CHAPTER 20

Interventions: Punishment, Diversion, and Alternative Routes to Crime Prevention

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FOLK WISDOM has long maintained that misbehaving children become adolescent delinquents and adolescent delinquents become adult criminals. Recent studies in several cultures support this wisdom.

In London, among a group of working-class males, those who had been “troublesome” between the ages of 8 and 10 were most likely to be convicted for serious delinquent acts between the ages of 10 and 13, and an early conviction (along with poor family management practices) was an efficient predictor of later convictions—up to the age of 32 years (Farrington, 1986, 1995).

In Sweden, among males in a midsize community first studied in the third grade and traced to the age of 30, those who were aggressive at age 10 and hyperactive at 13 were the most likely to commit serious crimes both as adolescents and as adults (Magnusson, Klinteberg, & Stattin, 1992).

In Finland, especially among males, those considered to be aggressive at age 10 were also considered to be aggressive at age 14 and considered themselves aggressive at age 26. In addition, the males who had earlier been considered most aggressive were likely to have been arrested both for crimes and for alcohol abuse (Fulkkinen & Pitkanen, 1993).

In St. Louis, men who reported symptoms of conduct disorders in childhood were most likely to exhibit adult antisocial behavior and alcoholism (Robins & Ratcliff, 1979).

In Massachusetts, early misbehavior in school as well as parental rejection, poor family interactions, and little monitoring predicted subsequent serious criminal behavior (McCord, 1994).
Among children reared in an urban ghetto on the South Side of Chicago, aggressiveness in the first grade (together with low school attendance, frequent spanking, leaving home at an early age, and exposure to racial discrimination) predicted arrests for violent crimes as adults (McCord & Ensminger, 1997).

The evidence seems to support conflicting intervention strategies. On the one hand, if crime is a result of personality deficiencies or faulty socialization, reformative practices would be justified. On the other hand, if crime is an outgrowth of early aggressive behavior because society blames, condemns, and aggregates aggressive children, seemingly the best strategy for prevention would avoid setting in motion self-fulfilling prophecies.

Intervention strategies of the first type include attempts to correct personality problems, change socialization practices, educate, or deter through fear. Intervention strategies of the second type include diversion programs designed to avoid having youngsters perceived by themselves or others as “bad.” Intervention strategies of both types can focus on correcting personality problems, changing socialization practices, and education. The differences between the two strategies are focused most sharply by contrasting the effects of punitive approaches with those of diversion.

This review first considers evidence about the effectiveness of punishment as a deterrent to crime. It then considers evidence about diversion as a deterrent. After showing that neither increases in punishments nor diversion programs show much promise for decreasing crime, the review considers evidence about effects of counseling programs. Again, the evidence is not encouraging. Finally, the review turns to evidence about effects of social manipulations and cognitive approaches. Preschool programs, educational and skills-training programs, and at least one postincarceration program seem to offer promising strategies for diverting the path leading from early misbehavior to crime.

**PUNISHMENT AS PREVENTION**

The view that fear of punishment reduces crime is as old as Western thought. Plato attributed to Protagoras the argument “He who desires to inflict rational punishment does not retaliate for a past wrong which cannot be undone; he has regard to the future, and is desirous that the man who is punished and he who sees him punished may be deterred from doing wrong again” (Plato, 324/1956). During the 18th century, Beccaria (1764/1963) and Bentham (1789/1988) placed this view at the foundation of criminology.

If fear of punishment deters crime, increasing sanctions should reduce criminality. So obvious had the link between pain and motivation appeared that its scientific scrutiny awaited the second half of the 20th century. Measures of the relationship between criminal activities and indices of the certainty and severity of punishment therefore offered promise for testing the role of hedonic calculations in motivations for crime.

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influence others who might commit crimes are considered to be general deterrents. As a specific deterrent, punishment is expected to prevent repetitions. When repetition occurs, theory suggests that punishment has been too lenient. This view has a deceptively obvious appearance. Yet, several studies show that severity of sanction is not monotonically related to rates of recidivism (e.g., Crowther, 1969; Glaser & Gordon, 1990; McCord, 1985; Sherman, 1992; Wolfgang, Figlio, & Sellin, 1972).

Possibly, criminals who receive long sentences learn to accept the procriminal values expressed by convicts (Glaser, 1969). Possibly, longer sentences increase resentment or decrease the socializing values that could control aggressive desires. Possibly, as the Opponent Process Theory suggests, punishments or the rewards of criminality acquire positive incentive value through time (Rosellini & Lashley, 1992; Solomon, 1980). Or, perhaps, punishments are irrelevant, serving only to endorse the image of “hardman” that many criminals find desirable (Katz, 1988).

