WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT OF RISK FOCUSED POLICING ON THE DRUG COURT PHILOSOPHY BY THE YEAR 2005?

Project Article

California Commission on

Peace Officer Standards and Training

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Sacramento, California

September 2000

Implementing Risk Focused Policing into the Drug Court System

Police departments across the country are taking credit for today's decline in Crime, attributing it to everything from an increased presence of officers on the street and the advent of community policing to mandatory sentencing laws. Academicians have added a number of factors such as the growing economy, stabilization of the drug trade, aging "baby boomers" and periodic truces among warring street gangs to the list of possible factors linked to declining crime.

Put aside for the moment your beliefs and arguments about what is responsible for current declining crime rates in many countries, and look toward the true crime prevention.

The prevention of crime in the 21st century needs to be much more than mandatory sentencing and more police operating in traditional roles. Likewise it needs to be much more than enhanced lighting, bars on windows, locks on doors and gated communities.

In the next eight to ten years this country will realize a 30 percent increase in its adolescent population. Based on that prediction, many criminologists believe their will be an explosion of crime.[1]

The economic cost of incarceration, as a fundamental underpinning of our traditional approach to criminality is staggering and portends to escalate dramatically if our current practices continue.

Risk and Protective-Focused Prevention

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[1] Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999

The development of Risk Focused Policing came from Risk and Protective-Focused Prevention developed by two professors of social work at the University of Washington, J. David Hawkins and Richard F. Catalano, who have developed a model to address the problem of youth behavior in community settings that focuses on prevention rather than treatment of behavior.

The Redlands Police Department took Hawkins and Catalano's approach of the public health model and further applies it to juvenile delinquency and the prevention of crime.

Researchers have identified factors that place youths at risk for problem behaviors. These include: availability of drugs and guns, low neighborhood attachment, high transitions and mobility, family conflict and management problems, lack of commitment to school, favorable attitudes toward problem behavior, and others.[2]

The Redlands Police Department along with Hawkins and Catalano are working to develop and demonstrate methods that target at-risk adults and juveniles to prevent problem behaviors by reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors.

In the Drug Court setting these factors, such as job opportunities, family counseling, parenting classes, and holding one accountable for their actions without incarceration show hope of reducing the recidivism rate, increase family re-unification, and decrease the cycle of families that are addicted to drugs.

Drug Court clients and their families can benefit from the same protective factors as others under Risk Focused Policing, by helping individuals develop resilient temperaments and positive social orientation, bonding through positive relationships and

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[2] Transforming Community Policing for the 21st Century. James R. Bueermann

imparting healthy beliefs and clear standards of behavior. These efforts can mitigate the impact of the risk factors.

Mutual Benefits of Risk Focused Policing inclusion into Drug Courts

Drug Courts traditionally have been client based and not family based, such as Risk Focused Policing. It is as if this partnership has illuminated the individual spokes that constitutes the wheel of justice, reveling to all criminal justice professionals the inner workings of their once disjoined fellow agencies. Consequently, the symbiotic nature of this proposal will produce a professional intimacy that works to unite all agencies as one, enabling the wheel of justice to rotate smoothly.

- There is a common mission. Parties work together to provide appropriate resources to the Drug Court client and his or her family.
- Judges are comprehensively informed. They get an ongoing and more reliable supply of information, which makes them more effective and less overwhelmed.
- The court has more credibility under this partnership. When a judge gives an order, every partner in the system works to ensure that the participant complies.
- Accountability compliance increases. Law enforcement and the court are accountable to the participant and his family and vice versa.
- Exposure to each other's roles opens the lines of communication and promotes mutual understanding of one functioning system. Complaints about one or the other failing are reduced, because all have a stake and a role in the outcome of the mutually agreed goals.
- The process is more expeditious, which promotes better "customer" service.
- The courts and police services are enhanced, as well as school systems. The

partnering makes them more effective and reduces the number of cases.

- This program is cost effective and provides a better alternative to incarceration: keeping participants in remission, lower recidivism, and family re-unification equals decreased crime and more time to devote to other cases and problems.
- Drug Courts and Risk Focused Policing serve as a model-in-stilling ownership, commitment and personal relationship because part of the community participates in goal setting.
- This partnership would function as a catalyst for building systems and relationships between agencies and people that help them prepare for future challenges and growth as the adolescent population explodes.

Risk Focused Policing and the Drug Courts working together have the potential to transform the policing and community paradigms of today. We now have a system that can prevent adolescent problem behavior: the police, the courts, and the communities they serve. They do not have to wait until juvenile crime, substance abuse or other community problems occur to act. With a research-based framework (Risk and Protective Focused Prevention), advanced technology, and protective factors.

We can better understand the risk factors contributing to adolescent abuse, violence, pregnancy and dropping out of school-and where these factors manifest themselves. These problems are so prominent in the family cycles of substance abuse. Accordingly, we can place our resources in the locations most likely to produce reductions in the targeted problem behavior, thereby controlling crime before it occurs.

Risk Focused Policing's emphasis on incorporating the entire community in the effort to reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors has enabled key leaders in our

community and governmental institutions to develop a common framework of theory, terms and strategic vision with which to facilitate meaningful, transforming kinds of change regarding the things that precipitate adolescent problem behavior and substance abuse.[3]

Clearly, the transition to this partnership of RFP and the Drug Court represents a substantial policing paradigm shift. However, it is becoming abundantly clear that adolescent problems such as substance abuse, violence, delinquency, teen pregnancy and dropping out of school will not be solved by any one institution acting alone. Police officials and the courts for instance, must look outward for innovative, paradigm-shifting alternatives to affect long-term reductions in crime. Their willingness to do so may well be crucial to both the long-term viability of their organizations and the safety of the communities they serve.

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[3] Transforming Community Policing for the 21st Century James R. Bueermann

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