

Street Violence Crime Reduction Strategies:

A Review of the Evidence

The literature review was created to compile the current research in the field and assess the effectiveness of various violence reduction strategies. The review breaks down each strategy by defining it, discussing theoretical origins, and detailing the current state of the empirical research. The review also categorizes the strategies by the type of approach and who is leading the efforts. The two main categories are police-led strategies and community-led strategies.

Within **Police-led strategies**, there are three main approaches to violence reduction:

1. **Offender-based approaches** are rooted in the idea that a small number of offenders are responsible for a disproportionately large amount of crime. **Focused deterrence** is the most notable of offender-based approaches. This approach shows promise in the short-term but requires additional research to maximize effectiveness.
2. **Place-based approaches** are based on the idea that violence is nonrandom and concentrated in particular areas. The specific place-based approaches mentioned in the review include **hot spots policing** and **place-based investigations** or **Place Network Investigations (PNI)**. These approaches are meant to focus on high-crime areas in order to break down criminal infrastructures. Research has shown strong evidence for hot spots policing and some benefit for PNI. The PNI approach is seen as a promising practice for reducing violence.
3. **Community-based approaches** have shown little effect on violence reduction but have shown a positive impact in a community's view of law enforcement. These police-led efforts include **community-oriented policing**, **broken windows policing**, and **procedural justice**.

Community-Led Strategies can be thought of as a **public health approach**. They are a multi-faceted, multi-player approach to violence reduction that centers around the idea that violence is a community problem and not solely an individual one. Specific public health approaches include Promoting School-Community-University Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER), Communities that Care (CTC), Youth Prevention Centers (YVPC), Cure Violence and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model. Community-led programs such as PROSPER and CTC show promising results but also show sustainability problems. Most of the benefits of these community programs seem to be directed towards juveniles and improving their mental health and outlook.

The literature review summarizes the research and evidence for all the above-mentioned strategies, identifying current evidence-based methods and where future research is needed.

A summary of the findings by the IACP/UC Research Center researchers revealed six key elements to a successful violence reduction strategy:

1. Focus on individuals and high-risk areas,
2. Address underlying reasons for violence through proactive intervention,
3. Promote perceptions of legitimacy and community support for an intervention,
4. Create of a network of agencies with productive relationships,
5. Base interventions on strong, well-defined theories to help guide application, and
6. Actively engage community stakeholders, including non-criminal justice ones.

For more information, see McManus, H., Cherkauskas, J., Engel, R., Light, S., & Shoulberg, A. (2019). Street Violence Crime Reduction Strategies: A Review of the Evidence. Available at <https://www.theiacp.org/research>.