Although severe punishments seem no more effective as crime deterrents than mild ones, the fear of pain continues to be thought of as an essential motivator. This belief may account for the widespread acceptance of a program in New Jersey that received publicity under the title Scared Straight (Heeren & Shichor, 1984; J. Miller & Hoelter, 1979). In that program, lifers dramatically showed young delinquents about life in prison. Despite its popularity, however, careful evaluations have shown the Scared Straight approach to be ineffective in preventing crime (Buchner & Chesney-Lind, 1983; R. Lewis, 1983).

If street crimes are committed by youngsters proving their courage, perhaps confirming the risks they are taking should not be expected to deter them. Perhaps, too, when people consider whether to commit a crime, they ignore potential sanctions. Although the latter hypothesis cannot be tested directly, Carroll (1982) tested it indirectly. He asked both offenders and nonoffenders to evaluate “crime opportunities” that varied in relation to amount of potential gain, severity of possible punishment, probability of gain, and probability of punishment. The results suggest that most people consider only one of the four features when evaluating opportunities. Participants in the study were, within the ranges considered, more likely to consider the amount or probability of gains than the amount or probability of punishment.

Effective punishments would seem to require that the individual at risk for punishment knows what would be punished. Studies of young children suggest that the timing of punishment as well as its regularity influence this knowledge (Bandura & Walters, 1963; Parke, 1969). The criminal justice system does not lend itself to providing clear and consistent signals for learning what society considers wrong. In an interesting discussion of this issue, Moffitt (1983) suggests that court delays, rewards for successfully executing crimes, and the sporadic nature of apprehension reduce the likelihood that legal sanctions can influence recidivism.

Fear of punishment could be ineffective in deterring further crime among criminals and nevertheless effectively reduce the probability that others would commit crimes. The Uniform Crime Reports seemed to provide a means for testing this general deterrence effect. In 1969, Tittle reported the results of an
analysis of the Uniform Crime Reports for the years 1959 to 1963. He showed strong negative correlations between crime rates and his measure of the certainty of punishment, the ratio of convictions to crime rates. Using average length of sentence to measure severity, Tittle found a weak but positive correlation between severity of sanction and crime rate. Chiricos and Waldo (1970), however, reanalyzed the data and contested the conclusion that anything other than chance relationships between crime rates and either certainty or severity had been discovered.

A rash of studies followed. Many, like the one by Antunes and Hunt (1973), used data from the Uniform Crime Reports. Antunes and Hunt defined the ratio of prison admissions to crimes known to the police in the prior year as their measure of certainty. Median length of prison sentence provided their measures of severity. Using data for 1959 to 1960 as evidence of homicide, sex crimes, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft, they tested five linear models. Models predicting crime rates from certainty of punishment supported the hypothesis that a threat of punishment reduces crime. Models based on severity, however, suggested that increases in severity of punishment increased crime rates. As possible explanations for these increases, Antunes and Hunt suggested stigmatization, alienation, and a heightened sense of injustice.

Uses of official records of crime to study the effects of punishment have three major problems. First, official crime rates do not accurately measure crime. At a minimum, the records reflect behavior of victims, police, and judges as well as the behavior of criminals (Ebbesen & Konecni, 1982; Goldkamp & Gottfredson, 1985; M. Greenberg, Wilson, & Mills, 1982; McCord, 1997a). Second, correlational approaches to causality cannot uncover essential linkages between events. The direction and size of correlations between crime rates and other social factors depend on the statistical conditions under which the correlations are assessed (Greenberg & Kessler, 1982a). Third, motivation may have no relation to the reality being measured through official statistics. Motivation depends, at least in part, on how individuals perceive their opportunities. These problems and research generated in attempts to deal with them are discussed below.

Crime and clearance rates are used to assess police and prosecutor efficiency. Not surprisingly, they are subject to manipulation for political purposes. Nagin (1978) illustrated this by comparing recorded crimes, clearances, and clearance rates before and after a change of administration in New York City. His computations show that although the number of robberies cleared increased 9% between 1965 and 1966, the clearance rate declined 58% over that period of time. Police discretion and plea bargaining add further "noise" to what might appear to be objective measures of deterrence.

Researchers have used records of fatal automobile crashes as indirect measures of drunken driving. Ross (1982) used interrupted time series analyses to detect effects of changes in laws related to driving under the influence of alcohol. He reviewed effects of such changes in Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Canada, Holland, France, New Zealand, Australia, Finland, and the United States. That review failed to show a reduction in accidents attributable to increasing the severity of punishment. In a more recent review of the effects of laws against mandatory, on which to lable (p. 59), campaigns to identify the insti.

