Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VI

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

9. Analyze violence, crime, and vandalism in schools.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 11:
Community Policing and Drugs

Chapter 12:
Bringing Youths into Community Policing

Unit Lesson

There are many correlations to crime. Correlations of crime include factors such as poverty, unemployment, mental illness, IQ, and substance abuse. Many studies have been devoted to looking specifically at the connection between drugs and crime. Youth throughout the entire United States are surveyed annually to assess their initial and continued exposure to drugs through self, friends, and/or family use. Data describing drug use across age groups report alarming trends. For example, more than half of young adults will have tried at least one illicit drug by their late 20s with more than 10% reporting trying illicit drugs prior to the eighth grade and using illicit drugs on a daily basis (Miller, Hess, & Orthmann, 2014).

In the United States, the illicit use of marijuana has been an ongoing debate. Many argue that marijuana is a drug that has various recreational and medicinal uses and that it should not be considered illicit. Others have argued that because of marijuana's ability to impair the senses and to cause cognitive degeneration over time, it should be kept as an illicit drugs. One of the major concerns about marijuana use is that marijuana is said to be a *gateway drug* that opens the door for harsher drug abuse and addiction.

Critics of this gateway theory point to national trends, which suggest that most young adults try illicit drugs in their teens as a form of experimentation and do not continue that drug use beyond their young adult years. The debates surrounding marijuana become even more interesting, as many states have begun to legalize the medicinal and recreational use of marijuana, but the federal government continues to view marijuana as an illicit drug. In addition, synthetic forms of marijuana have become more readily available to youth, increasing their likelihood to use the illicit drug.

In addition to marijuana, there are other drugs that are widely used by youth. The use of methamphetamines has continued to grow among youth ages 12 and older. The use of methamphetamine is of grave concern because of the chemicals used to produce the drug and the volatility of the laboratories in which the drugs are produced. The federal government has attempted to combat the use of methamphetamines through harsh restrictions on the sale of the chemicals used to manufacture methamphetamine as well as the development of environmentally sound cleanup procedures for identified methamphetamine labs.

There are also forms of drug use that are only illegal for some groups because of the age restrictions placed on the use of those substances. Underage drinking is a phenomenon that exists because the legal limit for alcohol consumption is 21 years of age. Research has demonstrated that many youth have tried alcohol while under the age of 21. The most concerning type of underage drinking is binge drinking in which a person consumes five or more consecutive drinks in one setting.

The use of prescription drugs by teens is also a concern. Research has found that there is an increased use of prescription drugs over "street drugs". The most commonly used prescription drugs have an effect on the central nervous system such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives. Prescription drugs are often used at rave parties to alter attendees' sensory perceptions which results in increased energy levels. Related concerns include: the increased potential for drug overdoses and other medical hazards, violence resulting from drug trafficking, noise pollution, potential for driving under the influence and traffic control, and parking congestion issues related to rave attendance.

In response to the aforementioned drug issues, a "war on drugs" was initiated. Over time, it became clear that such a strategy was insufficient to fully address the drug problem in the United States. Thus, a national drug control strategy was introduced. This strategy focuses on prevention of drug use (e.g., education programs and life skills training), treatment of drug users (e.g., substance abuse treatment and drug courts), and the disruption of the drug trade through the use of law enforcement strategies (e.g., drug raids, surveillance, undercover assignments, arresting dealers, arresting drug users, and improving intelligence).

Citizens have also been asked to assist police in combating street-level narcotics sales. Crime prevention through environmental design strategies have been used in public housing to address drug problems. In addition, collaborative efforts between criminal justice agencies, public housing authorities, citizens in the community, businesses, and other agencies have been established to empower residents, improve the physical environment, and develop comprehensive and coordinated community approaches to addressing the drug problem.

The involvement of youth in community policing is integral to the success of community policing strategies. Youth are more likely to be victims of crime than they are to be perpetrators of crime. Thus, it is important for youth to have relationships with law enforcement that allow them to assist in protecting and serving the community. Some people may remember when you were told in elementary school that if you needed help you would go to someone in uniform like a police officer. The expectation was that the officer would be your friend and provide you the help that you needed. That notion of the friendly police officer is not one that is often held by youth in the first quarter of the 21st century. Instead, many youth have negative perceptions about law enforcement in their community.

