Agencies Participating on the Youth Violence Reduction Strategy Development Team:

- **Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services**

- **Counsel on Children and Families**

- **Office of Children and Family Services**

- **Division of Criminal Justice Services**

- **Education Department**

- **Office of Mental Health**

- **Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives**

- **Division of State Police**

STATE OF NEW YORK

Youth Violence Reduction Strategy: Goals and Guiding Principles

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Introduction

New York State is committed to taking aggressive actions to reduce violent crime committed by children and adolescents. Although violent crime committed by offenders of all ages has declined substantially from its peak in the late 1980s and early 1990s, youth violent crime rates remain well above historical levels and have recently begun to increase again in many areas of the State. Furthermore, there is nationwide evidence suggesting especially strong increases in violence among adolescent girls and pre-adolescent children of both genders.

It is especially troubling when youth crimes are fueled by gang involvement. It is frightening when these crimes involve guns in the hands of children. Such behaviors by youth are wholly unacceptable and are among the highest priority targets of the State's violence reduction strategy.

New York State Youth Violence Reduction Strategy: Goals and Guiding Principles is one of two documents that together describe and explain the State's strategy for reducing violent crime among children and adolescents. This document provides an overview of the strategy and explains the strategy's guiding principles. A separate document currently under development—*New York State Youth Violence Reduction Strategy: Support and Technical Assistance*—will explain the coordinated assistance available through a consortium of State agencies to support local youth violence reduction efforts.

Goal

By the end of 2005, reduce violent crime committed by children and adolescents by at least 10 percent in selected high crime cities. Greater reductions may be expected in some communities, depending on local historical trends in crime rates.

Among the violence-related behaviors to be addressed by participating localities, special emphasis is to be given to reducing
  (a) Gang involvement and gang violence,
  (b) Weapons possession and weapons use,
  (c) Truancy and school dropout,
  (d) Drug abuse and underage drinking, and
  (e) Recidivism among youth on probation and youth on aftercare.

Overview of the Strategy

New York State's Youth Violence Reduction Strategy (YVRS) is designed to promote and support a coordinated attack on youth violence in selected high-crime areas. The strategy has components at two levels: locally developed *coordinated action plans* and state-level *support and technical assistance* to facilitate local efforts. With assistance from the State, participating localities will develop and implement coordinated action plans designed to

- Yield near-term reductions in youth violence through an appropriate combination of rehabilitation, deterrence, and varying degrees of incapacitation;

- Yield lasting reductions in the numbers of violence-prone youth through an appropriate combination of prevention, early intervention, diversion, and rehabilitation that will (a) prevent early onset of delinquency among the youth most at risk for lifelong violence, (b) focus intensive efforts on children and adolescents who are retrospectively identified as early-onset delinquents, and (c) intervene early with adolescents who begin to show signs of late-onset delinquency;

- Repair harm to victims and build community capacity to maintain safety for its citizens;

- Employ "best practices"—programs and strategies that have been found to be the most effective in reducing youth violence

Guiding principles. Because the profile of needs, resources, and community environment will differ from one locality to another, it will be the responsibility of each participating locality to develop a coordinated action plan that is tailored to local circumstances but conforms to a common set of *guiding principles*. The YVRS guiding principles are stated and explained later in this document.

Support. The State will provide support for local development and implementation of coordinated action plans that are consistent with the YVRS guiding principles by (a) establishing a state-level, interagency technical assistance function to work in partnership with local interagency planning efforts, and (b) wherever possible, providing funds to localities to support activities that are consistent with the Strategy's guiding principles.

Performance Indicators. Participating localities receiving fiscal support through certain state and federal funding programs will be required to provide performance indicators on a periodic basis. Three general categories of indicators will be monitored:

- *Core indicators* of local violent crime, which are specified as part of the YVRS strategy and are <u>required</u> for all participating localities.
- *Recommended indicators* of local youth violence and risk factors, which are suggested as part of the YVRS strategy and should be monitored by localities wherever possible.
- *Program-specific indicators* to monitor the immediate outcomes of the specific interventions that comprise the youth crime reduction strategy in a particular locality. These are specified by each participating locality.

Appendix B lists the core indicators and recommended indicators, and explains all three types of indicators in more detail.

Summary of Guiding Principles

New York's strategy for reducing violent crime committed by children and adolescents involves encouraging and facilitating coordinated planning at both the state and local levels. The purpose of these coordinated planning efforts is to achieve implementation of well-integrated systems of interventions at the local level. Although effective intervention systems will differ from one locality to another, development and implementation of local intervention systems should be guided by a common set of principles, which include the following:

- Efforts reflect coordinated planning focused on **reducing violent crime** committed by children and adolescents.

- Intervention targets at the individual, family, and community levels are identified and prioritized on the basis of a local **needs and resource assessment** that both takes into account the concerns and priorities of all sectors of the community and capitalizes on the resources and capabilities of all sectors of the community.

- The local intervention system targets **risk and protective factors** at the individual, family, and community levels that have been shown to influence violent crime.

- The local intervention system applies **evidence-based interventions** to targeted factors. Where evidence-based interventions cannot be identified (or cannot be implemented given local circumstances), special attention is given to evaluating the effectiveness of any innovations that are introduced.