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laws against drunk driving. Ross (1992) concluded: "The increasing popularity of mandatory jailing laws in the United States offers a broad and diverse field on which to look for deterrent impacts, and the findings are in general unfavorable" (p. 59). Increasing the perceived certainty of punishment (e.g., through campaigns to enforce laws against driving while intoxicated and checkpoints to identify the intoxicated), however, appears to have some deterrent value.

Changes in the social climate lead to changes in the law. These social changes may, of course, account for either presence or absence of apparent effects of changes in the law. Sadly, few studies have succeeded in providing adequate control groups and appropriate measures of crime (Sherman et al., 1997; Zimring, 1978). To avoid contamination among measures, one would like to manipulate threats of punishment experimentally, using random assignment or matched controls. Then, if crime could be measured accurately before and after the manipulation, it might be possible to discern effects of changes in celerity, certainty, or severity of punishment.

Among the problems encountered in learning how to prevent crime is convincing relevant authorities that they do not already know how best to handle crime. Sherman and Berk (1984), for example, planned a study of misdemeanor domestic violence in which police were expected to arrest, provide advice, or separate couples according to a random assignment. Only a few officers were willing to participate in the study and even those few sometimes failed to follow the random assignments.

Critical of correlational studies for their failure to produce reliable evidence, Cook (1977) cited "natural experiments" that tended to support a view that increasing the probability of punishment would decrease crime. Crimes decreased on New York subways during 1965 when police increased their presence. Also, crime rates remained constant in a precinct that increased police patrols by 40% while rising in the rest of the city. A 25% reduction in accidents followed closely upon advertisement of new rules regarding arrests for drunken driving embodied in the British Road Safety Act of 1967, as well.

After Chaiken (1978) discovered that police records inflated evidence of effectiveness of the patrolling policies on New York subways, Cook (1980) reviewed 11 studies based on natural experiments, concluding that they justify only modest claims. Acknowledging that identifying causal conditions in a non-experimental setting can be extremely difficult, Cook suggested that police presence may increase the likelihood for people to report crimes.

D. Greenberg and Kessler (1982b) attempted the task of detecting a causal relationship between crime rates and clearance rates, as a measure of certainty, among 98 cities with populations over 25,000 in the United States. As in other studies, simple correlations based on cross-sectional rates produced evidence that could be interpreted as support for a deterrence hypothesis. Zero-order analyses showed negative correlations between clearance rates and murder, assault, robbery, and larceny. The data also suggested that crime rates might be influenced by population density, unemployment, and poverty. Because crime rates might be affecting clearance rates, Greenberg and Kessler also calculated two- and three-year lags between crime rates and clearance rates. Consistent
effects from certainty of punishment disappeared when population, population density, unemployment, income, skewness of income, and proportion of households headed by women were taken into account.

Some of those who argue that fear of punishment will deter crime justifyably criticize the use of clearance rates to measure certainty and the use of changes in sentencing practices to measure severity. Fear depends on perceptions, and these measures of certainty and severity may be unrelated to perceived certainty or perceived severity of punishment.

Studies based on perceptions have typically asked people to estimate their likelihood for being caught and the severity of anticipated punishments. In one study, for example, students estimated penalties for two crimes: theft and smoking marijuana (Waldo & Chiricos, 1972). They also estimated the probability of arrest for these crimes. Then the students reported on their own thefts of less than $100 and their own use of marijuana. The students who reported smoking pot gave lower estimates of the likelihood for being caught and lower estimates of the likelihood for receiving a maximum penalty should they be caught. Students who reported having stolen also gave lower estimates of the likelihood for being arrested, but their estimates for penalties were not lower than those made by students who reported no thefts. The authors suggested that severity and certainty of punishment have a greater influence on crimes considered mala prohibita than on those considered mala in se.

Doubts that perceived penalties influenced use of marijuana were raised, however, when Meier and Johnson (1977) reported results from a national probability sample of adults over 18. In the national sample, those most likely to use marijuana were also likely to perceive punishment for its use as most severe. The data showed no relationship between perceived certainty of punishment and marijuana use.

Attempting to account for some of the inconsistencies and to specify more clearly how fear of punishment should influence crime, Grasmick and Bryjak (1980) explained the interactions that an adequate test would involve: Only if apprehension is viewed as a cost should one expect certainty of arrest to influence behavior, and only if arrest is perceived as reasonably likely should one expect estimates of severity to influence behavior. To test their refined propositions, Grasmick and Bryjak asked 400 randomly selected people to report whether they had participated in eight types of illegal activities: petty theft, theft of something worth at least $20, illegal gambling, intentional physical injury of another, income tax evasion, littering, illegal use of fireworks, and driving under the influence of alcohol. For each of these crimes, respondents estimated the probability that they would be arrested if they participated, estimated the chance they would be put in jail if arrested, and reported on the severity of problems that would be created by whatever punishment they considered a plausible consequence of participation.