In order for community policing to be effective, law enforcement must build relationships with youth that destroy the negative perceptions and allow for the development of positive relationships. To that end, there have been various national strategies, state-sponsored programs, citywide initiatives, and best practices developed that allow youth to positively interact with law enforcement in their community.

Youth involvement must be understood in the context of the risk and protective factors that influence their victimization and delinquency. Many federal initiatives have been enacted to address the risk and protective factors that influence victimization and delinquency of youth. Such federal initiatives include: the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, America's Promise Alliance, Project Safe Childhood, and the Safe Start Initiative.

Addressing the risk and protective factors that impact the delinquency and victimization of youth also requires parental involvement. Families serve as the foundation for the development of communities. When the true sense of family does not exist, it is difficult for youth to understand the importance of working with others to secure and protect the community. In addition, when parents are not actively involved in the life of youth, their ability to mitigate risk factors and enhance protective factors that would keep youth from being victimized and/or engaging in deviance is significantly reduced or eliminated.

Schools must also be proactive in providing resources that assist youth in reducing the risk factors and enhancing the protective factors (e.g., school resource officers). Schools are in many ways mini communities in which youth interact on an almost daily basis. Unfortunately, youth are exposed to a moderate amount of risk factors in their school communities. Many youth indicate that they have been victims of crime and exposed to violence in schools (e.g. vandalism, break-ins, bullying, and school shootings). In response to these risk factors, school administrators, law enforcement, and other community partners have worked to develop the following:

- after-school programs,
- strategic processes for creating safe schools,
- educational programs about nonviolence,

- mediation and anger management training for school personnel,
- clear policies that define excepted behavior and the consequences related to nonconformity, and
- crisis plans.

Reference

Miller, L. S., Hess, K. M., & Orthmann, C. H. (2014). *Community corrections: Partnerships for problem solving* (7th ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Cengage Learning.

Suggested Reading

To learn more about the topics found this unit, you must first log into the myCSU Student Portal and access the Academic OneFile or ProQuest Criminal Justice databases found in the CSU Online Library.

The articles listed below highlight community policing strategies associated with drug control and youth involvement in community policing:

Forman, J., Jr. (2004). Community policing and youth as assets. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology, 95*(1), 1-48.

Goetz, B., & Mitchell, R. (2003). Community-building and reintegrative approaches to community policing: The case of drug control. *Social Justice, 30*(1), 222-247.

Parent, R. (2011, December 31). Policing in Canada: A strategic community-based approach towards injected illicit drugs. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology, 3*(4).

Pettersson, T. (2014). Complaints as opportunity for change in encounters between youths and police officers. *Social Inclusion, 2*(3), 102-112.

Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

The Youth and Community Policing

Research has demonstrated that the success of community policing strategies is dependent upon the involvement of key community stakeholders, which include youths. The form of youth in the community policing process has been approached using a variety of strategies. How do law enforcement agencies in your community include youths in community policing strategies? To help you answer this question complete the following tasks:

1. Visit the websites of your city and/or county law enforcement agencies, and review their websites to learn information about community policing strategies that incorporate youths from your community.
2. Contact your city and/or county law enforcement agencies and find out what youth-inspired community policing programs they offer.
3. Arrange an informational interview with one of the law enforcement personnel (e.g., public relations officer) at your city and/or county law enforcement agencies to ask questions about youth-inspired community policing initiatives that are utilized in the community. (The interview does not have to be face-to-face, telephone and email are acceptable formats.)
4. Once you complete one or more of the aforementioned tasks take some time to evaluate:
   a. The extent to which what you learned from the textbook supports and/or refutes what you learned from your research about the youth-inspired community policing programs offer by your local law enforcement agency.
   b. Any suggestions for changes to existing youth-inspired community policing programming and/or recommendations for the development of new youth-inspired community policing programming that you like your local law enforcement agency to consider.

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to complete or submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.