

Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission



GANGS





Methodology:

Active discussion
Case Study
Role Play



Required Materials:

Easel Pad
Participant Manual
Notepad for each participant
Pens & Pencils



Duration: 3 hours

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Learning Objectives

- To learn about gang culture.
- To learn about risk factors for gang involvement.
- To learn the reasons adolescents join gangs.
- Understand treatment models for gang involved adolescents.
- To understand community-based interventions.



WHAT IS A GANG?

TABLE I. KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GANGS AND VEOs

Factor	Gangs	VEOs
Group Motives	Security, solidarity, economic gain	Ideological and political goals
Targets of Violence	Largely interpersonal and transactional targeting other gang members, selected security sector officials and civilians	Largely strategic and collective targeting state and security sector officials, civilians, symbolic sites or events, rival groups
Illicit Economic Activities	Can make gang more organized and violent	Can delegitimize group but also provide means to sustain itself
Relationship to Political Actors	Neutral or oppositional when targeted by police Collusive when protected or paid by politicians in exchange for votes, thuggery or access to neighborhood	Oppositional Collusive when sponsored by specific agencies or actors
Geographic Focus	Local	Local, regional, national or transnational
Individual Motivations and Risk Factors	Family instability, early aggressive behavior, insecure neighborhoods	Political drivers, increase in religiosity Broader range of risk factors

GANGS VS. VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

GANGS

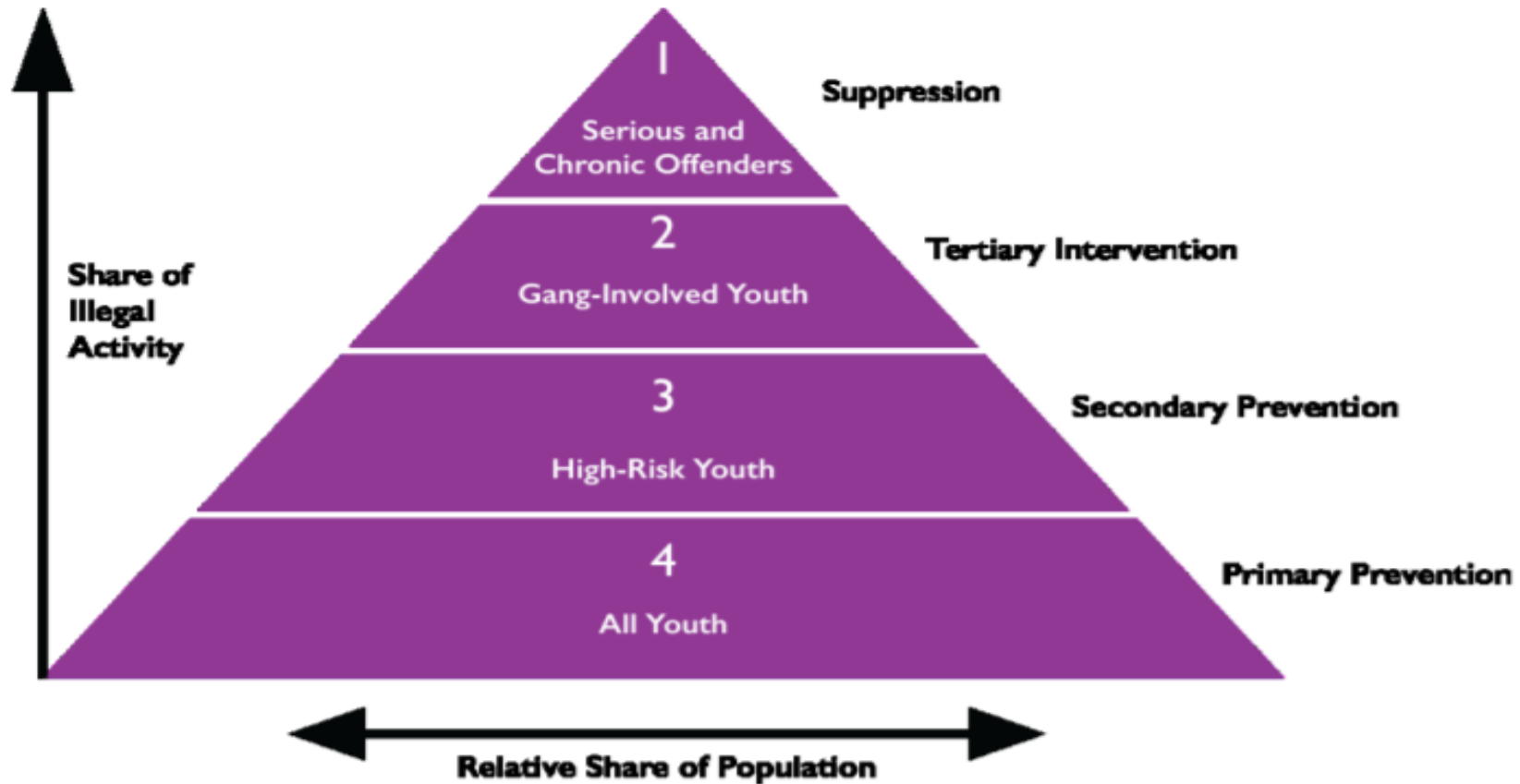
Any durable street-oriented group whose involvement with criminal activity is part of their group identity.