As in the Meier and Johnson study, some of the evidence adduced by Grasmick and Bryjak seemed to show that more severe punishments increased criminal behavior: Those who gave larger estimates of the likelihood of being put in jail if arrested reported participating in more crimes. Analyses taking into account the severity of problems that would be encountered by probable punishments yielded different estimates of severity. That is, the data revealed they were lower for those who expected the greater severity of punishment.

Estimates of situations in which asking respondents to estimate the severity of punishment, use of clearance rates to measure certainty, and use of changes in sentencing practices to measure severity. Fear depends on perceptions, and these measures of certainty and severity may be unrelated to perceived certainty or perceived severity of punishment.

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punishments yielded a different picture. Among those whose scores for perceived certainty of punishment were in the highest quartile, subjective estimates of severity were significantly negatively correlated with participation. That is, the data supported the authors’ interpretation that those who believed they were likely to be arrested if they committed crimes were influenced by their estimates of the effects of probable punishments. And, except for those who reported little anticipated inconvenience from the plausible outcome of arrest, criminal behavior appeared to be influenced by estimates of the certainty of punishment.

Estimates of the likelihood for punishment have been based on hypothetical situations in which respondents are asked to assume they have broken the law. Jensen and Stitt (1982) added a dimension to understanding such estimates by asking respondents to report the likelihood that they would commit certain types of crimes. High school students reported their past misbehavior, their probable future misbehavior, and the probabilities of punitive responses under hypothetical conditions of misbehavior. With prior misbehavior controlled statistically, perceived risk of punitive response was related to the students’ hypothetical choice to use marijuana, to become drunk, to use more serious drugs, to truant, to participate in shoplifting, to commit vandalism, and to participate in burglary.

These studies of deterrence based on perceived penalties shared a bias that attributed reported behavior to expressed beliefs. Yet none of them could show whether the respondents’ behavior had influenced their beliefs about punishment or whether their beliefs about punishment had influenced their behavior. Longitudinal studies could shed light on the direction of impact.

Reasoning that prior experience would affect estimates of punishment, Paternoster, Saltzman, Chiricos, and Waldo (1982a; Paternoster, Saltzman, Waldo, & Chiricos, 1982b) collected data from 300 college students at two interviews. During each interview, the students reported whether they had done something worth less than $10 and whether they had used marijuana or hashish during the prior year. Also during each interview, the students estimated the likelihood of being caught, being arrested, and being convicted for these acts. The investigators considered correlations between time-1 reports of behavior and time-2 perceptions of punishment to be experiential effects; they considered negative correlations between time-1 perceptions of punishment and time-2 reports of behavior to be deterrent effects. Correlations of the first type were stronger than those of the second. The authors concluded that experience influences judgments about punishment and that perceptions of punishment do not influence theft or drug use.

Bishop (1984), too, used a longitudinal design to study effects of perceived sanctions. More than 2,000 high school students responded to two questionnaires asking about participation in 13 types of crimes and about three types of constraints. As measures of the three types of constraints, students were asked to estimate the risk of legal sanctions, the risk of losing their friends if they got into trouble with the law, and the degree to which they believed in the rightness of the law. Bishop analyzed responses to the constraint questions from the first questionnaire as predictors of responses to the delinquent-involvement
questions in the second questionnaire. Using multivariable linear regression, she found that all three types of constraints appeared to reduce criminality. Bishop interpreted the data as showing deterrent effects, but because she did not control for prior delinquency, the evidence does not distinguish experiential from deterrent effects.

Although not without problems, the studies based on subjective evaluations of penalties vindicated some of the assumptions of those utilitarians who believe that behavior is a consequence of attempts to maximize self-interest. These studies showed that a rational model of the relationship between perceived pain and intentional choice could give an account of some forms of criminal behavior. Yet, these studies failed to link actual punishments with motivations for crime. Unless subjective estimates of severity and certainty could be shown to be systematically related to objectively defined severity and certainty, a deterrent model of intervention would have no practical value.

In one of the few experimental studies of effects of punishment, Buikhuisen (1974) included measures of perception and an objective measure of illegal activity. Buikhuisen arranged to have an enforcement campaign against driving dangerous vehicles in one town. As a control, he arranged to have no enforcement campaign in a similar town. Using before and after measures based on random selection of automobiles, Buikhuisen discovered increased compliance with the law only in the town that had introduced the campaign of enforcement. There, a majority of both those who did and those who did not comply with the law were aware of the police campaign and knew of potential penalties. Those who disregarded the law were among the group most likely to appear in courts for other offences. They were younger, poorer, and less well-educated.

