Evidence on Community Safety Strategies & Promising Practices

Alameda County Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Action Team Meeting
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Melody Tulier, MCP, MPH, DrPH(c)
Call to Action

- Unsafe communities propel and reinforce health inequities
- Safer communities is a preventative approach to health
- Mandate for a multi-pronged approach – across public health, healthcare, social service and criminal justice systems
- Explicit identification of key outcomes and both risk and protective practices
Research Approach

- Review academic literature
  - In particular systematic reviews
- Include research from major centers
  - The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) at the U.S. Department of Justice, the Blueprints for Violence Prevention project developed by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV)
- Relevant case studies
Most Effective for Child & Youth:
Creating positive environments (classroom, families, individually)

- Study of 9 programs with 3,600 participants found childhood programs can prevent criminal involvement
- Examples of programs include:
  - Nurse-Family Partnership
  - Infant Health and Development program
  - High/Scope Perry Preschool Program
  - Good Behavior Game
  - Second Step: Student Success through Prevention Program curriculum
Most Effective for Child & Youth: Mentoring

- 46 randomized control or quasi-experimental studies of mentoring programs
- Modest effect for outcomes related to academic achievement, drug use, and aggression
- Best performing programs included advocacy, teaching and emotional support
  - Mentoring - Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
    - Reductions in alcohol and drug use and truancy in addition to increased Grade Point Average
Most Effective for Child & Youth:
Enhancing paths through therapy and academic and career opportunities

- Multisystemic Therapy – Intensive individual and family therapy on peer pressure, behavior, communication, and parenting.
  - Reductions in reported drug use, incarceration, days incarcerated, fewer arrests

- Career Academies - integrates career and academic curricula and opportunities
  - Reduced drop out rates, higher earnings, more hours worked per week
Most Effective Programs for Neighborhoods: Vibrant Neighborhoods through Physical Changes

- Effective programs/contexts which enhanced safety included:
  - Access to transit
  - Building reparations
  - Greening vacant lots
  - Reduction in alcohol outlets
Most Effective Programs for Neighborhoods:
Vibrant Neighborhoods through Problem Solving Interventions

- “Coproduction” (where reductions in crime stem from cooperation with community members), rather than a zero-tolerance policy at specific places
- Police focusing on “hot spots” = shift from policing people to places
- Weapons bans have a moderately high effect
- Firearm violence also decreased with community interventions and policing strategies
Most Effective Programs for Neighborhoods: Comprehensive community-based interventions

- Outperformed limited interventions (gun buy-back programs, information and enforcement campaigns, etc.)

- Ex. Comprehensive Intervention On Robbery and Physical Disorder:
  1. Situational prevention strategies (improved street lighting, implementation of video surveillance, dispersing groups of loiterers, performing code inspections, cleaning up vacant lots)
  2. Social service actions
     - 42 percent reduction in robbery calls in treatment areas relative to control areas
     - Physical disorder was alleviated at 13 of 17 (76.5 percent) treatment places
Most Effective Programs for Neighborhoods: Comprehensive community-based interventions

- Ex. Comprehensive intervention Reducing Homicide=
  - The Milwaukee Police Department, criminal justice entities, service providers, and communities investigate, provide emergency services, assess community factors contributing to homicide, and educate the community
  - 52 percent decrease in the monthly count of homicides in the intervention districts
Key Components of Success

- When assessing success, must consider type of program to determine the most appropriate outcome, but also scale of which it is implemented.

- Regardless of program, two major factors correlating to effectiveness are:
  1. A therapeutic intervention philosophy (such as counseling and skills training)
  2. Quality of implementation
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