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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Graduated Sanctions</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Target Population: At-Risk Youth</em></td>
<td><em>Target Population: Delinquent Youth</em></td>
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| 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
- Improving the juvenile justice system response to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives

Source: Wilson & Howell, 1993
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

Research-based

Outcome-focused

Data-driven
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 “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.
Non-Serious Non-Violent Non-Chronic 64%

Serious 34%

C,S & V 4%

Violent 8%

Chronic 15%

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk and Protective Factors</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Peer Group</th>
<th>Individual Characteristics</th>
<th>Community</th>
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<td>Age 3</td>
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<td>Conduct Problems</td>
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<td>Serious and Violent Delinquency</td>
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### Prevention

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<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Early Intervention</th>
<th>Treatment &amp; Sanctions</th>
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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

Increasing Sanctions
- Diversion
- Youth Court
- Probation
- CB Resid.
- Intensive PS
- Residential Placement

Decreasing Sanctions
- Mentoring
- Group Counseling
- Day/Eve Report.
- Intensive PS
- Probation
- Residential Placement
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