

Lesson Plan 1: Crime Reduction

Purpose of the lesson

This lesson provides an overview of crime reduction as a comprehensive, community wide, intelligence-led, and evidence-based response to the problem of crime. Crime reduction is an umbrella approach – with problem-oriented policing as one of its cornerstones. With this in mind, the lesson will provide a context within which problem-oriented policing can be considered.

This lesson is intended to provide officers with an understanding of crime reduction. The officer will become aware of the rationale underlying crime reduction, including its key features, and how the overall concepts apply to the general duty police officer.

Note to Presenter

Please be encouraged to introduce the total training package of six lessons. You may want to consider outlining presentation timelines and your agency's expectations for officer involvement. Each lesson is designed to be taught in 10–15-minute segments. It is recommended that you present the training package within a reasonable period of time to enhance continuity, comprehension and retention. A summary of the remaining topics covered in this series is listed at the end of this first lesson.

Overview

Learning objectives	By the end of the lesson, officers will be familiar with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• crime reduction as a concept, and its relationship to problem-oriented policing• the need for a crime reduction approach• understand the key features of crime reduction• what the key principles really mean for general duty officers
Time	15 minutes
Instructional techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Q & A with discussion
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PowerPoint CD (slides 1–12)

Procedure

Slide 1: Crime Reduction

Introduce yourself (if necessary).

Slide 2: Overview of Lesson 1

Learning objective 1

Crime reduction as a concept, and its relationship to problem-oriented policing.

Introduce the lesson.

Explain that the lesson is intended to provide officers with a better understanding of:

- crime reduction as a concept, and its relationship to problem-oriented policing.
- the reasons for using a crime reduction approach.
- the key principles of crime reduction.
- what the key features of crime reduction really mean for general duty police officers.

Ask: What is your understanding of crime reduction?

Add that crime reduction captures the essence of problem-oriented policing in a holistic, collaborative, and comprehensive way.

Slide 3: Evolution of Policing

Explain crime reductions as an evolutionary step in the context of policing:

- It is *best* described as the “way of policing.” Crime reduction is expected to involve the entire criminal justice system, all levels of government (e.g. health, education, housing), and a multiplicity of community partners. It is a way of responding more holistically to crime.
- Crime reduction advances the evolution of policing models – moving forward from traditional policing, to community policing, to problem-oriented policing and most recently, intelligence-led policing.
- Crime reduction can be described as an umbrella approach that respects the contributions of each partner agency while keeping in context the aspects and importance of proven police practices, such as Problem-oriented policing.

Slide 4: The Need for a Crime Reduction Approach

Learning objective 2

The reasons for using a crime reduction approach

Explain that crime reduction has evolved out of a concern that police have been losing ground in their ability to respond to crime:

- Policing is becoming increasingly expensive and complicated. Investigations are taking more time, resources are stretched to the maximum, and overall, police are required to do more with less – and in reality, with much less.
- Crime has become more complex and expensive to investigate. Criminal mobility, access to sophisticated equipment, diversity of language, weaponry, and other such challenges demand that police work efficiently and effectively to ensure community safety concerns are met.
- Partnerships are a necessary component of crime reduction. This approach requires a more in-depth and integrated method of involving many levels of community and government. This collaborative agency approach ensures an overall comprehensive process occurs that is not necessarily police driven.

Slide 5: Developing a Canadian Approach

Explain that crime reduction has been very successful in other parts of the world, and now also in British Columbia:

- UK has had tremendous success for more than a decade utilizing a crime reduction approach. Since 1997, crime has been reduced by 35% (Home Office, 2007).
- While the development of a crime reduction approach in Canada will reflect Canadian values and conditions, the guiding principles remain the same: police will need to work in a far more integrated fashion with other parts of the criminal justice system, all levels of government, community, and other stakeholders.
- In B.C., while the stage is still being set for practicing the principles of crime reduction, positive results are already evident.
- Crime is down generally around B.C. The reduction of crime is even more dramatic especially where a focus on chronic and priority offenders has occurred in areas that are more fully practicing crime reduction strategies. In addition, one of the factors contributing to the success of one B.C. community is its hiring of a crime reduction manager (Plecas, 2008).

Slide 6: Key Principles of Crime Reduction

Learning objective 3

The key principles of crime reduction.

Describe the key principles of crime reduction:

- **A primary focus on offenders, not offences** – It is now widely recognized that certain offenders are highly recidivistic and responsible for a disproportionately large volume of crime. If we pay special attention to that group, police can receive greater value for energy output.
- **A sustained system of partnerships** – It is one thing to say you can reduce crime, but it another to sustain it over the long term. In developing responses to offenders, this means getting individuals off of drugs, supporting them with proper housing and employment, and providing proper medical and social services. Achieving these goals requires connections with partners who are directly responsible for the delivery of appropriate programs and services through wrap-around initiatives. There is also a need to recognize that not everyone is going to jail. However, even if individuals go to jail, they will get out at some point. Everyone who comes into conflict with the law needs to be connected to services that can reduce the underlying conditions that lead to crime.
- **An additional focus on:**
 - **Convicting highly recidivistic and other priority offenders** – This means working in partnership with Crown Counsel to ensure that highly recidivistic and other priority offenders are fully investigated, processed, and attended to throughout the court process to ensure a full application of the law. This collaborative effort is aimed at reducing the revolving door syndrome.
 - **Attending to hotspots** – Every police officer knows that there are certain locations within the community where there will be higher volumes of crime and/or more serious crime. These areas require police officers to be more attentive to these locations and to go about patrolling in a more intentional and directed way. It also means doing other things as well that will turn those hotspots into low crime areas.
 - **Operating in a strategic and intelligence-led manner** – This demands that we have sophisticated information systems, involving greater use of crime analysts, intelligence software, integrated computer systems, and more accessible databases.
(Note for instructor: Historically, people have not used local databases to the extent that they could have).

