

# Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders

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# The Need For a Comprehensive Strategy

- Poor targeting of serious, violent & chronic offenders
- Little use of risk and needs assessments
- Over-use of detention and incarceration
- Use of ineffective programs
- Reduced juvenile justice budgets

# Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders

*Problem Behavior > Noncriminal Misbehavior > Delinquency > Serious, Violent, and Chronic Offending*

## Prevention

*Target Population: At-Risk Youth*

Programs for  
All Youth

>

Programs for Youth at  
Greatest Risk

>

Immediate  
Intervention

>

Intermediate  
Sanctions

>

Community  
Confinement

>

Training  
Schools

>

Aftercare

Preventing youth from becoming delinquent by focusing prevention programs on at-risk youth

## Graduated Sanctions

*Target Population: Delinquent Youth*

Improving the juvenile justice system response to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives

# The Comprehensive Strategy Continuum

It is structured around six levels of parallel program interventions and sanctions, moving from least to most restrictive :

# The Comprehensive Strategy Continuum, cont'd

- Intervention programs tailored to identified risk and need factors, if appropriate, for first-time minor delinquent offenders provided under minimal sanctions
- Intervention programs tailored to identified risk and need factors for nonserious repeat offenders and moderately serious first-time offenders provided under intermediate sanctions

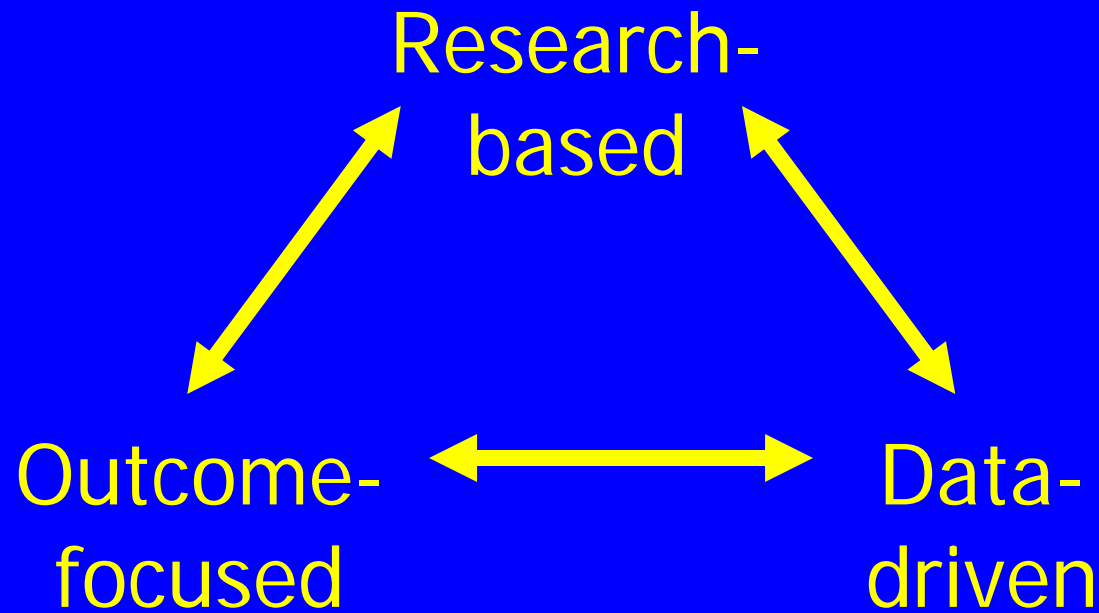
# The Comprehensive Strategy Continuum, cont'd

- Intensive intervention programs tailored to identified risk and need factors for first-time serious or violent offenders provided under stringent sanctions
- Multicomponent intensive intervention programs in secure correctional facilities for the most serious, violent, and chronic offenders

# The Comprehensive Strategy Continuum, cont'd

- Post-release supervision and transitional aftercare programs for offenders released from residential and correctional facilities.

# Comprehensive Strategy Mantra





# Key Principles of the Comprehensive Strategy

We must

- (a) strengthen the family in its primary responsibility to instill moral values and provide guidance and support to children;
- (b) support “core” social institutions, schools, religious institutions, and community organizations in their roles of developing capable, mature, and responsible youth;

## Key principles, cont'd

- (c) promote delinquency prevention as the most cost-effective approach to reducing juvenile delinquency; and
- (d) intervene immediately and effectively when delinquent behavior occurs.

# Accountability

- Graduated sanctions are often overused to promote “accountability,” a euphemism for punishment. A popular form is “zero tolerance” which, without services, is not likely to reduce delinquency and could have the opposite effect.
- Shock incarceration, such as “scared straight,” boot camps and other deterrence strategies may actually increase recidivism.
- Punitive detention may wipe out the positive effects of treatment programs.

