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**ACHIEVING CRIME PREVENTION:
REDUCING CRIME AND INCREASING SECURITY
IN AN INCLUSIVE CANADA**

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Introduction

Crime prevention strategies and programs appear to be widely accepted as key components in the attempt to assure greater safety and security for Canadians and their communities. However, the apparent consensus over the benefits of prevention may be more illusory than we think – the dream of a more effective prevention strategy faces two major challenges.

The first lies at the level of ideals and values. There is a tension between the pursuit of safety and security, which are widely seen as a good thing, and the costs associated with this pursuit both financially and in terms of the limits to civil liberties and the workings of an open society. The threat of terrorist attacks, concerns over the violence perpetrated by gangs and organized crime, and the everyday issues of the security of our homes and our personal safety have made us more aware of how fragile social life can be. Arguably, it has also contributed to a situation where we are willing to sacrifice privacy and individual rights in order to get things under control. An example of this is found in our increasing willingness to be monitored and supervised by such technologies as closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) or bio-coded passports. We also seem to be increasingly willing to view limits on the free movement of people through such techniques as no-go lists and airport controls as an acceptable price to pay to achieve greater safety for all.

This tension is reflected in the specific area of prevention. The basic idea behind crime prevention is that crime and victimization are not random. We are increasingly aware of the risks that increase the probability of these events, and of the protective factors that insulate certain people or situations from them. The challenge lies in deciding how to use this predictive knowledge while still respecting the ideal that we are innocent until proven guilty, an ideal that is conceptually at odds with the thrust of prevention. Prevention requires proactive interventions, but such interventions must respect the rights of the individual (including the right to informed consent to treatment) and avoid the risks associated with labelling the people who receive these interventions or of negatively characterizing their home communities.

The second challenge is more pragmatic and organizational. Prevention is but one of many strategic options within the criminal justice system and, as such, it must compete

against others for support and resources. In spite of the apparent consensus over the idea of prevention, there are a number of sources of resistance to shifting priorities and resources in this direction. Some of these reflect political and populist fads and fashions over how to deal with crime, others the interests of organization and workers. There can even be resistance from the individuals and the communities that prevention initiatives are designed to help. The bottom line is that it is difficult to ask an “old” set of institutions to do “new” work. The result, all too often, is that prevention becomes little more than a gloss, one that covers other agendas and other interests.

The rest of this paper will attempt to address some of the issues emerging from these two challenges. The first section will focus on a discussion of what we mean by the concept of crime prevention. This will begin with a brief discussion of the vision and goals of a prevention strategy, and will be followed by sections on prevention as a strategy and a set of program options, and on approaches to the design and delivery of prevention initiatives. The second section will shift the focus to a discussion of the sources of resistance to change in the area of crime prevention, and on how these are influencing progress in this area. The paper will conclude with a brief discussion of some research options that might help us move forward in our attempt to implement prevention in a manner that contributes to greater safety and security while protecting civil liberties and the desire of communities to participate in an open and meaningful manner.

1. What do we mean by crime prevention?

Three main questions will be addressed in this section:

1. What is the vision that underlies crime prevention, and what are the goals of a prevention strategy?
2. What are the strategic options for achieving these goals? What are the favoured implementation mechanisms for the design and delivery of prevention initiatives?

I would argue that that the **guiding vision** is that of individual and community well-being, and that criminal justice initiatives are primarily designed to contribute to these ends by assuring the safety and security dimensions of that well-being. There are two major threats on this level. The first is the actual incidence of victimization, and the physical, financial, emotional and secondary costs associated with such experiences. The second refers to the perception of insecurity and risk, and to the impact that fear of crime can have on lifestyle choices and overall quality of life. Reductions in these objective (actual incidence) and subjective (fear and insecurity) elements are the goals of prevention initiatives, and they are the measurable impacts against which we can assess the effectiveness and efficiency of various types of initiatives.