- Quality control procedures ensure **fidelity of implementation**.

- The local intervention system is based on valid assumptions about normal youth development and **developmental pathways to serious and violent delinquency**.

- The local intervention system holds youth accountable for their behavior through the use of **graduated sanctioning** and **restorative practices**.

- Case management for interventions that target individual youth is guided by valid, **standardized assessment procedures.**

- The set of interventions implemented in a given geographic area (neighborhood, precinct, municipality, etc.) work together as a **seamless system** of mutually compatible, mutually reinforcing interventions.

- Planning and implementation of the local intervention system takes into account the cultural diversity of targeted youth, program staff, and other members of the community. Efforts reflect both state and federal emphases on reducing **Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)** in the juvenile justice system.

The key concepts highlighted in bold print in the above statements of guiding principles are explained and discussed in more detail in Appendix A.

Prerequisite to a seamless system of interventions that is responsive to community concerns and priorities and takes full advantage of available resources is an established structure for coordinated planning and routine collaboration among the following entities:

- Applicable local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies
- Prosecutor's and juvenile presentment agency's offices
- Probation department
- Family court
- County or city youth bureau
- County departments of health and mental health
- County department of social services
- Alcohol and other drug (AOD) services network
- Other state, county, and local government agencies providing services to troubled youth
- Schools
- Businesses
- Religious, fraternal, and nonprofit organizations involved in crime and delinquency prevention
- Community leaders and spokespersons

In addition, YVRS planning and implementation should be coordinated with other federal and New York State initiatives, such as Weed and Seed, Safe Neighborhoods, Safe Schools, Integrated County Planning (ICP), the Coordinated Children Services Initiative (CCSI), and the Governor's Street Crime Enforcement Program.

Such collaboration emphasizes shared priority-setting and decision-making between government officials and community leaders, facilitates operational coordination of interventions across agencies and service providers, facilitates efficient utilization of public and private resources, capitalizes on the skills and expertise of all sectors of the community, and promotes community-wide support for crime reduction efforts.

APPENDIX A:

BACKGROUND

AND

EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Reducing Violent Crime

For the purposes of the Youth Violence Reduction Strategy, "violent crime" includes any youth behavior that would qualify as a violent crime under UCR definitions for crimes included among the "violent index offenses" (murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and assault) or violent part 2 offenses ("other sex offenses," simple assault, dangerous weapons, arson, kidnaping, and coercion).

The strategy is intended to target behavior that is consistent with the specified UCR definitions, including domestic and school-related violence, whether or not such behavior would typically be reported as a crime. For example, if one 10-year-old boy strikes another with his fist and gives the other a bloody nose in a schoolyard confrontation, or an older sibling deliberately causes injury to a younger sibling in their home, a simple assault has occurred, whether or not it is reported to police. Likewise, if a ninth grade student takes lunch money from a seventh-grader by force or the threat of force, a robbery has occurred. It is within the scope of this strategy to work toward reducing the incidence of such events and work toward reducing the number of young persons engaging in such behavior.

Needs and Resource Assessment

Development of a coordinated action plan begins with a comprehensive assessment of violent crime rates in potential target areas, factors contributing to violent crime in targeted areas, and a thorough accounting of resources that can be invoked to reduce the severity or impact of contributing factors.

- Assessment of violent crime rates should include analyses of geographic patterns and historical trends.

- Assessment of factors influencing violent crime should examine the prevalence of risk and protective factors at individual, family, and community levels, and should emphasize risk and protective factors shown in prior research to influence violent crime rates. (See section titled "Risk and Protective Factors," below). Needs assessment may or may not include reliance on standardized self-report surveys such as the Communities That Care (CTC) survey or the Search Institute's "Profiles of Student Life" survey, but in any case, should be based on formal, structured analysis of local conditions.

- Community-level conditions may warrant special attention, if they have been under-emphasized in the past.
    - Much of the vast literature on the factors associated with the onset, maintenance, and termination of delinquent behavior is concerned with the processes that affect key personal attributes (bonding to pro-social influences, beliefs, values, attitudes, personality, coping strategies, and the like). However, antisocial behavior (like all behavior) is determined by environment as well as individual attributes. Much of the opportunity for reducing violent crime relates to control of negative forces within the environment.
    - Both the forces that encourage delinquency and informal social controls that inhibit delinquent behavior are related to characteristics of the communities in which youth spend their time. Evidence has been accumulating in recent years that community-level factors such as visible drug trafficking, neighborhood disorganization, and the "collective efficacy" of informal social controls do indeed affect local violence rates and recidivism among offenders returning to the community. It is such community-level characteristics rather than the characteristics of specific individuals that are the targets of interventions such as community policing, the efforts to reinforce pro-social norms inherent in certain "community justice" practices, and efforts to improve "quality of life" through property development, suppression of loitering, aggressive drug law enforcement, and anti-gang initiatives.