DIVERSION AS PREVENTION

During the first half of the 20th century, sociologists began to notice how frequently behavior could be conceived as the playing of roles assigned by associates (Cooley, 1902/1956; Mead, 1918; Tannenbaum, 1938; Thomas, 1923). This way of portraying behavior became known as Interaction Theory or Labeling Theory. To many, it seemed reasonable that actions of the criminal justice system provided a role that could lead to further criminal behavior (Agnew, 1974; Becker, 1963; Erikson, 1962; Garfinkel, 1956; Kitsuse, 1962; Lemert, 1951; Schur, 1971). To avoid increasing crime through expectations imposed when a youngster was adjudicated delinquent, courts were urged to avoid using a stigmatizing label and police departments instituted a variety of “crime prevention” strategies that were designed to give children another chance.

Until recently, the belief that the probability for further delinquency was reduced by diverting youngsters away from the courts seemed too obvious to require evaluation. Indirectly, however, some of the studies that evaluated the deterrence model had also tested the theory that the criminal justice system increases crime through imposing expectations for misbehavior. Positive correlation between severity of sanction and crime rates could be interpreted as evidence of such a labeling process. Klein (1974) tested the theory more directly through a justice system.

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In 1969, the proportions of arrested youths released by the police in Los Angeles County ranged from 2% to 82% in different departments. Klein selected the eight departments with the highest and the five departments with the lowest "diversion" rates. These 13 departments had roughly comparable recording procedures. Overall comparisons failed to show a pattern related to differences in diversion rates. When the delinquents were divided into first offenders and multiple offenders, however, a pattern emerged. For first offenders, those arrested in districts with high diversion rates were less likely to commit additional crimes during the two-year follow-up period. For multiple offenders, those arrested in districts with low diversion rates were less likely to commit additional crimes during the two-year follow-up period. On this evidence, it would be reasonable to conclude that a labeling effect is more likely to influence first-time offenders.

To test the generality of such a conclusion, McCord (1985) examined the criminal careers of 197 men who, as juveniles, had committed minor crimes that brought them to the attention of the police. In 1938, the police established a Crime Prevention Bureau to deflect juveniles from the courts. The Crime Prevention Bureau had processed and then released 163 of the juveniles at the time of their first encounter with the police; only 34 had been sent to court for a misdemeanor first offense. Comparison of those sent to court with those diverted through the Crime Prevention Bureau indicated neither racial nor social class bias. About half of both groups were from broken homes. Although both groups ranged in age from 7 to 17, those sent to court tended to be the older boys.

More than 30 years later, McCord gathered criminal records for the men. These records did not support the hypothesis that a court appearance would increase crime. Over half of the boys who had been "given a break" through the Crime Prevention Bureau (51%) were subsequently convicted for at least one Index crime. Fewer than a quarter (23%) of the 26 boys who had been convicted and fined, released, or placed on probation subsequently were convicted for any Index crimes. Of the 8 sent to reform school, 3 (38%) were later convicted for Index crimes. The diversion project had failed to decrease criminality. But the data also offered no support for a deterrence model.

Similar results were found when Glaser and Gordon (1990) retraced 1,121 people sentenced in 1984 for assault, burglary, drug crimes, driving under the influence, theft, and indecent exposure. They compared outcomes for those given probation only, probation with financial penalties, probation with jail time, and probation with jail time as well as financial penalties. For all the crimes studied, probation with fines resulted in fewer rearrests and revocations of probation than did probation alone or with jail time. This remained true even after taking into account effects of prior arrests, prior convictions, and prior drug problems.

A movement to avoid labeling by diverting youths from the juvenile courts became popular in the United States after World War II. Studies of these projects show that many of their clients would never have appeared on court dockets.
Typically, these studies report that the diversion programs tend to bring new groups of people into the criminal justice system. The Children and Young Persons’ Act of 1969 reflected concern over possible effects from court processing in Great Britain. This act introduced cautioning, a formal warning procedure believed to be less serious and less stigmatizing than court processing. Farrington and Bennett (1981) studied effects of the new law by examining files of juveniles who had been younger than 15 when first arrested. Their sample included 202 who had been sent to court and 705 who had been issued a police caution. Disposition appeared to have been strongly influenced by age and seriousness of the offense. Even after statistically controlling effects of sex, age, race, social class, area, and seriousness of crime, those who received police cautions were less likely than those sent to court to have been rearrested during a 34-month follow-up period. Farrington and Bennett scrutinized the records of 47 cases to learn more about the delinquents. These records included information about family size, attitudes of the parents and the juvenile, academic performance, and school behavior. Analyses indicated that the juvenile’s attitude predicted both disposition and rearrest. After statistically controlling effects of these attitudes, rearrest rates following cautions appeared to be greater than those following court appearance.

