



APPA's PSN C.A.R.E. Model: A Framework for Collaboration, Analysis, Reentry, and Evaluation



Supporting Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)

Adam K. Matz, M.S.

Research Associate

American Probation and Parole Association (APPA)
Council of State Governments (CSG)

In many large cities (e.g., Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles) more than half of all homicides in major cities (e.g., Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles) are perpetuated by youthful gang-affiliated individuals. Estimates from the National Gang Intelligence Center find 90 percent of these homicides involve a firearm. Further, it has been demonstrated that up to 80 percent of homicide offenders and 56 percent of the victims were under probation or parole supervision at the time of the incident.

Recognizing the continued prevalence of violent firearm-based crime in many urban communities, in 2001 the U.S. Department of Justice implemented the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) anti-gun (and later anti-gang) initiative. Previous results from Boston's Operation Ceasefire, Richmond's Project Exile, and New York's Compstat confirmed the importance of collaboration in reducing violent crime. These crime reduction programs demonstrated the utility of including law enforcement, prosecution, courts, probation and parole, universities, community leaders, and faith-based organizations in interagency partnerships. Some programs, such as Chicago's Project Safe Neighborhoods, have demonstrated empirically rigorous success in reducing homicides.

To assist community corrections agencies in these collaborative endeavors, the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) created the PSN-inspired C.A.R.E. (collaboration, analysis, reentry, evaluation) model. In the full report APPA provides an overview of each interrelated concept followed by a listing of several key policy and practice recommendations.¹ This brief summarizes the key points of the report.

Collaboration

Probation and parole departments should take care to seek out opportunities to work with law enforcement, prosecutors, universities, community-based

organizations, and others while preserving the autonomy and integrity of their agency. Law enforcement can support probation/parole through partnerships; including enhanced supervision, information sharing, and fugitive apprehension. Prosecutors and the courts can support sanctions for noncompliance of probationer/parolees conditional release. Research organizations can support program evaluations, the results of which can be used to engage state legislature to consider additional funding and resources for one's agency. Community organizations, as many agencies are accustomed to, can provide social service options for probationers/parolees. The following are ten straightforward recommendations aimed at improving partnership sustainability.

Practice Recommendations

1. Diversify funding
 2. Establish a strong network of partner agencies
 3. Develop a strategic plan
 4. Solidify structure
 5. Determine appropriate staffing
 6. Strengthen commitment through involvement
 7. Establish rapport
 8. Uphold measureable standards
 9. Support through recognition
 10. Motivate through effective leadership
-

Analysis

A commonly understated phase of many projects, *community analysis* (a.k.a., problem analysis) serves as a precursor to program development. A Collaborative should rely on both official data (e.g., crime mapping, national crime data sources such as the UCR) and officer/ community perceptions (i.e., surveys, interviews, focus groups) when examining local crime problems. A well-qualified research partner is recommended and many collaborative partnerships will find the use of a community analysis subcommittee (a.k.a., steering committee) containing a mix of professionals, representation of practitioners and researchers, beneficial. One should be wary of partnerships in which problems and solutions have been pre-identified. It is always preferable that partner agencies be included in problem identification and solution strategies. When approached to engage in a collaborative that already

¹ Full report at http://www.appa-net.org/psn/docs/PSN_CARE_Model.pdf

exist, ask questions freely to discern the commitment expected by your agency, potential benefits, and potential for mission distortion (i.e., conforming to the aims of another organization) or mission creep (i.e., doing work that is usually out of scope of your agency).

Practice Recommendations

1. Develop a community analysis committee
 2. Encourage diversity of committee members
 3. Select a project director
 4. Involve key stakeholders
 5. Integrate community and faith-based organizations
 6. Incorporate a research partner
 7. Corroborate key terms
 8. Utilize a wide assortment of criminal information sources
 9. Disseminate findings
-

Reentry

As the community supervision field well knows, offender reentry is best addressed through the careful assessment of the likelihood of recidivism (i.e., risk) and treatment of offender criminogenic needs. Offenders are more successful when their reentry has been planned prior to their release from a correctional facility. Services addressing the offender's individual needs (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, housing, employment) must start while the offender is incarcerated and continue through their release to the community. Collaboratives will serve as pivotal opportunities for justice agencies to collectively reiterate the conditions of probationers/ parolees supervision while also allowing community organizations to introduce and connect supervisees to essential services in the community.

Practice Recommendations

1. Incorporate community corrections in prevention efforts
 2. Incorporate community corrections in suppression efforts
 3. Assess the risk and needs of offenders using validated instruments
 4. Implement, develop, and maintain a transition plan for reentry
 5. Engage offenders in their own success
 6. Adopt graduated sanctions for technical violations
 7. Incorporate evidence-based practices
-

Evaluation

Though too often an afterthought, program evaluation is essential for justifying the continued funding of a program as well as informing future program development across the nation, consistent with evidence-based practices (EBP). While it is true that evaluation exposes the strengths and weaknesses of a program or service, it also presents an opportunity for empirically-based alterations to existing programs to improve operational procedures and, ideally, outcomes. To elaborate, the C.A.R.E. model is designed to demonstrate a dynamic (not static) process of collaboration, analysis of the problem, reentry strategy development, and evaluation. Using a wide array of sources and analytical methods, researcher partners can assist agencies in process, outcome, and cost-benefit analyses. Continual and periodic evaluation should help strengthen collaborations, further narrow the community analysis, improve operational procedures, and improve outcomes.

Practice Recommendations

1. Establish a research partner
 2. Evaluate program implementation through process evaluation and program monitoring
 3. Evaluate program impact through outcome evaluation
 4. Perform a cost-benefit analysis
 5. Evaluate job satisfaction and organizational climate
 6. Use evaluation results to improve program practice
 7. Disseminate evaluation results
-

In conclusion, the C.A.R.E. model represents not a specific program or strategy, but a high-level framework for agency executives in how to approach new and existing interagency collaborations, concepts related to substantive participation, and the importance of continued and periodic research through the identification of crime problems as well as the strategic solutions implemented. The intent is for agencies to be able to use this high-level document to improve long-term planning for new and existing partnerships, preserve the autonomy of probation/parole agencies, and also contribute to EBP and the empirical literature.