Prevention initiatives strive to achieve these impacts by achieving one of three intermediate objectives. The first is to reduce the number of offenders. Given that it is estimated that as few as 5 to 10% of offenders commit half to two thirds of all offences, prevention initiatives should emphasize the reduction in the number of chronic or

persistent offenders. The second tactic is to reduce the number of victims, again with an emphasis on those who are repeat victims (as few as 10% of victims can account for almost half of all victimizations). Finally, prevention can strive to reduce the level of fear and the sense of insecurity in an attempt to both improve the quality of life in a community and, hopefully, to contribute to greater use and surveillance of public spaces and improved capacity for social control.

The next question is to identify the **range of strategic and program options** for achieving any or all of these objectives. I have elsewhere proposed a typology to classify the options (Hastings, 1996 – see table 1)

Table 1: A Crime Prevention Typology

R. Hastings, 1996

<i>Levels of Intervention</i>			
Primary	7	8	9
Secondary	4	5	6
Tertiary	1	2	3
	Offender	Situation	Victim
	<i>Elements of Crime Event</i>		

The typology is organized around two basic issues or axes. The first focuses on the objective of an intervention. There are three options:

1. The first focuses on actual or potential offenders – the objective here can be either to reduce the motivation to commit an offence or to increase the levels of self-control an individual can exercise in the face of opportunity or temptation.
2. The second is to focus on situations – the objective here is usually to reduce the opportunity or increase the effort or risk involved in committing an offence.
3. The third is to focus on victims – the objective here is to reduce the risk or vulnerability of certain individuals or groups, or to at least limit the degree of harm they suffer when victimized.

The second axis focuses on the issue of when to intervene. The model here borrows from the public health sector (see for eg. Brantingham and Faust, 1976)

1. The first is to wait until a criminal incident occurs and to react after the fact – this is called tertiary prevention, and is the domain of the traditional criminal justice system. Given the focus of this paper, little discussion of this approach is included here.
2. The second option is to identify individuals or situations that are at higher risk, and to intervene in order to reduce this risk or to control its effects – this is called secondary prevention (boxes 4, 5 and 6 in the typology). The basic strategic options include a relatively long term focus on reducing the risk factors or improving the level of protective factors associated with the risk of offending (box 4) or victimization (box 6). Alternatively, one can also focus on the situations where crime is more probable, and implement the kinds of interventions usually associated with situational crime prevention.
3. The third option is to recognize that the distribution of the risk factors associated with crime and victimization is not random. Rather, it is associated with the results of larger policy decisions that are not directly related to crime and justice but that effect them indirectly. The focus here is primarily on wider social arrangements, especially on systemic inequality and exclusion and its impacts – this is called primary prevention (boxes 7, 8 and 9 in the typology).

There is a significant and impressive amount of evaluation literature that both describes the types of measures used in each case and assesses their impact. There is not the time or space to review this work here.¹ However, it is interesting to note that, despite the apparent consensus over the value of crime prevention, and despite the wealth of research that demonstrates that prevention initiatives can be effective and efficient alternatives, the overwhelming majority of the time and energy of the criminal justice system continues to be invested in reactive and offender-based strategies (box 1 of the typology).

The point here is not so much to minimize the value and necessity of reactive measures – there is no doubt they are necessary to control or incapacitate certain offenders, and they serve a denunciatory and educational function. They may also be effective in deterring certain offenders. However, there is little reason to suspect that a one size fits all approach will be any more successful here than in any other policy sector. It would be

¹ Readers interested in an overview of this work are invited to visit the web site of the Institute for the Prevention of Crime (the University of Ottawa) at www.prevention-crime.ca

useful to know a great deal more about what types of sanctions are the most effective and efficient for different types of actual or potential offenders. The reality is that even the best and most effective reactive interventions have relatively little impact on the overall distribution of the risk and protective factors associated with offending, victimization and fear and insecurity. The problem here is that the mandate of most criminal justice institutions, and the resources at their disposal, impose real and significant limits on what they can accomplish in this area.

The final question shifts our attention to the problem of the design and **implementation of prevention initiatives**, and to the question of the distribution of the responsibility and accountability for work in this area. As indicated above, there are significant limits to what the justice system, on its own, can do to reduce risk factors or increase resiliency in individuals or communities. For example, the police cannot intervene with a child who is under twelve and require the child or its family to undergo an intervention. In the same way, the courts can only prosecute individuals, not communities or social systems, and there is not much they can do to address systemic inequality and the sense of exclusion.