Probably the most coherent study of how labeling affects juveniles has come from the West and Farrington (1977) study of 411 youths reared in London. These youngsters had been interviewed about delinquent acts at ages 14–15, 16–17, and 18–19. When the youths turned 21, West and Farrington reviewed their court records. Farrington (1977) coordinated the court records with the self-reports of delinquency for the 383 youths who had been interviewed all three times. As measured through their own reports of crime, in agreement with the hypothesis of negative labeling effects, the convicted boys had actually committed more crimes.

To discover how the label of delinquent affected self-reported delinquency, Farrington matched 27 boys who had been first convicted between the ages of 14 and 16 with 27 boys who reported similar crimes at the age of 14 but had not been convicted. At age 16, the convicted group admitted to committing 84 more crimes. Their reports at age 16 included 251 crimes to which they had confessed at age 14 and an additional 65 crimes committed prior to age 14. At age 16, the unconvicted group confessed to 232 crimes they had previously acknowledged and added 43 to the earlier confessions. Because 41 of the 84 crimes that differentiated their self-reports at the age of 16 could be attributed to reporting errors, Farrington concluded that about half the effects of convictions were due to reduced concealment and half to increased criminal behavior.

The longitudinal study of London youths shows that effects of encounters with the court depend on the nature of these encounters. Delinquency reports of those first convicted between the ages of 18 and 21 showed practically no increase among those who had been fined as a penalty; among those who had been discharged without penalty, however, the self-reports showed marked increases (Farrington, Osborn, & West, 1978).

Data from several perspectives suggest that neither increasing the severity of punishment nor avoiding labeling youngsters has a beneficial influence on
criminal behavior. In sum, the evidence has failed to support either punitive or diversionary strategies.

COUNSELING AS PREVENTION

Intervention programs have been designed with knowledge that delinquents typically have rejecting, aggressive parents (Dinitz, Scarpitti, & Reckless, 1962; Farrington, 1978; Glueck & Glueck, 1950; Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli, & Huesmann, 1996; Hirschi, 1969; D. Lewis, Shanok, Pincus, & Glaser, 1979; McCord, 1979, 1991; Pulkkinen, 1983; Rutter, 1978). Not unreasonably, therefore, some programs have tried to provide substitutes for parental care.

One such project, The Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study, randomly assigned boys to either a treatment or a control group. The program included both “difficult” and “average” youngsters between the ages of 5 and 13. From 1939 to 1945, social workers tutored and counseled 253 boys from 232 families, assisting the boys and their families in a variety of ways (Powers & Witmer, 1951). In 1975, when the boys had become middle-aged men, their names and pseudonyms were checked through vital statistics, court and mental hospital records, and centers for treatment of alcoholism. When interviewed, many of the men in the treatment program recalled their counselors with affection and a majority believed the program had helped them lead better lives. Yet, when compared with their matched controls who had not received help through the program, those in the treatment group fared badly; they were more likely to have serious criminal records; to have been diagnosed manic-depressive, schizophrenic, or alcoholic; and to have died at a young age (McCord, 1978, 1992).

Other counseling programs, too, seem to have had detrimental effects. Adults who had received clinic treatment as children in St. Louis (Cass & Thomas, 1979) and in Hawaii (Werner & Smith, 1977) were less well-adjusted than their untreated peers. Discouragingly, Gersten, Langner, and Simcha-Fagan (1979) discovered that delinquents in New York were more likely to sustain delinquent activities if they had been referred for treatment. Because those referred for treatment had not been randomly selected, results of most of the negative evaluations have been treated as anomalies.

A handful of carefully designed evaluations of counseling programs suggest that such results may not be accidental. Many courts in the United States have volunteer programs to provide adult guidance to probationers. One of these, the Volunteers in Probation program, agreed to an evaluation in which consenting probationers were randomly assigned to the volunteer program or to a control group (Berger, Crowley, Gold, Gray, & Arnold, 1975). Two out of three (randomly selected) probationers received the special services of group counseling, individual counseling, and tutoring given by the volunteers. Those in the control group received the ordinary services of the court. Evaluations occurred after 6 months and again after 12 months.

Both self-reports and official records showed that participation in the program had iatrogenic effects. Those assigned to the control group and those who had been assigned to the volunteer program but had not participated in it decreased their rates of crime. Those who participated in the volunteer program,
however, increased the number of crimes they reported and their records showed increases in the number of their police contacts.

Because of apparent deficiencies in the social skills of delinquents, many schools developed programs designed to increase self-confidence by giving students practice in discussing issues with well-adjusted peers. Typically, adult leaders guide the discussions. The programs have been called Positive Peer Culture, Peer Culture Development, and Peer Group Counseling as well as Guided Group Interaction. Gottfredson (1987) arranged to have students in public elementary and high schools randomly selected for inclusion in either the treatment or the control group of a Guided Group Interaction program. Overall, the results for elementary school children showed no effects. For the high school students, however, the Guided Group Interaction program tended to increase misbehavior and delinquency.

