

Lesson Plan 2: Problem-Oriented Policing

Purpose of the lesson

This lesson provides an overview of problem-oriented policing (POP). The lesson provides a brief historical review of POP, including the rationale for a shift in policing services; a definition of POP and its underlying concepts; and, a summary of the strengths and benefits of POP from the perspective of the community, police agency, and front-line officers.

Overview

Learning objectives	By the end of the lesson, officers will know: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the history of POP, including the rationale for a shift in policing services• the definition of underlying concepts of POP• the strengths of POP from a community, police agency, and front-line officer perspective.
Time	15 minutes
Instructional techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Q & A with discussion
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson plan• Support Material in Appendix A-E• PowerPoint CD (slides 1–14)• Handout: POP Officer Benefits

Procedure

Slide 1: Introduction to Problem-Oriented Policing

Introduce yourself (if necessary).

Slide 2: Overview of Lesson 2

Introduce the lesson.

Explain that:

- the lesson will provide an overview of problem-oriented policing (POP)
- the lesson provides
 - a brief historical review of POP, including the rationale for a shift in policing services
 - a definition of POP and an introduction to the underlying concepts
 - a summary of the strengths and benefits of POP from the perspectives of the community, policy agency, and front-line officers.

Slide 3: Background Information

Learning objective 1

Know the history of problem-oriented policing, including the rationale for a shift in policing services.

This slide provides general background information on policing and identifies some of the limitations of the traditional law enforcement approach to crime and disorder. The last points emphasize the need for a shift toward a problem-oriented policing approach.

- Police services have varied histories and mandates since their inception from the days of Sir Robert Peel.
- Police services tend to be *reactive* (versus *proactive*) (e.g. driven by calls for service).
- Law enforcement (e.g. patrols, routine call response, emergency response, criminal investigation) is one of the most prevalent means for responding to crime and disorder.
- Law enforcement has a limited ability to address community problems:
 - it is short-lived, and
 - it fails to address the underlying causes of crime.

Community crime and disorder is complex in nature, representing a societal problem which often extends beyond policing responsibility.

- **This suggests a need to adopt more comprehensive response strategies.**

For additional information on problem-oriented policing, see Appendix A

Slide 4: Effective Problem Solving

Describe effective problem solving.

Effective problem solving addresses community problems on the basis of:

- an understanding of the specific problem, and
- customized responses using strategies that effectively target specific problems.

Research suggests that effective problem solving is achieved through:

- focusing attention on problems, and
- creating response strategies from a variety of approaches.

(R. V. Clark & J. E. Eck, 2005)

Slide 5: History of Problem-Oriented Policing

Briefly outline the history of problem-oriented policing.

- Problem-oriented policing was first introduced in 1979 by Herman Goldstein, an American law professor who had worked for the Chicago Police Department.
- Goldstein developed a **systematic process** based on focused analysis and diverse approaches. There are two versions:
 - SARA (for Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) is the internationally recognized version
 - CAPRA (for Clients, Acquire/Analyze, Partnerships, Response, and Assessment of Action) is the model that has been adopted by the RCMP.
- Incidents are grouped and viewed as symptoms of a larger problem.
- Targeting the root causes of a problem rather than the symptoms represents a fundamental shift from the traditional law enforcement approach, and is a key component of POP. The need for this shift arises from the dominant historical police practice, which is driven largely by calls for service.

Slide 6: What Is Problem-Oriented Policing?

Learning objective 2

Define problem-oriented policing and describe key concepts.

Define problem-oriented policing.

Problem-oriented policing is a method for integrating daily police practice with criminal justice theory and research methods in order to develop the best possible means for reducing crime and disorder.

Slide 7: Emphasis on Proactive Policing

Describe how problem-oriented policing is beneficial for community, police, and individual police officers.

Problem-oriented policing is beneficial for community, police and individual officers in numerous ways. These include:

- crime prevention
- community partnerships
- sustainable solutions
- resource development
- department-wide flexibility and commitment
- use of officers' knowledge and experience.

As a proactive policing approach, problem-oriented policing is more than a quick fix: it works toward addressing root causes of problems.

Slide 8: What Is a Problem?

Describe the three elements that characterize a "POP" problem.

- A problem is a cluster or group of similar, related or recurring incidents.
- They might be related through a common theme, such as time, event, location, method, certain behaviour, or other factors.
- A problem may come to the attention of police through the community or via front-line officers.

- Some problems might require an individual police officers' attention, while others might demand the attention of the entire police agency, along with supportive community partnerships.
- As first responders, police often have the opportunity to become aware of significant social issues in the community before other agencies or community members. If the problem has some relation to the police but generally falls outside their mandate, police play an important role in generating referrals, building bridges, raising awareness and using their networks to augment solutions, with the intention of supporting initiatives in a secondary role.
- Sufficient clarity of the primary problem is required in order to ensure that the root cause will be addressed, rather than just the symptoms. Defining the problem correctly forms a central task that can give a police agency a focused and intentional direction. In other words, the degree in which a problem is understood will determine the effectiveness of police service delivery.