The question then is who will do the “new” work of crime prevention, especially as regards the types of programs and initiatives associated with the secondary and primary levels of intervention. The practical experience of crime prevention in Canada over the last twenty years has not been encouraging. Two tendencies emerge. The first is that while governments at all orders are eager to embrace the idea of prevention, they are much more reluctant to commit to the types and levels of investments of time and resources necessary to make prevention work, and there is little apparent willingness to be held accountable for the failure to reduce crime and victimization. The fiscal climate and political moods tend to favour more short term and punitive responses (see Garland 2001), and prevention has been more of a promise than a practice in this regard. The private sector has shown some willingness to get involved, but only in the sectors of prevention where there is a likelihood of generating profits. This means that the private sector has focused primarily on helping build or manage justice initiatives (such as prisons, especially in the United States), or on private security and situational prevention methods. The irony here is that the interests of the private sector require it to “sell” an aware of risk and the fear of crime in order to generate larger audiences for its goods and services. The end result might actually be an exacerbation of levels of fear and insecurity, and a reinforcement of stereotypes about certain types of individuals or groups.

In this context, the default answer to the question of who could deliver prevention has largely been to assign (download?) this responsibility to the community. In practice, this usually means local or municipal orders of government in some cases, or non-governmental or volunteer organizations in others. There has been an enormous volume of research and considerable debate over the desire and the capacities of communities to organize effectively and efficiently for prevention,² and not all of it is encouraging. The bottom line appears to be that communities do not always have the capacity (knowledge,

² See Hastings and Jamieson, 2001 for an overview of some of this work. Readers might also consult Crawford, 1995; and Hastings, 2005 and 2007 for some critical perspective on this issue.

skills and resources) they require to build partnerships and develop, implement and sustain initiatives. The result is that crime prevention initiatives are too often reduced to what communities are willing and able to implement, rather than being based on the best knowledge and research available. The consequence is that many projects fail to have the desired impact because of implementation failure.

This is hardly a secret, and considerable work has been done to address this issue and explore better ways of doing business. International organization such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, and influential national organizations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Canadian Council on Social Development among many others have contributed greatly to this issue. The emerging consensus is that we will only be able to deliver on the promise of prevention if we develop, implement and sustain comprehensive, integrated and evidence-based approaches to solving problems related to offending, victimization and fear and insecurity (National Working Group on Crime Prevention, 2007:18-22).

The National Working Group on Crime Prevention goes on to argue that there are five key requirements for success in this area (2007:23-29 – a summary of the argument is included in chart form on pages 16-17). These include:

1. Fostering and supporting effective planning and collaborative problem-solving partnerships – this includes a definition of success (including measurable indicators of success/failure and data requirements), as well as an action plan and the creation of responsibility centres at all orders of government.
2. Targeting and concentrating resources on the areas or sectors where need is greatest.
3. Developing and mobilizing community capacity – this includes technical assistance, training, and access to evaluations of previous initiatives and the lessons to be learned from them.
4. Ensuring that levels of investment are sufficient to develop, implement and sustain comprehensive evidence-based initiatives.
5. Eliciting public support and participation in prevention initiatives.

Yet, in spite of the apparent agreement over these requirements, we still are not moving forward as quickly or as effectively as we might hope. This realization leads us to an examination of the possible sources of resistance to change.

2. What are we waiting for? The problem of resistance to change

The notion of resistance to change often evokes an image of an almost irrational reluctance to explore new ways of doing things – I would argue that this image has little to do with the problem we face. A more productive approach is to start by asking what it is we are actually organized to do, and by recognizing that sometimes we inadvertently work in a manner that seriously compromises our ability to achieve certain of our stated objectives. The reality is that few organizations or, for that matter, few workers work in a simple one-dimensional way. On the contrary, most pursue complex and often competing goals, and there is seldom enough time, energy or resources to reach them all. It is not a question of bad faith – rather, we need a hard-nosed look at where the roadblocks are, and a pragmatic assessment of how each of these can be overcome.