A spate of therapies have been devised in the attempt to reduce antisocial behavior. Reality therapy (Glasser, 1965) seems to be best known among them. Kaltenbach and Gazda (1975) claimed success for the approach in group practice; Yochelson and Samenow (1977) claimed success with hard-core criminals. Unfortunately, because the approach has not yet been used in a well-controlled study, conclusions about its effectiveness appear premature.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANIPULATIONS AS PREVENTION

Use of random assignment has permitted evaluation of several programs designed to affect criminality through manipulating the environment of people at high risk for crime. In one program (Reckless & Dinitz, 1972), educational environments were manipulated to provide "vulnerable" boys with programs designed to improve their self-esteem. Sixth-grade teachers in Columbus Ohio nominated "good" and "bad" boys. The latter were randomly assigned either to experimental or control classes in the seventh grade. The program lasted for three years. The experimental group received special help in reading; their discipline was based on "mutual respect"; and special lessons using role model techniques were introduced to teach them how to act. Ratings made by their teachers at the end of ninth grade suggested that the experimental boys were more cooperative, comfortable, honest, and less delinquent. However, no differences were found in the proportions who had police contacts or in the proportions committing serious Index offenses. Nor were there differences in school performance, dropout rates, or school attendance.

Boys in the Ohio experiment designed by Reckless and Dinitz (1972) had been assigned to homogeneous groups of "bad" boys for their experimental treatment. Perhaps this feature of the experiment accounted for failure to show benefits—at least by objective measures. Klein (1971) discovered that programs providing gang members with group activities tended to be particularly damaging for 12- to 15-year-olds. Program activities increased cohesiveness of the gangs but also increased delinquency of the members. So clear was the evidence that Klein concluded that "there is good reason to doubt the desirability of continuing such programs or mounting new ones" (p. 119).
Dishion and Andrews (1995) used a random-assignment design to evaluate the impact of teaching techniques of family management and of focusing on peer relations and interactions. For the study, 83 boys and 75 girls, 10 to 14 years old, participated in 12 weekly 90-minute sessions focusing on their families, the teen interaction, both, or a self-directed change program. The two interventions with teen focus increased smoking and aggressive types of behavior (as measured by their teachers). Furthermore, my own research analyzing the source of harmful effects from the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study indicates that aggregating misbehaving children may be particularly risky during early adolescence (McCord, 1997b).

The Department of Labor sponsored a program testing effects of altering the social environment (Lenihan, 1977). A randomly selected group of men were given $60 a week for 13 weeks after release from prison. The men eligible for this program had committed property crimes, were under 45 years of age, had spent less than three months on work release, had less than $400 in savings, and were not first-time offenders. After release, those who received money were more likely to help pay for household expenses and to help support their families. The money appeared to delay return to theft. Through the two years of the study, fewer men who received the $780 had been arrested for theft. The beneficial effects increased with increasing age and were most dramatic among the poorest risks; those discharged without parole and poorly educated. Reports by participants suggest that the money enabled them to buy clothes, helped them feel better, and allowed them time to find a decent job. Timing of the help may have been important to its effectiveness. Evidence from a pilot project conducted by A. Miller and Ohlin (1985) suggests that experiences after release have a greater impact on recidivism than either background or program experiences.

One of the most promising approaches to intervention combined educating mothers in skills related to child rearing with intellectual stimulation of their young children. In 1962, a project known both as High Scope and as The Perry Preschool Program began with a random assignment of children from low-income neighborhoods to either a preschool or a no-preschool group (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, & Weikart, 1984). Home visits where parents were taught how to augment the school program were included in the interventions for the preschool group. The two groups have been traced both in school and as young adults. Those in the preschool program were more satisfied with their experiences in school and more likely to have graduated from high school. A higher proportion of those who attended preschool were employed and a higher proportion reported that they were self-supporting at age 19. The preschool program, including home visits, seems also to have reduced crime up to the age of 32: those in the program had significantly fewer arrests as juveniles and as adults. Criminal records showed that the intervention group had fewer adult felony arrests and that they were less likely to have been arrested more than four times (Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993).

