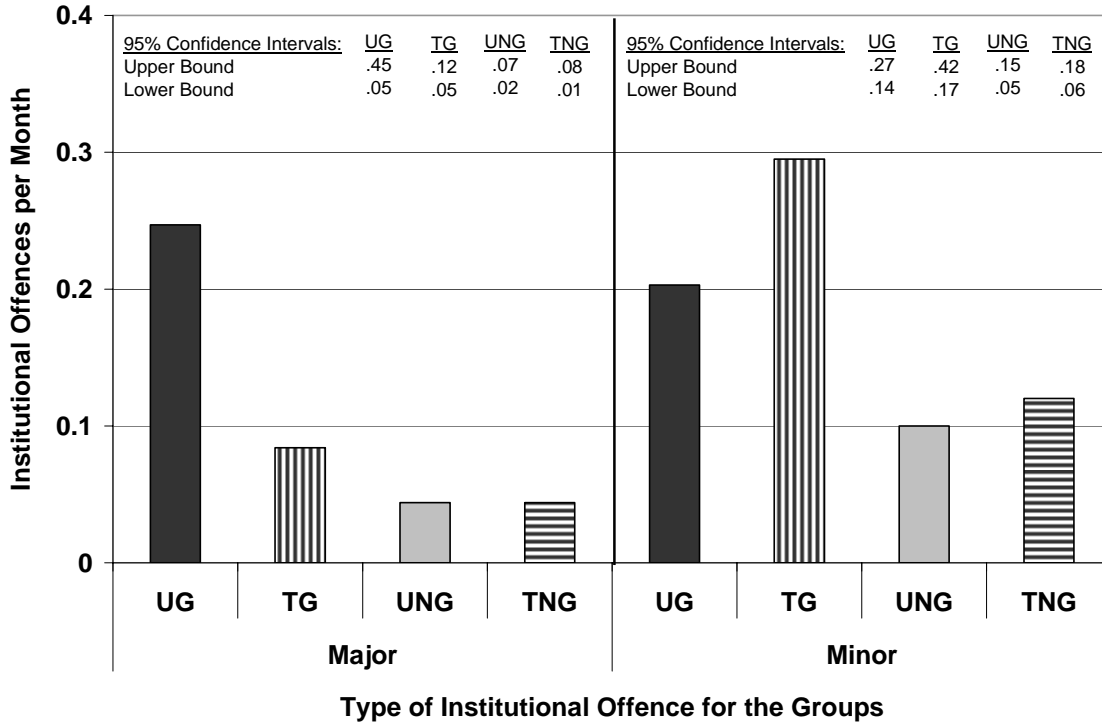
Figure 2

Survival Analysis for Violent Recidivism by Group
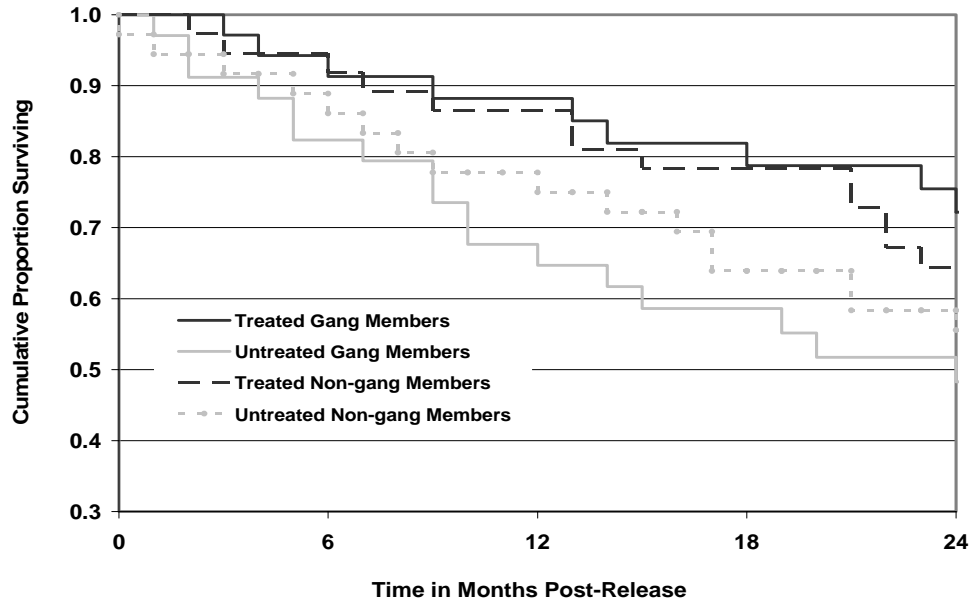
Source: Di Placido, C., Simon, T., Witte, T., Gu, D., Wong, S. (undated). *Treatment of gang members can reduce recidivism and institutional misconduct*. Regional Psychiatric Centre. Saskatoon, SK., Canada.1-30.