This section draws on previous work on resistance to prevention in the youth justice sector (Hastings, 2006). It will briefly discuss four such “roadblocks” or sources of resistance to change:

1. the current social context and the types of ideas that it favours;
2. The interests of the organizations involved;
3. The interests of the workers who deliver programs and services; and
4. The interests of the individuals and the communities who are the supposed clients of prevention initiatives.

2.1 The climate for change

Ideas compete within a wider socio-economic, political and ideological context. This context can either facilitate the emergence of some types of ideas or be a source of resistance to others. A recent example of an analysis guided by this insight is Garland’s work on *The Culture of Social Control* (2001).

Garland’s argument is that, by the 1960s, “penal welfarism” dominated criminal justice policy and practice. This approach incorporates two competing theoretical views. The first is the correctionalist perspective; it reflects a positivist commitment to identifying and treating the differences (whether in motivation or disposition) that cause individuals to engage in criminal behavior. There was considerable debate as to whether the explanation of these differences was to be found at the level of individuals or social interaction, or at the level of larger social influences. In either case, there was a general agreement that solutions would require a longer-term approach to either the rehabilitation of individuals or the reform of social situations. This is the approach that is most consistent with a commitment to crime prevention through social development (CPSD).³

³ The notion of crime prevention through social development (CPSD) is a complex one, and there is considerable debate over what exactly is included in this approach. For our purposes, we will use an inclusive definition of CPSD, one that incorporates the three major streams of CPSD work (see Hastings, 1998 for a fuller discussion of this typology). These are:

Liberal legalism, on the other hand, shifted the focus to the responsibility of individuals for their actions (this could also be called a neo-classical approach). The focus moves from an emphasis on the treatment of individuals to a commitment to justice (rights) and proportionality. In Garland's view, the correctionalist approach held the upper hand over the legal liberalist approach during this period. In addition, during that time, the control of crime was largely left to the "experts", and neither the public nor politicians spent a lot of time debating it.

There is not enough space to do justice to the complexity of Garland's argument in this paper. Suffice it to say that, in the intervening years, there has been increasing public and political attention to the problem of crime, and a dramatic shift in the perspectives that dominate the thinking in this area. Garland's argument is twofold. To begin, penal welfarism has lost its dominance over the field, though it continues to exercise considerable influence (especially within the narrower field of criminal justice institutions). There has been a shift to an emphasis on legal liberalism, and a downgrading of a commitment to correctionalism. More importantly, the culture of control has come to dominate policy and practice in this sphere, especially in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom.

Six elements of the culture of control have special significance for prevention policy and practices (Garland 2001).

1. An increasing emphasis on punishment over treatment. This reflects the public's sense that "nothing works" to rehabilitate offenders, and the expression of the public's frustration with current developments.
2. A more populist approach to crime and criminals, and a tendency to demonize offenders – crime and justice have become much more politicized.
3. An adaptive reaction that shifts the focus from offenders to risk management. There is more scientific concern with developing short-term responses to risky situations (for example, through situational crime prevention measures), and less support for longer-term attempts to change offenders (for example, through CPSD measures).

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- The developmental approach (boxes 4 and 6): this is primarily a micro level approach which focuses on identifying and addressing the risk associated with persistent or chronic offending, or the protective factors which are associated with prosocial behaviour. The work of the National Crime Prevention Strategy of Canada has been heavily influenced by this approach.
 - The social approach (boxes 7, 8 and 9): this is macro level approach that focuses primarily on the impact of inequality and relative deprivation on the distribution of risk or protective factors in a society. The goal here is to reduce inequality, or (at least) to improve the quality of supports provided to those at risk.
 - The community approach: the concern here is with the process of mobilizing for effective community action. The focus here is to develop community capacity and mobilize it for effective evidence-based action (see Hastings and Jamieson, 2002 for more discussion of this approach).

For the most part, our comments on resistance to change in this paper apply to all three streams of the CPSD approach.