Emphasize that applying the problem solving model facilitates a “best practice” approach to designing and implementing an appropriate response.

Slide 9: The Problem Solving Model

Briefly outline the four elements of the problem solving model. (This slide is only intended to provide an overview of the model. Slide 10 further explains and defines the four elements specific to SARA.)

- Element 1: Information gathering
- Element 2: Analysis
- Element 3: Response
- Element 4: Evaluation

Slide 10: Problem Solving Model

Work through the four general elements of the problem solving model, illustrating the systematic, logic-driven approach to problem solving. Focus on the four key areas: information gathering, analysis, response and assessment. These elements will be covered in greater detail in Lesson 3a (the SARA model) and Lesson 3b (the CAPRA model).

Note: use the problem solving model that applies to your police agency.

- **1. Information gathering:**
 - Includes local data collection (who, what, where, why, when)
- **2. Analysis:**
 - To understand and define the specific problem

- **3. Customizing of responses:**
 - Commitment to best possible responses
 - Integrating enforcement, situational crime prevention, crime prevention through social development, as necessary
 - No preference for one approach over the other – emphasis is on the *best* strategy
 - May be a single response or a multi-pronged response over time
- **4. Evaluation of responses:**
 - To share information
 - Learn from successes and mistakes

Slide 11: POP and Community Policing

Describe how community policing and problem-oriented policing are separate and complementary policing concepts. Reinforce the difference between the two: Community policing is a philosophy for policing, while problem-oriented policing is a method or framework for police practice.

- Community policing focuses on the reduction of crime, public-police relations, and organizational change.
- Problem-oriented policing is a method for reducing persistent community crime and disorder.

Slide 12: Benefits of POP

Learning objective 3

Describe benefits of problem-oriented policing.

Identify the overall benefits of problem-oriented policing for communities, police agencies, and individual officers. Distribute handout as required.

- **Community**
 - Greater involvement in public safety issues
 - Reduced level of fear
 - Increased level of safety
 - Increase in positive perceptions of police
- **Police agencies**
 - Encourages broader participation within police agencies

- Reduces calls for service
- More efficient use of resources through customized response strategies
- Encourages collaboration through community partnerships and shared responsibility
- **Frontline officers**
 - Engages and validates officers' experience and overall working knowledge
 - Increased sense of accomplishment and job satisfaction

Slide 13: Summary

Review the main ideas covered in the lesson.

- Problem-oriented policing:
 - involves a commitment to using the best possible response strategies
 - ⇒ by focusing on primary problems
 - ⇒ by using a variety of strategies as appropriate
 - integrates criminal justice theory, policy and practice
 - encourages community involvement
 - is a department-wide approach
 - seeks strategic input from front-line officers.

Slide 14: Next Lesson

Outline the next lesson.

Note to Instructor

The SARA problem solving model is known internationally in policing circles. The RCMP uses a problem solving model called CAPRA (Client, Acquire, Partnerships, Response, and Assessment). Both the SARA and CAPRA models (Lesson 3A and 3B respectively) are included as part of Lesson 3, and either model can be used depending on the protocol of the police agency.

Lesson 3: SARA/CAPRA Problem Solving Model

- Review of the problem-oriented policing (POP) concept
- The four steps of SARA/the five steps of CAPRA
- The importance of using the problem solving steps as a guide.

HANDOUT - LESSON 2

PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING OFFICER BENEFITS

As a member of this Police Agency, an officer might ask: "Why should I spend the time and effort to become involved in problem-oriented policing?"

Here are a few thoughts as to how an officer can benefit:

1. **Greater Satisfaction**
 - Officers will feel as though they are making a difference.
2. **Increased Job Opportunities**
 - More placements with POP- problem solvers etc.
3. **Less "Play it by the Book"**
 - More discretion for officers to start and work on POP projects of their own.
4. **Fewer Calls for Service**
 - By alleviating the "diseases".
5. **Fewer Negative Consequences**
 - Less stress and turmoil that is associated with the incident driven mentality.
6. **Increased Legal Ability**
 - When attempting to get legal monitoring approval/warrants: if the officer has a well developed plan/lots of information, they are more likely to get approved.
7. **Less Frustration and Cynicism**
 - Officers won't be dealing with the same people/issues over and over.
8. **Increased Sense of Ability and Confidence**
 - By seeing problems become resolved
9. **Increased Community Satisfaction**
 - Community will be happier, and they will have an increased appreciation of the police.