## Accountability, cont'd.

Sanctions provide only the context for service delivery; it is the therapeutic service within the setting that has the actual power to produce change in offenders.

This is because services reduce risk & increase protective factors in the developmental domains: family, school, peer group, individual, and community.

## Accountability, cont'd.

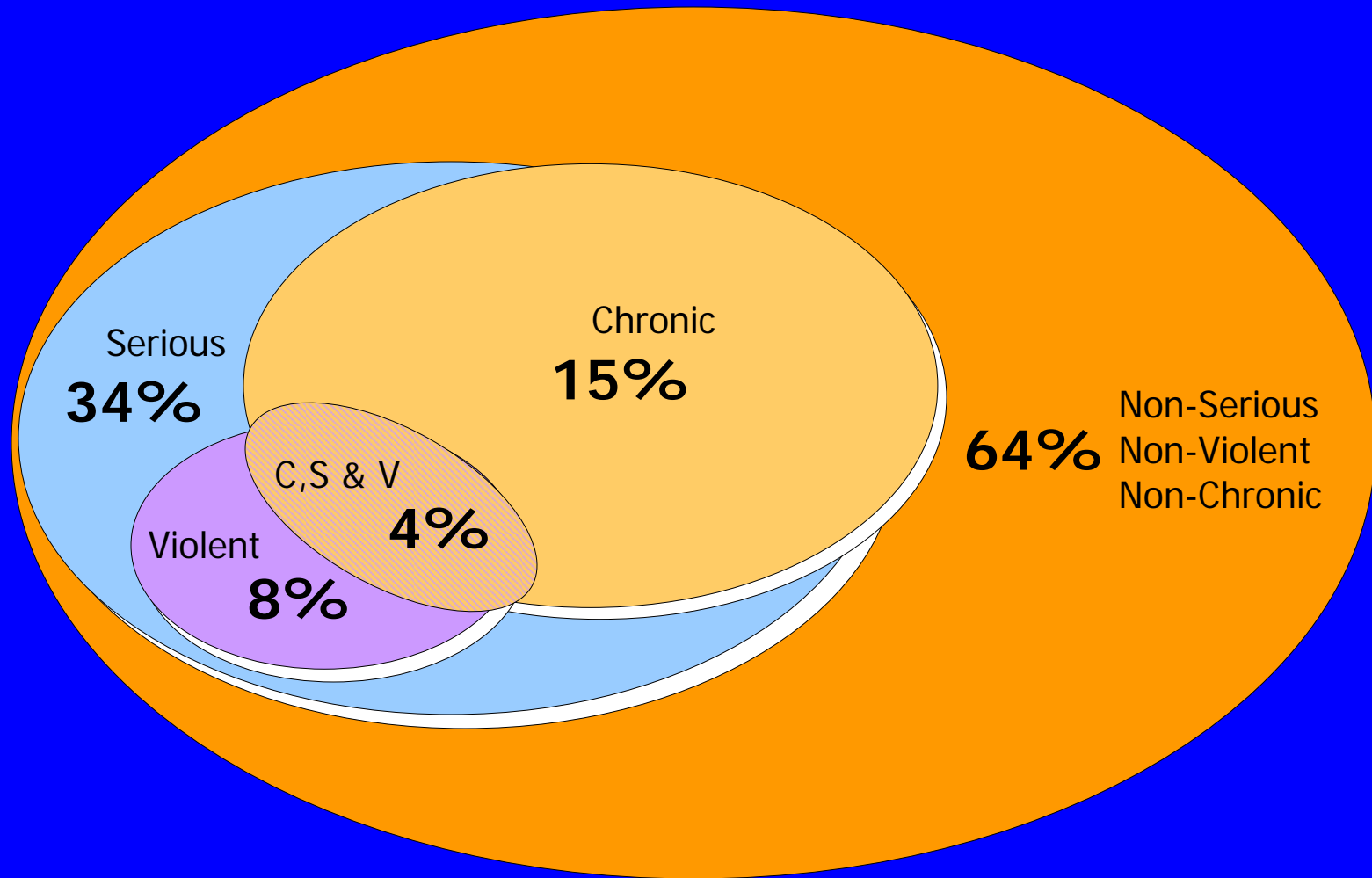
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# The Scope of the Delinquency Problem

Because only a small fraction of adjudicated youths are serious, violent, and chronic offenders (see next slide), the delinquency problem is quite manageable using the Comprehensive Strategy framework and tools.