- Identification of factors to be addressed should take into account the concerns and priorities of all sectors of the community.
- The accounting of available resources should also capitalize on the resources and capabilities of all sectors of the community. For this purpose, "all sectors of the community" refers to the entities

·   required to be represented in Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalitions (JCECs) under the federal juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant programs (JAIBG), plus other community leaders and citizen spokespersons as appropriate. (See listing at the end of the section entitled "Summary of Guiding Principles.") The young offenders and "at risk" youth who are targeted for intervention in the local strategy should also be viewed as potential resources, as individuals who potentially can be re-oriented toward making positive contributions to the community.

- Two examples of existing planning frameworks that incorporate structured needs and resource assessments are the CTC model and the TCAP model.
    - The Communities That Care (CTC) model incorporates a phase during which localities "Develop a profile of community strengths and challenges; collect data, inventory resources, identify overlap or gaps, analyze data and prioritize areas of focus."
    - Information to be assembled under the federal Targeted Community Action Planning (TCAP) model "includes readily available crime and delinquency data; risk factor data; information on past and current Federal, State, and local initiatives; existing community plans; State juvenile justice priorities (i.e., legislative mandates); and information on weaknesses and/or gaps in a community's comprehensive continuum of services for youth, from neonatal care to intensive juvenile aftercare services."

Further Reading:

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Known Risk and Protective Factors

In the context of the YVRS, *risk factors* are youth characteristics or circumstances that predict the onset or maintenance of serious and violent delinquency. Risk factors are not necessarily "causes," but the particular risk factors actually selected as intervention targets in a particular locality should be ones considered (as a conclusion from the needs assessment) to have the greatest direct effect on violence in that locality.

In general, " . . . multiple biological, psychological, and social factors–within the individual and in the family, school, peer group, and community–all contribute to some degree to prediction of delinquency and drug use. Risk factors . . . include community norms favorable to these behaviors, neighborhood disorganization, extreme economic deprivation, family history of drug abuse or crime, poor family management practices, family conflict, low family bonding, parental permissiveness, early and persistent problem behaviors, peer rejection in elementary grades, association with drug-using or delinquent peers or adults, alienation and rebelliousness, attitudes favorable to drug use and crime, and early onset of drug use or criminal behavior" (Catalano & Hawkins, in Hawkins, 1996, p. 152).

Protective factors "enhance the resilience of those exposed to high levels of risk and protect them from undesirable outcomes. . . . As distinct from risk factors, protective factors are hypothesized to operate indirectly through interactions with risk factors, mediating or moderating the effects of risk exposure" (Catalano & Hawkins, in Hawkins, 1996, p. 153). Research on potential protective factors is

relatively recent and considerably less extensive than research on risk factors. "Strength-based" interventions place more emphasis on enhancing or building upon protective factors than on eliminating or reducing risk factors.

The table presented below combines information from Box 4-1 on page 58 of the Surgeon General's Report (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2001) with factors addressed in the Communities That Care (CTC) surveys (Developmental Research and Programs, 2000).

Factors Associated with the Probability of Violence Among 15 – 18 Year Olds

Domain	Risk Factor		Protective Factor
	Early Occurrence (age 6-11)	**Late Occurrence (age 12-14)**	

Individual	General offenses
	Substance use
	Being male
	Aggression
	Psychological condition (e.g., Hyperactivity)
	Problem (antisocial) behavior
	Medical, physical problems
	Low IQ
	Antisocial attitudes, beliefs
	Dishonesty
	Rebelliousness
		General offenses
		Psychological conditions
		  Restlessness
		  Difficulty concentrating
		  Risk taking
		Aggression
		Being male
		Physical violence
		Antisocial attitudes, beliefs
		Crimes against persons
		Problem (antisocial) behavior
		Low IQ
		Substance use
			Intolerant attitude toward deviance
			High IQ
			Being female
			Positive social orientation
			Perceived sanctions for transgressions

Family	Low SES/poverty Antisocial parents Poor parent-child relations Harsh, lax, or inconsistent discipline Broken home Separation from parents Abusive parents Neglect	Poor parent-child relations Harsh, lax discipline; poor monitoring, supervision Low parental involvement Antisocial parents Broken home Low SES/poverty Abusive parents Family conflict *Family history of violence*	Warm, supportive relationships with parents or other adults Parents' positive evaluation of peers Parental monitoring
School	Poor attitude, performance *Academic failure beginning in late elementary school*	Poor attitude, performance Academic failure	Commitment to school Recognition for involvement in conventional activities
Peer Group	Weak social ties Antisocial peers	Weak social ties Antisocial, delinquent peers Gang membership	Friends who engage in conventional behavior
Community		Neighborhood crime, drugs Neighborhood disorganization Availability of firearms *Media portrayals of violence* *Extreme economic deprivation*	Collective efficacy

The items from the Surgeon General's report (listed in normal font) are concerned specifically with risk and protective factors that predict violence at age 15 to 18, but many of the items pertain to violence among younger individuals as well. The CTC items added to the Surgeon General's list for this document also pertain to a broader range of problem behaviors and a broader age range. The CTC items that were not included among those originally listed in the Surgeon General's report are listed in italics in the table. The factors listed in the table are not necessarily comprehensive; a great deal of currently ongoing research focuses specifically on identification of violence-relevant risk and protective factors.