Similar benefits have been shown when parent training has been combined with child training in early primary school (McCord, Tremblay, Vitaro, & Desmarais-Gervais, 1994; Tremblay, Pagani-Kurtz, Masse, Vitaro, & Pihl, 1995; Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1997) and in the homes of 12- to 17-year-old
delinquents (Borduin, Henggeler, Hanson, & Pruitt, 1995). Tremblay and his colleagues worked with Francophone boys in Montreal whose kindergarten teachers had identified them as among the most disruptive. A randomly selected group was assigned to a two-year treatment program in which the parents received training in family management and their children were assisted in improving their social skills. At the time of treatment, the boys were between the ages of 7 and 9. Treatment was evaluated against two control groups: one, a placebo, received attention through extensive biannual evaluations; the other received only whatever interventions were already available in the community. By age 15, the boys who had received treatment were more likely than those in either control group to be in regular school classes and less likely to have committed crimes. The program evaluated by Borduin and his colleagues attempted to empower parents by giving them skills to help address their adolescent’s problems. Two hundred delinquents between the ages of 12 and 17 were randomly assigned to the treatment group or to a control group that was given individual counseling. A follow-up four years later indicated that the empowerment program was more successful: fewer had been arrested and they were less likely to have committed violent crimes.

A related approach that promises to have multiple benefits in terms of health, school performance, and employment as well as delinquency and crime has focused on intervention through home visits that help to educate mothers regarding child health and development while also providing educational stimulation to the infants. Although the children are still young, analyses have shown benefits in terms of behavior (Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov, Liaw, & Spiker, 1993).

An advantage of training parents in skills that improve their socializing practices is that the training may be beneficial to subsequent offspring. It is wise to remember, however, that many parent training programs fail. It is difficult to get parents who need help to participate in the programs and, even when they do participate, many return to their old habits after short periods of time. These difficulties seem to have been overcome by some promising programs that include home visits from the time the mother is pregnant through the first two years of the infant’s life (Olds, Henderson, Tatelbaum, & Chamberlin, 1986; Olds & Kitzmann, 1990; Rauh, Achenbach, Nurcombe, Howell, & Teti, 1988).

COGNITIVE APPROACHES AS PREVENTION

Several short-term evaluations have provided evidence that teaching children special skills, even without parent training, may be a valuable tool to reducing their criminality. Guerra and Slaby (1990) taught incarcerated violent offenders that aggression was often counterproductive. As compared with both a group tutored in reading and mathematics who received the same amount of attention and a no-attention control, those who received the training regarding the counterproductivity of aggression were rated by their supervisors (who were blind regarding the treatment condition of those they rated) as less aggressive, impulsive, and inflexible.
Hudley and Graham (1993) taught unpopular, aggressive children how to recognize the intentions of others so that they would be less likely to attribute the intention to injure. They used role-playing techniques with nonaggressive, popular peers as teachers. Boys in fourth to sixth grades were assigned to one of three groups: the treatment group; a group having the same number of meetings, but these devoted to nonsocial problems; or a no-attention control group. Treatment lasted six weeks, with meetings two times a week. A month after treatment ended, an experimental session showed that the boys taught to recognize nonaggressive cues among their peers were less likely to complain about or criticize a partner whose actions frustrated them. Additionally, the teachers were more likely to recognize reduced aggressiveness among the boys trained to recognize nonaggressive cues.

Kazdin and colleagues (Kazdin, Esveldt-Dawson, French, & Unis, 1987) found that teaching problem-solving skills to hospitalized antisocial children between the ages of 7 and 13 was more effective in reducing dysfunctional behavior than was helping such children express themselves or than providing them with an equivalent amount of attention through games and talking. Although differences continued for a year posttreatment, few of the children maintained behavior within a normal range of problems.

Experiments have shown that training children to view television critically can reduce imitative aggression (Eron, 1986), and that academic tutoring can have social consequences for low-achieving children (Coie & Krehbiel, 1984). The results of experiments with such children indicate, however, that not all training in social skills is beneficial. In short, much remains to be learned regarding the types of training most likely to be beneficial in reducing aggressive, antisocial behavior.

**SUMMARY**

The evidence suggests that when a delinquent fails to receive penalties supporting the law, delinquency is likely to continue. Yet, the evidence does not show that serious penalties have more potent effects than mild penalties. It seems reasonable to interpret the receipt of penalties as a type of information from which youths can learn how society expects them to act.

Although a labeling effect seems to account for some criminal behavior, diversion programs have had only minor success. A recent intervention that may be particularly appropriate for reducing recidivism among juveniles has been developed from the work of Braithwaite (1989). Known both as reintegrative shaming and restorative justice, the program seeks to find a way for the guilty person to admit wrongdoing and yet to avoid being an outcast. The program is being evaluated through an experimental design in Canberra, Australia (Sherman & Strang, 1997).

Obviously, too little is known about how to produce socialized behavior. Counseling programs have typically been ineffective or damaging. Family training may be helpful, though keeping families in programs long enough to change parental behavior is a problem. Some, but not all, educational programs have had beneficial results. Those that seem effective should be replicated. New
programs, designed for appropriate evaluation, should be started. Perhaps as a consequence, it will become possible to regard intervention as crime prevention.

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