- Street gangs/School-based gangs
- Organized crime

GANGS

- An association of three or more individuals
- Group with specific identity.
- Purpose is to engage in criminal activity.
- Gangs may:
 - Employ rules for joining and operating within the association.
 - Meet on a recurring basis.
 - Provide physical protection of its members from others.
 - Seek to exercise control over a particular geographic location or region, or it may simply defend its perceived interests against rivals.
 - Have an identifiable structure.

FIGURE I. GANG RESPONSE AND INVOLVEMENT PYRAMID



BASED ON: Phelan Wyrick, Ph.D, Gang prevention: How to make the "front end" of your anti-gang effort work, *U.S. Attorneys' Bull.* 2006; 4(3):52-60.1'

CRIME AND GANG INVOLVEMENT

ADOLESCENT VIOLENCE

- Adolescent violence has a gender dimension.
- Violence among pre-adolescents is a growing concern.
- School violence has escalated.
- Adolescent violence is often a response to the threat and fear of victimization.
- Adolescent violence is closely associated with community violence.
- Adolescent victimization by peers and adults creates an environment for more violence.

WHO ARE GANG MEMEBRS?

Brainstorm in your group the characteristics you believe correspond to those individuals who join and participate in gangs.

WHO JOINS GANGS?

- Recruits generally range in age from 12 to 15 years
- Most members are boys, but 10 percent of all gang members are girls
- Certain risk factors increase the likelihood of gang involvement

WHY JOIN A GANG?

- Friendship
- Protection or safety
- Make money
- Family member in gang

RISK FACTORS

- Individual and Personal Attributes
- Family Demographics
- Relational
- Community
- Society

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY



(U.S. Department of Justice, 2010)

RELATIONAL



(U.S. Department of Justice, 2010)

COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD



(U.S. Department of Justice, 2010)