Further Reading:

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Evidence-based Interventions

Whenever possible, local action strategies should incorporate interventions for which prior research has yielded scientifically sound evidence of effectiveness in (a) reducing the incidence of serious and violent crime, or (b) reducing the prevalence or severity of risk factors known to be associated with the probability of serious or violent crime, or (c) increasing the prevalence or strength of protective factors known to mitigate the effects of existing risk factors. Resources should not be wasted on ineffective or untested interventions when evidence-based interventions are available.

- Evidence-based interventions will not always be effective when replicated in new locations or applied to new populations, but the odds of success are greater using previously successful models than using models with no prior track record.
- It is likely that local assessments will identify some needs for which there are no previously successful intervention models, requiring original development of innovative solutions. Introduction of innovative models should be based on explicit theory or rationale , undertaken as demonstration projects, and accompanied by rigorous "theory-driven evaluation." A theory-oriented framework, such as a *logic model*[1] should be used to assist in program design, explicate the rationale connecting immediate outcomes to ultimate goals, explicate the rationale connecting program activities to immediate outcomes, and guide program evaluation efforts.

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[1] See http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/ofpa/tips.htm for an overview and illustration of the use of logic models.

Two excellent compilations are available that summarize dozens of interventions found in previous research to be effective in reducing youth crime and delinquency: *Communities That Care Prevention Strategies: A Research Guide to What Works*, (Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., 2000) and *Research-Based Program Models: A Resource Tool*, prepared as part of the Monroe County Integrated County Planning Initiative (Fisher, LaPage & Martino, 2001). However, new research findings are continually emerging, and none of these compilations should be considered exhaustive. Local planners may be aware of evidence-based programs not covered in these documents and may incorporate such in their local action strategies. In addition, as the need arises, State-agency staff can often assist localities in locating up-to-date information about evidence-based interventions that could fill identified gaps in their local intervention systems.

Further Reading:

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Sherman, L. W., Gottfredson, D. C., MacKenzie, D. L., Eck, J., Reuter, P., & Bushway, S. D. (1998). *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

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Thornton, T. N., Craft, C. A., Dahlberg, L. L., Lynch, B. S., & Baer, K. (2002). *Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action (Rev.)*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

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Wright, K. N., & Wright, K. E. (1994). A policy maker's guide to controlling delinquency and crime through family interventions. *Justice Quarterly, 11*(2), 189-206.

Fidelity of Implementation

Given adoption of effective program models, prior research has shown clearly that achieving the desired effects is strongly dependent on the degree to which interventions are implemented as designed. Thus, it is essential that local action plans include systematic procedures for monitoring and maintaining the fidelity of implementation. This typically requires an explicit quality control effort, as well as provisions for formal staff training and continuous reinforcement of program principles and practices.

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Blueprints for Violence Prevention. Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. Retrieved March 6, 2003, from the World Wide Web: http://www.colorado.edu/scpv/blueprints/index.html

Developmental Pathways to Serious and Violent Delinquency

Local action plans should be developed with an awareness of both (a) the normal course of youth development and (b) the typical developmental pathways leading to serious and violent delinquency. The former is important because youth think differently than adults; they are still forming attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns, and they need guidance in learning appropriate ways to think about their options, their actions, and the consequences of their actions. The latter is important because the risk and protective factors that are most influential are different at different ages or developmental stages. Thus, it may be more important than previously recognized to fashion interventions differently for youth who become delinquent by way of different developmental pathways.

For boys, it is fairly well established that there are two distinct pathways for development of serious anti-social behavior:

A childhood onset trajectory involves boys who begin to show severe patterns of anti-social behavior prior to puberty. Compared to those with later onset, these boys:

- Commit more crimes and more serious crimes
- Show aggressive behavior as early as pre-school or elementary school and "exhibit a pattern of escalating violence through childhood and adolescence" (U.S. DHH, 2001, p. 52)
- Are more likely to continue antisocial behavior into adulthood
- Show "a personality profile characterized by impulsive and impetuous behavior and a cold, callous, alienated , and suspicious interpersonal style" (Silverthorn & Frick, 1999, p. 103).
- "Come from much more dysfunctional family environments, characterized by a high rate of parental psychopathology, a high rate of family conflict, and the use of dysfunctional parenting practices" (Silverthorn & Frick, 1999, p. 103).

An <u>adolescent-onset</u> trajectory involves boys who first begin to exhibit serious anti-social behavior during adolescence.

- Adolescent-onset offenders are substantially greater in number than childhood-onset offenders
- They "seem to desire more close relationships with others, yet tend to reject traditional status hierarchies and religious rules" (Silverthorn & Frick, 1999, p. 103), which "seems to be an exaggeration of a normal developmental process" (Silverthorn & Frick, 1999, p. 122)
- "Late-onset offending is usually limited to a short period, peaking at about age 16 and dropping off dramatically by age 20" (U.S. DHH, 2001, p. 52) (but more recent studies suggest that violent behavior may be persisting further into young adulthood in more recent cohorts, and drug sales tend to peak in early adulthood)
- Boys following this pattern "typically show few signs in childhood that they will become violent later on, laying to rest the myth that all violent adolescents can be identified in childhood" (U.S. DHH, 2001, p. 52)