Figure 3

Comparison of Post-Treatment Institutional Offence Rates by Group

Source: Di Placido, C., Simon, T., Witte, T., Gu, D., Wong, S. (undated). *Treatment of gang members can reduce recidivism and institutional misconduct*. Regional Psychiatric Centre. Saskatoon, SK., Canada. 1-30.

Appendix B

Monitoring and Evaluating the Anti-Gang Planning Process

Note: The following outline is not intended to provide a thoroughly exhaustive review of the assessment process which can be very extensive and therefore beyond the range of the present report. Instead, the outline is intended to help the reader appreciate the various issues involved in conducting an assessment of the anti-gang planning process.

The anti-gang planning process may involve five inter-related stages: Preassessment, development of program goals and objectives, strategy selection, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

1. Preassessment

(a) Develop a consensus of definitions (e.g., a gang, gang member, and gang incident).

Although there is no universally accepted definition of a gang (Spergel et al., 1994), a useful starting point is the definition of street gangs used by the California Penal Code (section 186.22f):

> "any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether
> formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or
> more [specified] criminal acts, having a common name or common identifying sign or
> symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged
> in a pattern of criminal gang activity" (p. 6).

The definitional issue is important because non-consensus of definition will have practical implications. For example, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (1997) observes that "Because of the diversity of gangs and their activities, many communities have trouble defining, or even recognizing, their gang problems. Some community's deny having a problem"(p. 7). Furthermore, an ill-defined gang problem or incident may set off an over-reaction involving a heavy suppression effort where none is needed. When discussing inmates, Kassel (2003)

observes mislabeling an offender as a gang member may have such serious implications as denial

of privileges and early release options.

Consensus of definition involves knowing the types of gangs that exist in one's community,

as well as the structural/organizational characteristics of the gangs and the personal and social

characteristics of gang members. For example, some gangs are primarily status- or defensive

orientated (formed along racial or ethnic lines) that may be more or less organized and devoted to

generating money through illegal activities (as are gain-orientated gangs). As a result, the

planning team must ask and answer a number of questions about the nature and structure of a

gang: Is the gang mainly defensive- (and secondarily involved with gang-related activities

intended to generate money) or gain-orientated? Is the community's gang problem chronic or

emerging? Does the gang have a rigid hierarchical organization or is it loose-knit? How many

gangs are in the community? How many members are leaders, core or fringe members? What

activities or problems are associated with a gang?

Knowing the personal and social characteristics of gang members should be based on their

age, gender, race/ethnicity, social class, educational attainment and educational needs,

employment background and skills, training and employment needs, family structure and support

systems.

Also important is to define the scope of a gang-related incident. A gang-motivated definition

focuses on the nature of the criminal act. For example, a criminal act might be defined as a gang-

related incident when it grows out of gang motivation or interest. Thus, a robbery that reasonably

affects a gang's reputation or material interests (that is, a group interest as opposed to serving

individual needs unrelated to the group) might be classified as a gang incident (Regulus, 1993).