# *Juvenile Offender Court Careers*



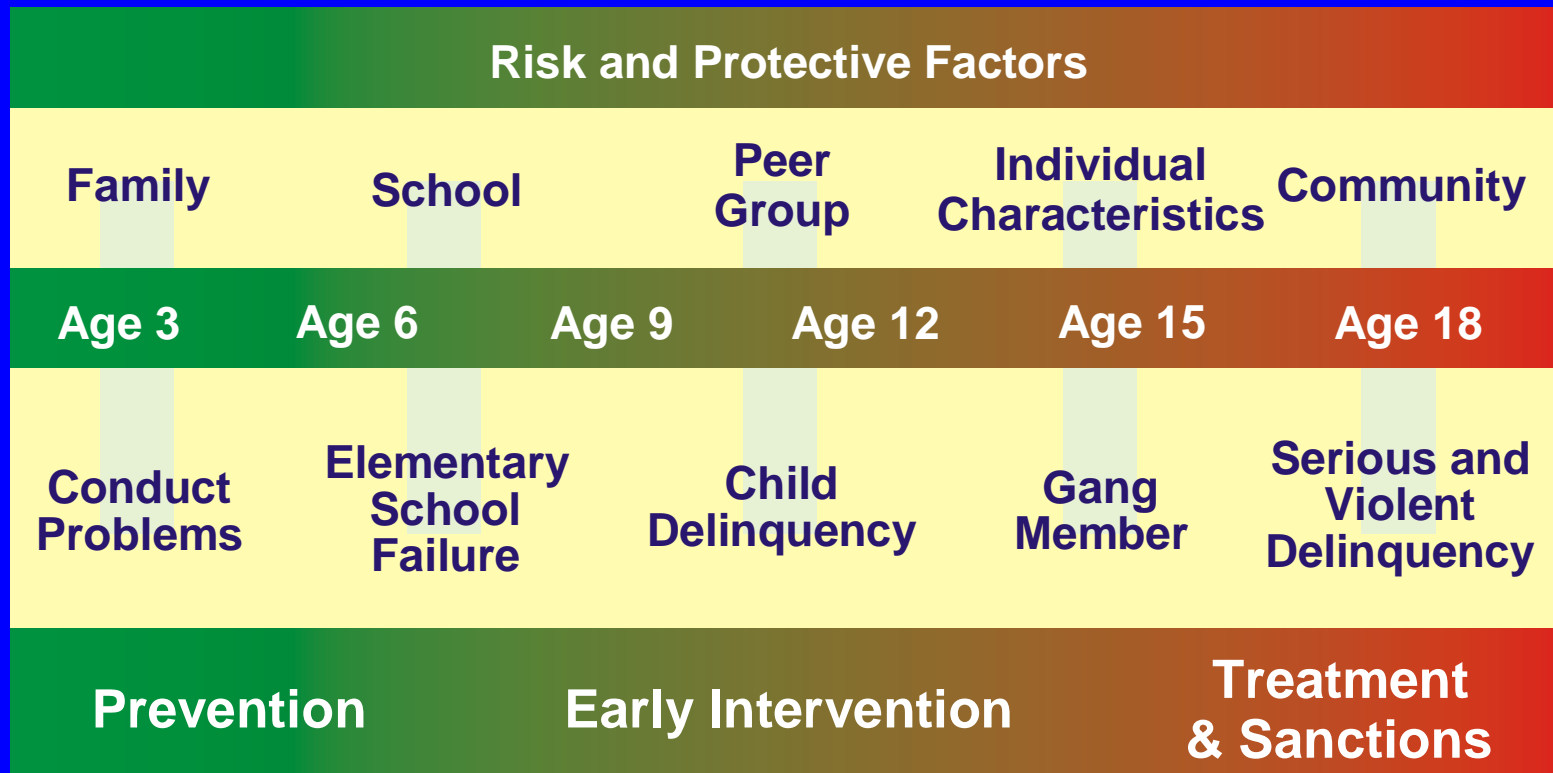
Source: Snyder (1998) Maricopa Co. Study (N=151,209)

# The Prevention Component

- Use of a research-based risk and protection framework within the public health model helps structure the delinquency prevention enterprise in communities.
- Prevention programs oriented toward reducing risk and enhancing protective factors can have beneficial effects for ameliorating a range of adverse outcomes.