Much less is known about the developmental pathways that lead to serious anti-social behavior in girls, but there is mounting evidence that the pathways are different for girls than for boys. Silverthorn and Frick (1999) suggest that antisocial girls typically follow what they call a "delayed-onset" trajectory, noting that

- "Girls typically do not begin showing severe patterns of anti-social behavior until adolescence."
- "However, these anti-social girls appear to show many of the . . . mechanisms that were associated with the *childhood-onset pathway* [emphasis added] in boys." (p. 122)

Because it is likely that childhood-onset delinquency (for boys), adolescent-onset delinquency (for boys), and delayed-onset delinquency (for girls) derive from different causal mechanisms, it is likely they are sensitive to different risk and protective factors. This suggests, in turn, that a comprehensive strategy for juvenile crime control must intervene differently in each of these developmental sequences. For example, the Surgeon General's Report (U.S. DHH, 2001) notes that "Early childhood programs that target at-risk children and families are critical for preventing the onset of a chronic violent career, but programs must also be developed to combat late-onset violence" (p. 52). Similarly, many programs designed primarily for late-onset boys are unlikely to be appropriate for late-(delayed)-onset girls.

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Holding Youth Accountable Through Graduated Sanctioning and Restorative Practices

The OJJDP-sponsored *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Offenders* and the *Juvenile Accountability (Incentive) Block Grant* program (JAIBG/JABG) both recommend holding youth accountable for their actions through a system of graduated sanctioning, a continuum of treatment alternatives, and a focus on restorative interventions.

Graduated sanctioning is designed to hold youth accountable for their behavior by providing an appropriate response to every delinquent act and providing positive incentives for pro-social behavior. The key elements of a graduated system are (a) a graduated array of sanctioning and treatment options, (b) a systematic process for identifying the appropriate entry point into the system for a given case, and (c) clear rules for stepping up or stepping down the continuum on the basis of youth behavior, both within and across service settings.

As envisioned in the OJJDP strategy, a graduated system includes the following:

- Immediate sanctions within the community for first-time, nonviolent offenders (not necessarily within the formal justice system).
- Intermediate sanctions within the community for more serious and repeat offenders.
- Secure care programs for the most serious, violent, and chronic offenders.
- Aftercare programs that provide high levels of social control and treatment.

For graduated sanctioning to function effectively, (1) behavioral standards must be clearly specified, (2) consequences for negative behavior and rewards for positive behavior must be clearly specified (for example, through the use of written "behavioral contracts"), (3) sanctions for negative behavior or rewards for positive behavior must be applied consistently and very shortly following the relevant behavior, and (4) the sanctioning schedule should increase in severity with repeated or more serious negative behavior and decrease in severity with consistently positive behavior (Taxman, 1998; p. 30).

Punishment and external control do not, by themselves, hold youth accountable. To be fully accountable for their actions, young offenders also must acknowledge the harm their actions have caused, be accountable to the victim and the community, take responsibility to repair the harm, and seek to achieve success as law-abiding citizens through competency development and community involvement. Acknowledging these principles has led to the development of interventions that emphasize the need to repair the harm of youth crime.

Although there are many restorative practices being used in the juvenile justice system, four types of specific restorative practices being used around the world have become increasingly common in the United States over the past twenty-five years. *Victim-Offender Mediated Dialogue (VOD)* brings a suitably prepared victim and suitably prepared offender together to discuss the crime in a safe environment under the direction of a highly skilled facilitator. *Family Group Conferencing (FGC)* provides an opportunity for youth, the youth's family, and other supporters to hear directly from the victim, the victim's family, and other members of the community about the impact of their actions, and to come to agreement on how to repair the harm. *Community Reparative Boards (CABs)* are composed of small groups of trained community volunteers who meet with the offender to negotiate a restorative contract to be completed as part of the offender's sentence. *Sentencing Circles* bring together the judge, prosecutor, defense lawyer, victim, offender, supporters of the victim and offender, and any other community members who want to attend and participate in determining the sentence.

Restorative practices are most often applied to cases involving nonviolent offenders with little or no offending history, although there are some instances where they are used in repeat juvenile delinquency cases and low-level felonies in both juvenile and adult cases. As components of a graduated sanctioning system, restorative practices provide meaningful responses to offenses that might not

otherwise be met with any significant response from the formal justice system. They may be especially useful for operationalizing the "immediate sanctions within the community for first-time, nonviolent offenders" envisioned in the OJJDP Comprehensive Strategy and the JAIBG program.

Links to several comprehensive reviews of research evaluating the effectiveness of restorative practices can be found at the New York State Community Justice Forum web site (cited below). Studies have found that, compared to more traditional approaches, restorative practices tend to yield greater victim satisfaction with case dispositions, greater offender satisfaction with case dispositions, higher compliance rates with ordered restitution, fewer new offenses, and less serious new offenses. Because much of the existing evidence for the effectiveness of restorative practices has involved interventions with youth adjudicated for nonviolent offenses with little or no prior offending history, restorative practices may be more applicable to adolescent-onset delinquents than to adolescents retrospectively identified as childhood-onset delinquents.