On the other hand, even though a gang member might commit a crime, if the crime only affects

the individual's interests but not the gang's, then the incident might not be defined as gang-related. On the other hand, in some jurisdictions, a crime may be characterized as gang-related when the suspect or offender is a gang member, regardless of gang motivation or circumstances (Regulus, 1993). Thus, any serious criminal act involving a gang member might be classified as a gang incident.

(b) Causes or factors

Strategic responses must recognize five basic risk factors associated with joining gangs:

- Individual (e.g., need for recognition and status, safety and security, power, excitement);

- Family (e.g., family poverty, child abuse or neglect, poor parenting management);

- School (low school achievement, low degree of commitment);

- Peer Groups (e.g., associating with delinquent or aggressive peers), and;

- Community (e.g., area poverty, presence of gangs in neighborhood, low levels of neighborhood attachment or integration).

The planning team must begin thinking about how the above causes or factors might connect to the goals and objectives of those prevention, disengagement, and suppression strategies that will later be proposed.

(c) Available community resources

Having a stronger sense of a gang problem and the needs that must be addressed by proposed responses, the planning team also needs to know what community agencies have the capacity to deliver certain kinds of services. For example, some agencies have demonstrated the ability to provide individual and family counseling. Others may be delivering drug and alcohol abuse counseling. Some agencies might have an ability to deliver recreational opportunities. Knowing what services a community is capable of delivering is invaluable when planning

response strategies.

2. Action Objectives

Once the nature of the gang problem (types of gangs, activities, causes) is better understood, the planning team can begin to consider the various objectives of the overall anti-gang strategy. The strategy might contain the following long-term objectives: Reduce level of gang-related crimes, encourage school attendance and achievement, increase employment levels, reduce level of substance abuse, reduce racism in schools, educate the public about the gang problem. Short-range objectives might include facilitating cooperation with government and non-government agencies and developing timelines.

3. Selecting and Implementing Strategies

Once the needs of target youth and the short- and long-term objectives of the overall anti-gang strategy are better understood, the management team can begin to select strategies appropriate for the objectives from the four categories of community mobilization, social intervention, opportunities provision, and suppression. Thus, the planning team must decide what government and non-government agencies and services must be involved in the anti-gang initiative. Different social intervention techniques and opportunity provisions to consider might include: Personal and family counseling, attitude and behaviour change, specifically discouraging gang involvement, planning educational and vocational services, crisis intervention services, recreational programs, etc. Suppression strategies might include targeting gang members and "hotspots," increasing surveillance of gang members, develop a geotracking system and specialized gang prosecution units, or aggressive prosecution of gang crimes.

Of course, strategies must be implemented. This might include establishing a Gang

Coordinating Unit, whose responsibility would be to forge a working relationship between a variety of agencies that provide educational and vocational services, individual and family counseling, crisis intervention, substance abuse programs, and recreational opportunities.

4. Monitoring and Evaluating

Information and data on needs, process, and outcome should be gathered on a regular basis in order to ensure that the best possible service is being provided to recipients. A needs assessment seeks to identify and measure the level of unmet needs within a community or sub-community. Assessing unmet needs must occur before any effective program planning can occur (Posavac & Carey, 1997). Once the systems and processes to meet these needs are in place, a process evaluation may help determine whether the planning process is proceeding as intended. Process evaluation involves checking on the assumptions made while a program is being planned. Some questions asked might be: Are staff properly carrying out the plans for the program? Is the program being developed and implemented as planned? Is the web of services, programs, agencies, and institutions properly connected into an organized system?

Eventually, program planners will want to know whether or not the program they provide has elicited positive changes in people. Evaluating the successes and failures of a program is the responsibility of an outcome evaluation. Some questions asked at this point might be: Has there been an increase in school commitment and achievement? Has there been a reduction in gang-involvement and gang-related crime? Has there been an increase in the arrest and incarceration rates of gang member? Although there are different types of evaluations, they all serve the same overarching purpose: contributing to the provision of quality services to those in need. Program evaluations provide rational information about needs, program activities, and outcomes all of which can be used to improve the quality of a service or program.