# Prevention and Intervention Windows of Opportunity



Source: Howell (2003)

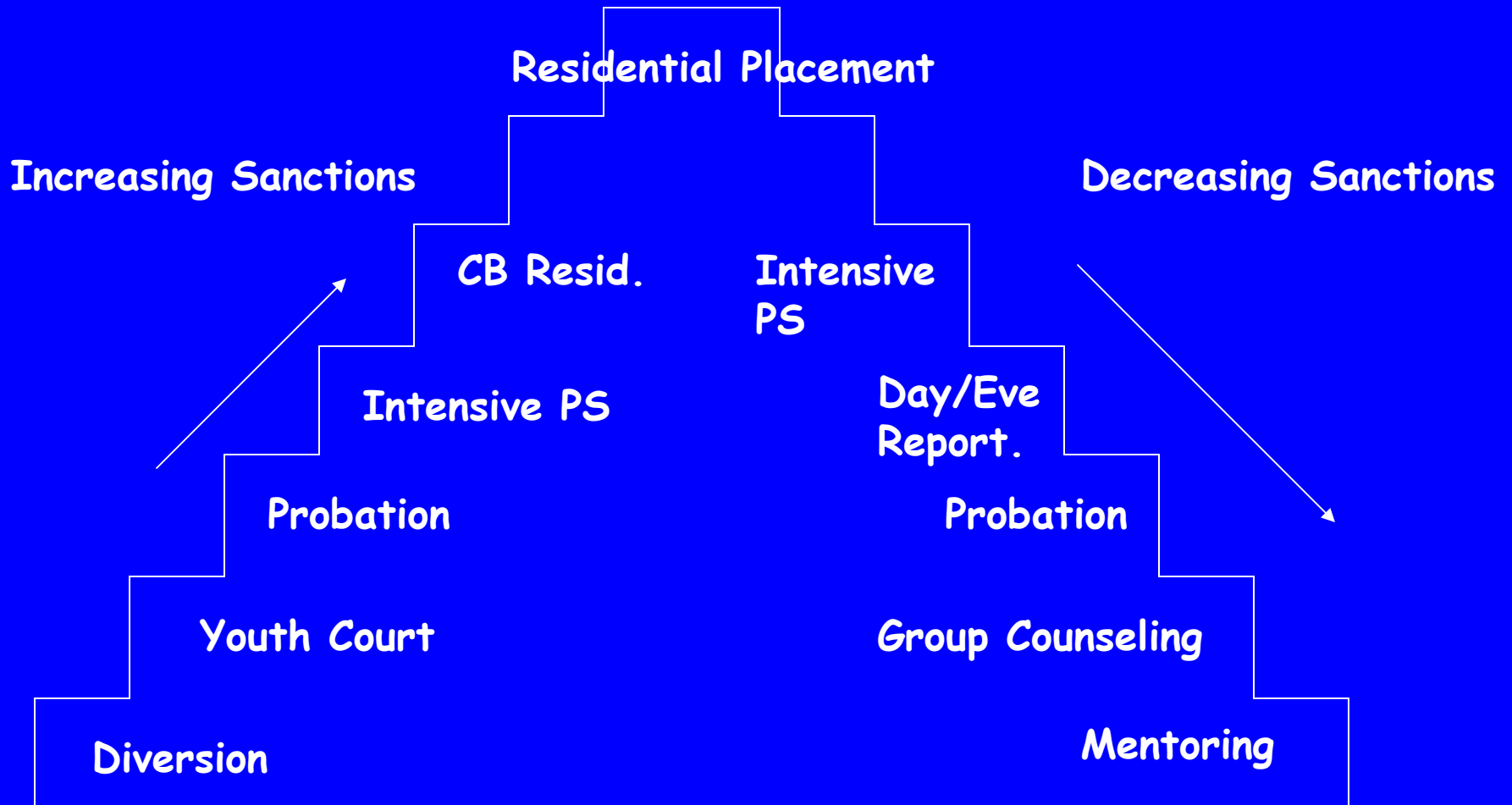
# Risk Factors for Delinquency

- Family
- School
- Peers
- Community
- Individual

# The Graduated Sanctions Component

The graduated sanctions component of the Comprehensive Strategy consists of the last four levels of the overall framework in which treatment programs are combined with levels of supervision or control appropriate to the nature of juveniles' offenses and their risk for reoffending.

# A Graduated Sanctions Model



# Structured Decision Making Tools

- Detention screening instruments
- Intake screening instruments
- Research-based risk assessments
- Objective assessments of youth and family strengths and needs
- A placement matrix for recommending court dispositions
- Standardized case plans
- Routine monitoring and assessment of case plan implementation

# Benefits of Using the Comprehensive Strategy

- Increased prevention of delinquency
- Enhanced responsiveness from the juvenile justice system
- Greater accountability on the part of youth
- Decreased costs of juvenile corrections
- A more responsible juvenile justice system

# Comprehensive Strategy Mantra

- The right service for the right kid at the right time