Though restorative practices have been shown to reduce the number of new offenses and the average seriousness of new offenses, their ability to prevent future violent crime in particular remains largely untested. Nevertheless, they are emphasized in the Youth Violence Reduction Strategy for the following reasons:

- Restorative practices hold youth accountable in cases that might not otherwise produce a meaningful response from the justice system.
- Restorative practices yield greater victim satisfaction, greater acceptance by offenders, and greater offender compliance than traditional responses.
- Restorative practices integrate naturally with graduated sanctioning systems and are featured prominently in both the OJJDP Comprehensive Strategy and the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program.
- There are, in fact, few other diversion options for first offenders for which there is definitive evidence for effectiveness in reducing future violence. Enough evidence that restorative practices can reduce general recidivism has accumulated to warrant further testing of their ability to reduce violent recidivism specifically.

With few proven diversionary alternatives, and taking into account the demonstrated effects of restorative practices on accountability and satisfaction, localities participating in the YVRS initiative should integrate restorative principles and practices into their local intervention systems and carefully evaluate their contribution to violence reduction.

Further Reading:

Beyer, M. (2003). *Best Practices in Juvenile Accountability: Overview*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Coolbaugh, K., & Hansel, C. J. (2000). *The Comprehensive Strategy: Lessons Learned From the Pilot Sites*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Danegger, A. E., Cohen, C. E., Hayes, C. D., Holden, G. A., & The Finance Project. (1999). *Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants: Strategic Planning Guide*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

New York State Community Justice Forum. Retrieved July 31, 2003, from the World Wide Web: http://www.nyscommunityjusticeforum.org

Taxman, F. S. (1998). Reducing recidivism through a seamless system of care: components of effective treatment, supervision, and transition services in the community. College Park, MD: University of Maryland.

Standardized Assessment Procedures

Effective prevention and intervention efforts focus on strengthening protective factors and eliminating or reducing the severity of risk factors. Thus, comprehensive assessment of risk factors, protective factors, and other service needs is essential both for individual-level case management and for aggregate assessment of local intervention priorities.

- Risk factors, service needs, and protective factors should be identified using standardized procedures that can be used and understood in the same way across agencies and service settings.
- Broad coverage is required, ranging from identifying youth at risk of serious and violent delinquency among more general populations (e.g., middle school and high school students) to screening for mental health problems, substance abuse problems, and specific risk and protective factors among youth already referred to the juvenile justice or social service systems.
- For youth entering the juvenile justice system the recommended assessment system is the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) available through the NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA).
- For mental health screening and assessments, recommended instruments include the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment developed by John Lyons at Northwestern University and the Verbal Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (V-DISC). Both instruments are available through the New York State Psychiatric Institute or (for counties using the YASI) through DPCA.
- For identifying youth "at-risk" among school-aged children, no specific instrument is recommended at this time, but published instruments or standardized procedures that have been formally validated and normed are preferred over ad hoc and locally unique procedures.

Seamless System

In order to ensure that all of the components of a local youth violence reduction strategy work together as a seamless system of mutually compatible, mutually reinforcing efforts, active coordination is required at both the strategic level and the individual case management level.

A coordinated community strategy is one in which local agencies, organizations, and community leaders work together to ensure consistency in their responses to violence and the conditions that promote violence. They share common goals and a common philosophical framework, and they adopt consistent policies across settings.

For example, strategies that seek to reduce gun violence by juveniles need to ensure that all of the relevant actors, including schools, police, the probation department, courts, the social services department, and service providers agree to an integrated approach to problems such as gun possession, the availability of guns, youth attitudes concerning guns, and community norms. Similarly, a policing initiative expected to yield an increase in arrests of juveniles should be closely coordinated with other agencies and service providers, so that advance arrangements are in place for delivering the youth to appropriate settings (e.g., a community assessment center or social service agency), without creating undue increases in detention populations or police overtime. For all such efforts, strategic partners must establish practical procedures for routine exchange of information concerning both programs and individual cases, and they must also jointly review implementation of the approach and measure its success.

At the individual case management level, a seamless system is one in which youth cannot "fall through the cracks." It requires integration of operational procedures across the agencies and the

programs that deal with young offenders and "at-risk" youth, such that the system functions as though it were a single entity (e.g., see Taxman, 1998). Without explicit joint planning and policy development, gaps and inconsistencies frequently appear among the services and interventions operated by the justice system, the mental health system, the substance abuse treatment system, the social services system, and the school system.

One of the main objectives of a seamless system is to provide continuity for individual youth who experience a combination or sequence of interventions. Continuity is critical to achieving positive outcomes whether youth experience multiple interventions simultaneously (e.g., outpatient drug treatment while under probation supervision) or sequentially (e.g., step down from institutional placement to day treatment and from day treatment to less intensive community supervision). In either case, interventions should be guided by similar philosophies, terminology, expectations, and where applicable, compatible curricula (continuity of content), so that youth do not experience mixed messages. With respect to transitions across service settings, the system should insure that each intervention follows logically from the previous one (another aspect of continuity of content), that there is a smooth transition from one level of external control to another (continuity of control), that there are no gaps in essential services, such as medical care or mental health services (continuity of service delivery), that there are explicit plans for engineering a smooth transition from one living situation to the next (continuity of social environment), and there are provisions for maintaining or transitioning interpersonal supports (continuity of attachment). (See Altschuler and Armstrong, 2002 for more detailed discussions of the components of continuity.)