4. The delegitimation of experts and expertise in favour of populism and “common sense” – there is less support for long-term investment logics such as those typical of CPSD initiatives, and less willingness to wait for results.
5. Recognition of the limits of the state, and a shift to an emphasis on partnerships and on the responsibility of communities to take charge of their fate.
6. The private sector plays an ever-larger role in the criminal justice sector – this contributes to an interest in “selling” the fear of crime, and to an emphasis on the types of products and services that the private sector provides (these usually involve technological solutions or an emphasis on security).

Garland’s work focuses primarily on developments in the United States and Great Britain, but there is reason to believe that some of the main themes of the culture of control have influenced the situation in Canada. The politicization of crime, the popularity of punitive responses, the delegitimation of experts and the shifting roles of the public and private sectors in criminal justice all contribute to a climate that may not be as receptive to giving priority to a CPSD approach to crime prevention (Hastings, 1998). The risk is that CPSD may not “fit the times”, and that governments and community organizations may encounter resistance to attempts to design and develop the types of complex and integrated long-term initiatives that are required if CPSD is to fulfill its promise.

The emergence of a culture of control (Garland, 2001) makes it harder to get support from the public and politicians for policies that favor treatment over punishment and control, or that rely on scientific expertise rather than on common sense about the problem of crime and what to do about it.

2.2 The challenge for justice organizations

Good ideas, on their own, do not necessarily advance the interests of an organization. Using some comparative work done in the area of youth justice, this section will focus on some of the pressures justice organizations are currently facing, and on how these organizations and their workers are responding (Hastings, Dufresne and Frenette, 2003; Hastings and Bailleau, 2004).

There is a strong sense among representatives of youth justice organizations that their workload is increasing in both quantity and complexity, and that the resources at their disposal have not matched this growth. A key concern of these agencies is to assure their survival and to work to accomplish their designated mission. This requires that they obtain the resources they require to do their work, something that is becoming increasingly difficult to do. In addition, the current emphasis on horizontal or inter-sectoral initiatives, and on the importance of partnerships, has resulted in increasing pressures on these organizations, and in concerns about public accountability. In addition, many organizations (especially those that are community-based) rely on

contract relationships with government agencies. It seems to many that the majority of their work involves dependency and the delivery (sometimes in new ways) of traditional types of services. There is a reluctance to abandon the “tried and true” for the risks of innovation, especially when such innovation is perceived as a threat to their interests. The result is a reluctance to abandon traditional reactive programs and services or to explore prevention options. This is compounded by the fact that, for the most part, crime prevention advocates and practitioners remain relatively marginal to political and administrative power, and are seldom in a position to exercise a significant impact on decision-making.

2.3 The perception of justice workers

The key concern of frontline workers is to be able to do their work in the face of a perceived combination of increasing demand for services and decreasing resources to provide them. The result is increased levels of stress and frustration, and a sense of being forced to do more with less. There also appear to be high levels of cynicism and mistrust in the face of attempts at reorganization or reform. A particular area of concern is that many of the proposals for change require a shift to a more generalist orientation to service delivery, one that may run counter to the types of specialist expertise that a CPSD approach requires for program design and delivery. The result is a concern about a deprofessionalization of their status, change fatigue and demoralization about their work situation.

Workers seem to feel trapped between three competing discourses that compete for their allegiance:

- the first favours administrative and fiscal efficiency and the attempt to “do more with less”;
- the second focuses on criminal acts and emphasizes the importance of control and deterrence and pushes “real time” just desserts type measures that educate and responsabilize offenders; and
- the third retains the traditional focus on the needs of offenders, and a commitment to a long term approach to treatment and reintegration.

These competing sets of goals and strategies make it very difficult to articulate a consensus about the mission of the justice system or about the best way to achieve it. On the contrary, it appears that the treatment strategy required by developmental and social approaches to prevention is losing ground to the administrative and control logics of the other two discourses. Arguably, these other two approaches will be less sensitive to civil liberties and diversity.