- **Problem solving in a collaborative way** – What is fundamentally different about crime reduction is that while it involves the police, it also promotes a broadly-based community solution to crime.
- **Being accountable** – A focus on accountability requires strict measurement of what police do. This involves designing performance measures, including program evaluation, and overall, an evidence-based approach to policing. It also means using programs and approaches that have been shown to work, while removing programs that have been ineffective.

Slide 7: Applying Key Features on the Job (1)

Learning objective 4

What the key principles really mean for general duty police officers.

Describe how the key features of crime reduction apply to day-to-day activities for officers on the front line:

- A primary **focus on offenders**, not offences:
 - Identifying, targeting, and being particularly attentive to prolific and other priority offenders. This means making sure that all members of the detachment are aware of who these individuals are and their criminal activity.
 - Being proactive about prolific and priority offenders.
 - The focus on prolific offenders *should not be* at the expense of crime reduction initiatives that tackle crimes committed by first-time and non-prolific offenders.
- A focus on **hotspots**:
 - Not just identifying hotspots, but finding out what makes them problem areas. More importantly, it is determining what is needed to turn these areas around, being attentive to what crime analysts can tell you about the patterns associated with those hotspots, and to what various stakeholders can do to make a difference.
 - Becoming knowledgeable about bylaws and other legislation that may be helpful, applying crime prevention through social development (Lesson 4) and situational crime prevention techniques (covered in Lessons 5 and 6).

Slide 8: Applying Key Features on the Job (2)

- A focus on **getting prolific offenders convicted**:
 - Making sure – as far as possible and when appropriate – that arrests are made and that charges are recommended in cases involving prolific and priority offenders. In the first instance, this means arresting when there is an opportunity to arrest. Prolific offenders should be considered a priority.
 - Making sure that your reports to Crown Counsel are as thorough and complete as possible.
 - Developing a strong rapport with Crown Counsel.
 - Emphasizing to Crown Counsel the significance of dealing with prolific and priority offenders.
- A focus on operating in a very **strategic, intelligence-led, and information-led way**:
 - Making sure that you are attentive to intelligence-gathering opportunities.
 - Making sure that the information you gather is complete and going the extra mile in terms of getting background information on an offender.
 - Doing patrols in a purposeful manner.
 - Doing street checks and understanding their intelligence-gathering value.
 - Sharing information with other police officers.

Slide 9: Applying Key Features on the Job (3)

- A focus on **accountability**:
 - Appreciating the importance of measurement and evaluation in terms of initiatives you might be involved in.
 - Remembering that all police initiatives should be evidence-informed. This means choosing initiatives that have been shown to work.
- A focus on **forming partnerships**:
 - Recognizing the important role that many different stakeholders can play in reducing crime, and working together. This includes schools, service providers, housing providers, employers, and agencies at all three levels of government.
 - Being attentive to the kinds of things that community members can do to be helpful in supporting youth and adults at risk.
 - For example: helping youth at-risk to complete school, get job training, addressing drug abuse through public health, and preventing family violence (Waller, 2006).

Slide 10: Applying Key Features on the Job (4)

Ask: What partnerships do you think you could develop in this community at your level of policing?

- A focus on **collaborative problem solving**:
 - Recognizing the need for partners to work together in an ongoing and collaborative fashion, with great respect for the contributions that each has to offer.
 - Recognizing that collaboration does not happen on its own; it requires deliberate coordination and organization. For example, in the UK, the integrated approach is facilitated through a very well developed system of partnerships involving all levels of government, and a broad range of community stakeholders – to the extent that many communities have full-time officials coordinating local partnerships.

Ask: Crime reduction is relatively new in Canada. What do you see are some of the initial challenges in applying crime reduction in this community?

Slide 11: Policing: A BC Practitioners' Toolkit Training Series

Outline upcoming lessons. Remind officers of the training process and your agency's expectations regarding participation.

- **Lesson 1:** Crime Reduction
- **Lesson 2:** Introduction to Problem-Oriented Policing
- **Lesson 3:** Problem Solving Model (SARA/CAPRA)
- **Lesson 4:** Crime Prevention through Social Development
- **Lesson 5:** Situational Crime Prevention I (Crime Triangle, Broken Windows)
- **Lesson 6:** Situational Crime Prevention II (C.P.T.E.D.)

Slide 12: Next Lesson

Outline the next lesson.

- Lesson 2: Introduction to Problem-Oriented Policing
- Historical review of problem-oriented policing (POP)
 - The introduction and underlying concepts of POP
 - Summary of the strengths and benefits of POP