Further Reading:

Altschuler, D. M., & Armstrong, T. L. (2002). Juvenile Corrections and Continuity of Care in a
   Community Context: The Evidence and Promising Directions. *Federal Probation, 66*(2), 72-77.
Taxman, F. S. (1998). *Reducing recidivism through a seamless system of care: components of effective*
   treatment, supervision, and transition services in the community. College Park, MD: University
   of Maryland.

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)

One fourth of the funding available through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Formula Grant Program is contingent upon efforts to reduce the disproportionate representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system. As noted in the State's three-year plan (New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, 2003, pp 51-52), a 1988 amendment to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 required states to "address efforts to reduce the proportion of juveniles detained or confined in secure . . . facilities, who are members of minority groups if such proportion exceeds the proportion such groups represent in the general population." A 2002 amendment then expanded this mandate to "reduce . . . the disproportionate number of juvenile members of minority groups, who come into *contact* [emphasis added] with the juvenile justice system."

Localities must be cognizant of the DMC mandate when developing a coordinated action plan for reducing youth violence. For example, certain policing strategies might *increase* DMC by disproportionately increasing arrests in minority communities, *unless* they are offset by other interventions that reduce the overall level of criminal activity by youth in those communities. An increase in arrests, in turn, might disproportionately *increase* detention and adjudication of minority youth, *unless* it is offset by a system that holds many youth accountable for their actions through appropriate alternatives to detention and formal adjudication. (See sections on graduated sanctioning and restorative practices, above.) A well-planned *system* of interventions can include effective enforcement tactics and appropriate incapacitation, while still achieving an overall reduction in DMC.

Further Reading:

Community Research Associates, Developmental Associates, and Developmental Services Group (2001). *Disproportionate Minority Confinement Technical Assistance Manual: Second Edition.* U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (2003). *Three-Year Comprehensive State Plan for the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Formula Grant Program.* Albany, NY: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

APPENDIX B:

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

<u>Core Indicators of Violent Crime</u>

Participating municipalities will be required to report a core set of indicators monthly. The core indicators are designed to measure progress toward the ultimate goal of reducing violent crime committed by children and adolescents. They include *direct* measures of reported violent crime and *indirect* measures of violent crime based on arrest data and other violence-related indicators. They also include some indicators that specifically address youth crime and some that apply to persons of all ages. The arrest-based indicators derived from the Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system will be provided by DCJS. Probation Intake data will be obtained separately from local probation departments through the State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives.   The indicators derived from Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) crime data and UCR arrest data are to be provided by participating localities. The core indicators are listed in Table B1.

<u>Other Recommended Indicators of Youth Violence and Risk Factors</u>

It is recommended that other indicators of youth violence and violence risk factors be monitored by participating localities wherever possible. If it is feasible, participating localities should monitor reported injuries, indicators of school-related violence, and indicators of other problem behaviors known to be associated with violence or to be precursors of violence. Some specific examples are listed in Table B2.

Some of the recommended indicators may only be available at less frequent intervals than the core indicators. For example, the "school violence reported incidents" and "school risk indicators for problem behavior" are normally only reported to the State Education Department (SED) on an annual basis. The county-level PRISMS indicators are also normally reported annually. Nevertheless, some of these indicators may be obtainable more frequently through collaborative arrangements among local agencies in participating localities.

<u>Program-Specific Indicators</u>

It is important to monitor not only progress toward the *ultimate goal* of violent crime reduction but also the *direct outcomes* of the specific interventions included in locally defined coordinated action plans. Taken together with other information, measures of intervention outcomes make it possible to begin to understand whether an intervention is contributing to the ultimate goal of violent crime reduction, and if not, why not. For example, if an intervention is found to produce the intended direct outcomes but does not yield a reduction in violent crime, it is possible either that the problem addressed by that intervention is not the most important contributor to violent crime in that locality or that alleviating the problem cannot have a measurable impact on violent crime unless other problems are addressed at the same time. On the other hand, if an intervention is found to *not produce the direct outcome* it was designed to produce, then perhaps the intervention model is not properly implemented or is not an effective model in the context where it is being applied.

Because the specific interventions that comprise a coordinated action plan will differ from one locality to another, appropriate performance indicators for the direct outcomes of specific interventions must be determined by each participating locality. Localities should routinely monitor the status of the direct outcome indicators for all of the interventions incorporated in their local action strategies. In addition, the contracts that govern programs funded through the DCJS Office of Funding and Program Assistance routinely *require* that grantees specify the performance indicators that will be used to measure direct outcomes of the funded interventions, and that they include the indicators in their quarterly progress reports.

