Shaping the Conversation for Safer Communities

Crime Prevention Week - November 1st to 7th, 2015

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

Community Engagement

Assessing the Local Situation

> The first and most important step in any crime prevention initiative is to fully understand the problem to be addressed in order to deliver a targeted, effective response.

- What are the crime and safety issues in the community?
- What segment(s) of the population needs to be reached?
- What are the main characteristics of this population (age, sex, race, ethnic group, occupation, criminal history, possible motives)?
- Are there times (of day, month, year) and/ or specific areas (to or from school, around the local store, etc.) where the problematic behaviours occur more often?
- Was there anything distinctive in the way they were committed (e.g., home invasions)?
- What factors create opportunity (e.g., poor lighting around homes, neglected or unstable neighbourhoods, lack of supervision for children and teens)?
- Do people feel safe? What makes them feel unsafe? What would make them feel safer?
- What do local residents think the community's crime problems are?
- Do community members see this issue as a priority? Is this what they are most concerned about?
- What impact has it had on residents and the community?
- Are other programs and/or services in the community already addressing the problem?

Evidence Based Crime Prevention

- The pathway to chronic offending can begin as early as 7 or 8 years old, when risk factors associated with crime begin to emerge. Focused interventions, delivered at the right time to the right people, can have an impact on these risk factors.
- Research addressing criminogenic risk factors has established the intervention principles and methods that create the foundation for evidence-based crime prevention. Although implementing evidence-based crime prevention may require more effort, **communities will become safer over time, with offending and victimization—and associated costs—decreasing.**

Assessing the potential participants of a crime prevention initiative:

- Are potential participants able to fully participate?
- Are the location and time of the activities appropriate for potential participants?
- Does the initiative need to be adapted in order to meet specific characteristics or needs of the population?

Intervening with people who do not need the intervention can have negative repercussions!

A lack of understanding of local crime and safety issues and context can result in the selection of the wrong type of prevention activity. This may result in failure and could have counter-productive outcomes.

Community Support

- When people are consulted about problems, they are more likely to participate in solving them. A crime prevention initiative is more likely to succeed if it has wide community support and participation, and if you encourage the community to share in your successes.

> It is recommended that:
> - the community be the focal point for effective crime prevention;
> - strategies for preventing crime be sensitive to local needs; and
> - community-based approaches to preventing or reducing crime be developed and delivered through inter-governmental and community-level partnerships.

Give good reason to be involved

- Highlight the benefits of the crime prevention initiative and how time invested can help the community
- Give everyone a chance to contribute, and create a sense of ownership
- Present the project in an interesting way and make events action-oriented

Communicate clearly, regularly, and frequently with the community through newsletters, event bulletins, fact sheets, media advisories, posters, flyers, street banners, reader boards, and even T shirts.

Be sensitive to language difference and use translators and interpreters if necessary.

Community Crime Prevention

Two additional ways that the community can become engaged in preventing or reducing crime:

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

- A safe community can encourage youth to design and paint murals instead of graffiti and involve local businesses in clean-up campaigns. Graffiti and litter suggest that residents do not care about their community, and this can increase the fear of crime. It can lead to criminal acts if people are reluctant to go out.

Community Action Programs

- Community action programs include Block Watch, Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Stoppers and Citizens on Patrol/Citizens Crime Watch where community members watch out for each other and report suspicious activities. They also include community policing.

For more information:

Safe Communities Kit and Community Crime Prevention Guide

www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/publications/index.htm

Guide for Selecting an Effective Crime Prevention Program

www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/gd-slctng-ffctv-prgrm/index-eng.aspx

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