2.4 The perceptions of the “clients”

We are often so caught up in the problems posed by offending and victimization that we tend to forget that, for the offenders, crime is often a perceived “solution”. For example, many of the offences committed by youth reflect instrumental motives connected to the personal situation or an expressive response to tension and frustration. In many cases, these responses are seen as rational and reasonable – these youth do not necessarily see themselves as criminal, and they are often surprised that others take them so seriously. They can also often experience interventions as a form of constraint rather than of assistance.

At the risk of oversimplification, the key concerns of young people who encounter the system are to make sense of their world and to cope with the challenges they face. These young people do not necessarily see their experience with the justice system as the most important dimension of their life, or as the best place for them to be. Even those who have a more positive or symbiotic relation to the system are suspicious of its real intentions. Many of these youth do not share the system’s diagnosis or interpretation of their needs. Even those that do may not feel that the interventions they experience are the best way to respond to their concerns. There can be a tremendous gap between what young people feel is in their best interests and what evidence-based crime prevention research tells us can “work”. This gap can be the source of resistance to change.

These concerns are often reflected at the level of local communities who are experiencing problems related to crime and insecurity. Residents of most such communities would like to see improvement, but they are often also very cynical about the likelihood of real and sustained progress in these areas (see Jamieson, 2008). They are also aware of the risks associated with turning against other locals, and of the potential negative consequences of being labelled as a “target” for outside intervention. The result can be resistance to mobilizing and participating. One consequence is that justice agencies may be tempted to either ignore those who won’t help themselves (largely because they lack the resources to go it alone) or to return to the types of more traditional measures that fall almost exclusively within their mandate and the limits of their resources.

3. Where to next?

There is a wealth of evaluation research indicating that properly implemented prevention initiatives are effective and efficient responses to the problems related to crime, victimization and insecurity. However, two possible areas of concern were addressed: the threat to civil liberties and the sources of resistance to change.

Given the social distribution of the risk factors associated with offending and victimization, and the proactive focus of prevention initiatives, there is a possibility that, in our enthusiasm, we may compromise the civil liberties of the individuals targeted for intervention – this can undermine our efforts and may serve to create suspicion and even cynicism about our intentions and our programs. Similarly, an understanding of the sources of resistance to change is seen as essential if we are to move forward in this area

– the point is that there are a lot of “good” reasons for resistance, and these will have to be address if we are to make progress.

Designing a research and policy agenda designed to contribute to addressing these two concerns will be a complicated and controversial task, and I would not want to minimize the time and energy that will be required. However, without presuming to be in any way complete, I would suggest such an agenda should include at least five components.

1. A commitment to focus on impacts, rather than only on inputs and outputs. This would require considerable debate over the operational definition of the measures of success or failure, and the identification of the types of data necessary to measure our situation and our progress. This data has to be made accessible in an inexpensive and relatively user-friendly manner so that discussions can be relatively inclusive. It is imperative that representatives of affected communities take an active part in these processes.
2. A commitment to investing more in research and development in the areas of prevention and community safety. We would benefit by knowing a great deal more about the key ingredients of successes or failures in other policy sectors (such as public health) or in other jurisdictions. Ideally, this knowledge could be converted into diagnostic tools, technical assistance and accessible training opportunities.
3. More attention should be paid to understanding the experiences of newcomer and immigrant communities. There is considerable variation in rates of offending and victimization among these communities, even in situations where risk or resiliency levels seem similar. However, national level data does little to help us understand the actual workings of these communities. Ideally, we need to complement the available picture with local studies that combine quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (ethnographic) approaches in order to help us better understand the context and the patterns of social relations in different communities.
4. More needs to be done to develop relationships and share power with these communities. We need to overcome the sense of exclusion and powerlessness that characterizes the residents of many high risk communities – otherwise, our well-intentioned interventions may actually contribute to reproducing inequality and exclusion.
5. Finally, we need to direct more attention to the related issues of responsibility and accountability. At the moment, there is no integrated national framework for planning, resources distribution or holding organizations and agencies accountable for the results of their work. At a minimum, models such s a treasury board approach (spending control) or a commissioner approach (central planning and resource allocation) should be studied. More attention should also be given to

the benefits and limitations of more ad hoc and problem-oriented initiatives (such as the National Drug Strategy or the current focus on gangs).

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