TABLE B1: Core Indicators of Violent Crime		
Indicator Category	**Indicator Description**	**Age Categories**

UCR Reported Crime	**UCR Crime Categories**
	• Homicide (Index)
	• Sex offenses
	  - Forcible rape (Index)
	  - Other sex offenses (Part2)
	• Robbery (Index)
	• Assault
	  - Aggravated Assault (Index)
	  - Simple assault (Part2)
	
	• Dangerous weapons (Part 2)
	• Firearm-related index crimes
	  - Homicide
	  - Forcible Rape
	  - Robbery
	  - Aggravated Assault
		N/A

UCR Reported Arrests	**UCR Arrest Categories**
	• Homicide (Index)
	• Sex offenses
	  - Forcible rape (Index)
	  - Other sex offenses (Part2)
	
	• Robbery (Index)
	• Assault
	  - Aggravated Assault (Index)
	  - Simple assault (Part2)
	• Dangerous weapons (Part 2)
		7-12
		13-15
		16-18
		19-21
		22 plus

NOTE: Indicators in shaded cells will be provided by DCJS; they need not be reported by participating localities		

CCH Juvenile Offender (JO) Arrests	**In UCR Arrest Categories**
	• Homicide (Index)
	• Sex offenses
	  - Forcible rape (Index)
	  - Other sex offenses (Part2)
	
	• Robbery (Index)
	• Assault
	  - Aggravated Assault (Index)
	• Dangerous weapons (Part 2)
		13
		14-15

CCH Arrests Involving Firearms By Age Categories	**In UCR Arrest Categories**
	• Homicide (Index)
	• Sex offenses
	 - Forcible rape (Index)
	 - Other sex offenses (Part2)
	
	• Robbery (Index)
	• Assault
	  - Aggravated Assault (Index)
	  - Simple assault (Part2)
	• Dangerous weapons (Part 2)
		13
		14-15
		16-18
		19-21
		22 plus

Shooting Incidents	**Total Shooting Incidents Reported**	N/A
Probation Intake : JDs	**JD Cases Opened at Intake** • Total • Designated felony cases • All other cases	
Probation Intake : PINS	**PINS Cases Opened at Intake** • Total	

TABLE B2: Other Recommended Indicators of Youth Violence and Risk Factors		
Indicator Category	**Indicator Description**	**Age/School Category**
School-Related Arrests – Penal Law Code Top Charge	**Arrests on School Property or Transportation or at School-Sponsored Functions Off School Grounds** • Falsely reporting an incident (PL 240, subsections 50, 55, 60) • Placing a false bomb (PL 240, subsections 61, 62) **Drug-Free School Zone Arrests** • Criminal sale of a cont. substance in or near school grounds (PL 220.44)	7-12 13-15 16-18 19-21 22 plus
School Violence - Reported Incidents (SED Reporting Categories)	**Violent and Disruptive Incidents on School Property or Transportation or at School-Sponsored Functions Off School Groups** • Homicide • Weapons possession • Weapons Use • Personal injury or intimidations • Sexual offenses • Use, possession or sale of drugs or alcohol • Bomb threat, false alarm, arson or riot • Theft • Burglary • Criminal Mischief **Factors Underlying Violent or Disruptive Incidents** •Firearm-related • Weapon-related (other than firearm) • Gang-related • Drug-related **Weapons Confiscated on School Property or Transportation or at School-Sponsored Functions Off School Grounds** • Handgun • Rifle-Shotgun • Other firearms • Knives • Chemical/Biological Agents • Other Weapons	Elementary Middle/Jr. High High School
School Risk Indicators for Problem Behavior (SED Reporting Categories)	**Problem Behavior** • Non-criminal disruptive incidents • Truants • Attendance rate • In-school suspensions • Out-of-school suspensions • Alternative education program referrals • PINS referrals • JD referrals • Criminal court referrals • Counseling referrals (voluntary) • Other non-punitive referrals • Under probation supervision • Expulsions • Annual high school completion/dropout rate • Suicide attempts/interventions	Elementary/ Middle/Jr. High High School
School Safety	**School Safety** • Transfers requested to other schools because of school safety issues	Elementary Middle/Jr. High High School

Indicator Category	Indicator Description	Age/School Category
Reported Injuries	**Youth Violence/Drug/Alcohol-Related Injuries** • Homicide and legal interventions (i.e., deaths caused by police action) • Hospitalizations resulting from self-inflicted injuries • Hospitalizations resulting from assault • Indicated reports of child abuse and maltreatment • Intoxicated youth involved in auto accidents • Drug related hospital diagnosis	0- 6 7-12 13-15 16-18 19-21
Selected PRISMS Risk Indicators (Limited to indicators not otherwise noted above)	**Interpersonal Problems** • Emotionally disturbed students • Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD)-Related mental health diagnoses **Problem Behavior - Sexuality** • Teenage Pregnancy • Teenage Abortions • Hospital diagnoses of STDs **Problem Behavior - Delinquency** • Juvenile property crime arrests • Juvenile other arrests (nonviolent, non-AOD) • OCFS-Total in care **Family Dysfunction** • Foster care admissions • Children in foster care • Preventive services openings • CPS (Child Protective Services) indicated cases • CPS reports - mandated • CPS reports - total received • Divorces **Academic Failure** • 3rd grade reading and math • 4th grade science • 5th grade writing • 6th grade reading and math	N/A

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TABLE B2: Other Recommended Indicators of Youth Violence and Risk Factors
(Continued)

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