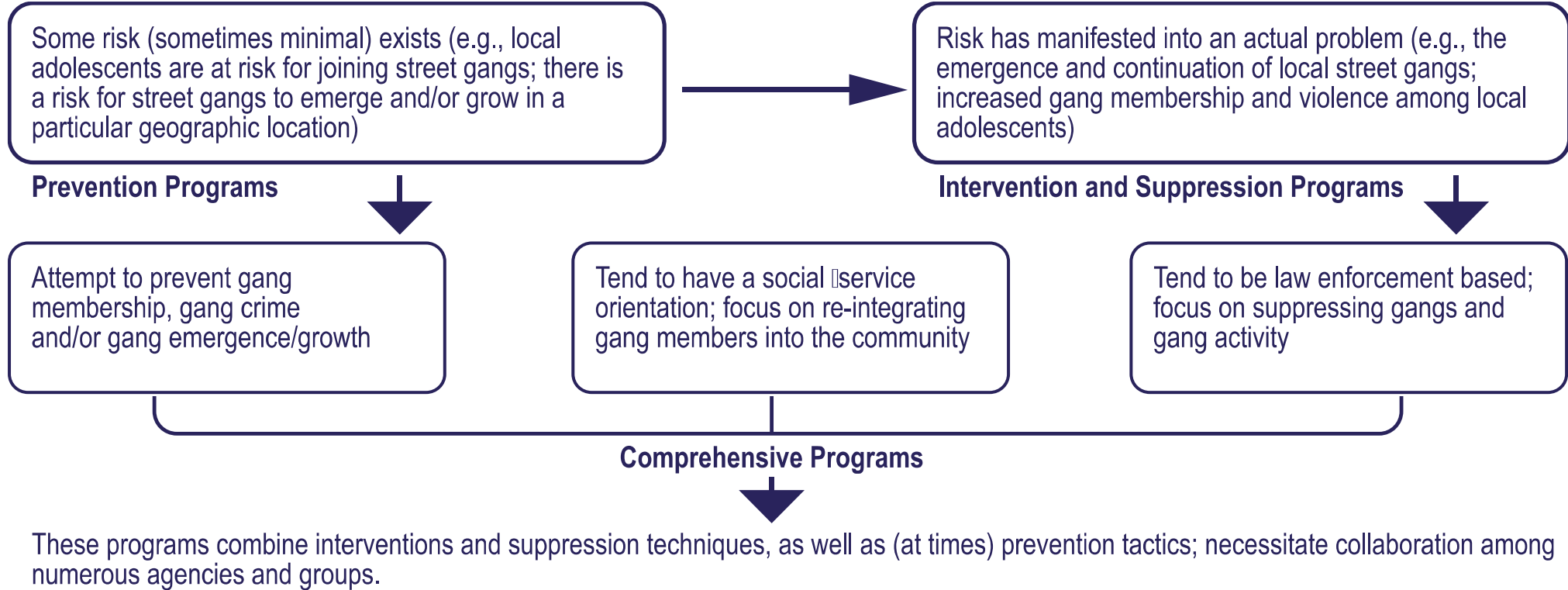
SOCIETY



(U.S. Department of Justice, 2010)

RESPONDING TO A GANG PROBLEM

- Prevention
 - Primary and secondary
- Intervention
- Suppression
- Reentry



PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, SUPPRESSION, & COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

COMPREHENSIVE GANG STRATEGY

- Community mobilization
- Provision of academic, economic & social opportunities
- Social intervention
- Gang suppression
- Organizational change & development

RESILIENCY

In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways.

REDUCING RISK = ENHANCING RESILIENCY

- Two-pronged approach
 - Address structural issues that predispose adolescents to act violently and make them susceptible to victimization
 - Equip adolescents with enhanced skills and abilities to prevent and reverse trends towards crime and violence

REDUCING RISK = ENHANCING RESILIENCY

- Violence prevention as part of social development
- Principle of inclusivity
- Integrated planning and programs
- Coordination and partnerships
- Strengthened police-adolescent relationships
- Provision of specific alternatives for offenders and school drop-outs

REDUCING RISK = ENHANCING RESILIENCY

- Develop programs to promote “pro-social” behavior
 - Structured voluntary community service
 - Support family stability
 - Adolescent-friendly spaces

REDUCING RISK = ENHANCING RESILIENCY

- Institutionalization of adolescents should be last resort
 - Adolescent diversion programs
 - Review legislation
 - Systematic evaluation of mental health needs among institutionalized adolescents

REDUCING RISK = ENHANCING RESILIENCY

- Develop system to monitor youth development indicators, for the design and implementation of programs
 - Creation of youth development index
 - Longitudinal study on youth development

REDUCING GANG VIOLENCE

- Establish surveillance systems
- Improve training of law enforcement
- Monitor impact of existing gang legislation
- Adopt a balanced approach
- Develop plans to help gang members to exit from gangs
- Establish a rigorous research agenda on the causes of street gangs

EXTRACTION & EXITING ISSUES

- Very serious and can be dangerous
- Must be done by trained and talented people
- Requires a process and extensive networking
- Must include family, faith and community based resources as well as law enforcement
- Highly individualized and confidential strategies

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Know the current recruitment methods.
- Know current initiation rituals.
- Identify areas where gangs could gain an appearance of power and control.
- Differentiate various levels of affiliation and involvement.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- There is no single clear solution to preventing or reducing gang activity.
- Adolescents do not join gangs for life.
- More girls are joining gangs and engaging in violent delinquent behavior.
- Adolescent gang members come from a variety of backgrounds.
- A comprehensive approach, using prevention, suppression and intervention strategies will be most effective.