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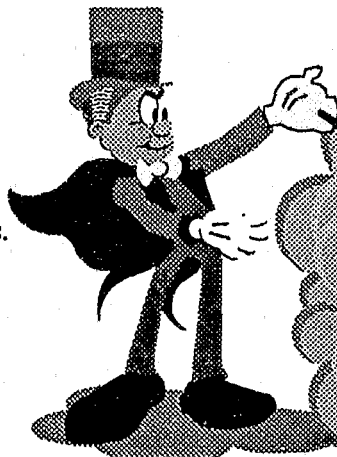
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Juvenile Probation Tricks of the Trade*

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Juvenile Intensive Probation Surveillance Techniques

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ACQUISITION

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Introduction

The concept of juvenile probation has been with our society for quite some time. Over the years, probation officers throughout our nation have developed programs to supervise, counsel and guide delinquent youth to live productive lives. Unfortunately, the ability of these officers to provide the necessary guidance and supervision is being hampered by variables out of their control. Cut backs in staff and increasing case loads are a few of the obstacles probation officers are expected to overcome each day. The public demands that juvenile delinquency be controlled, yet resources needed to battle the problem are dwindling. As a result, minors in need of close supervision and in depth intervention are being sent to costly, often overcrowded secure facilities.

Many juvenile courts have observed that when these minors are released from custody they exhibit more violent and more serious behaviors than when they were initially placed in confinement. Additionally, in many jurisdictions these minors are returned to the community with little or no supervision. To counteract this trend, many juvenile courts have developed a highly structured and closely supervised probation program called Intensive Probation. These courts are postponing the confinement of minors and instead are placing them on Juvenile Intensive Probation.

Juvenile Intensive Probation Programs vary around the country. Each program is unique and is developed to serve the

needs of the individual community. The underlying concept, however, is common to all the programs: closely monitored supervision will reduce the likelihood that the juvenile will commit additional delinquent acts. This paper discusses various aspects of these programs. It begins with a brief overview of Intensive Probation and presents the positive and negative aspects behind the concept. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of surveillance to the program and provides detail on techniques which probation or surveillance officers can use to conduct surveillance.

Intensive Probation Overview

There are two basic differences between intensive probation and traditional probation supervision. The first is in the type of juveniles being supervised. In most cases, juveniles on Intensive Probation have lengthy criminal histories. Although most of them have at one time or another been supervised by traditional probation, they continue to commit delinquent acts. They also tend to be more sophisticated and less willing to change their behavior. In some cases, they have the potential to be violent. Merely placing these juveniles on Intensive Probation is not going to necessarily change their behavior.

When these juveniles are placed under supervision, they usually test the limitations to which they are being subjected. The advantage to having them under Intensive Probation is

* In recognition that probation officers have a wealth of untapped knowledge and experience, this series provides a medium for them to share their experience, knowledge and skills with the field. The series seeks to address specific professional development needs of juvenile probation officers by providing practical, useable materials focused on discrete probation skills and techniques. Anyone interested in contributing to this series should contact Doug Thomas, JPOI Coordinator, at the NCJJ, 701 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (412) 227-6950. The Center is the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. This series was supported by funds provided to the Technical Assistance to the Juvenile Court Project by OJJDP through grant #89-JN-CX-K001. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP.

that officers have more opportunities to monitor the juvenile's behavior and assign immediate consequences to modify the juvenile's negative behavior. In some cases however, the juvenile asks to be sent to a secure facility rather than deal with the detailed scrutiny that an Intensive Probation program provides. Most of these juveniles have not been accountable for their actions in the past and now feel as though they are living in a fish bowl. Probation officers need to understand that these juveniles will not change over night and that they should refrain from revoking these juveniles' probation for minor infractions. Officers should develop a system of progressive sanctions in which the severity of consequences is equal to the infraction committed by the juvenile.

The second substantial difference between traditional and Intensive Probation is the method by which the juveniles are supervised. In Intensive Probation Programs, the caseloads are generally smaller (10-15 minors per officer) and the officers usually work in teams of two. The structure of these teams and the responsibility of each team member varies from program to program. Many teams consist of a seasoned probation officer who handles the legal aspects of the cases and a surveillance officer who conducts the majority of field contacts. It is imperative that each team member understand their roles and that communication between members remains open and honest. A break down in communication can result in mixed messages being sent to the juveniles and the probability that the team will be manipulated by the juveniles in the program.

Even though Intensive Probation programs vary, most programs have the following similar components:

- school or education
- community service
- monetary restitution
- employment
- surveillance.

Although all the components are important, the most visible to the public is the surveillance component.

Surveillance Techniques

The American Heritage Dictionary defines surveillance as "close observation of a person or group, especially of one under suspicion." This definition infers that a person under surveillance is physically being watched. Although much of surveillance conducted by Intensive Probation programs consists of watching or observing minors, surveillance also includes inquiring about a juvenile's behavior when the team is not actually observing the youth. This type of surveillance is known as collateral contacts. One example of a collateral contact is calling the juvenile's school to obtain information on how many classes the juvenile has missed or how often the juvenile probationer has been sent to the office for discipline problems. Another example would be contacting law enforcement agencies to find out why a juvenile was questioned by the police. Collateral contacts enable the team to gain information on minors

while they are away from the team's supervision. The team may use this information to develop a specialized treatment plan for each minor and to monitor activities.

Visual surveillance is the most common form of surveillance and is typically conducted by surveillance officers. These officers should have considerable knowledge of the history and current status of the juveniles they are monitoring prior to conducting field contacts. These officers should familiarize themselves with the following information on each minor:

- delinquent history
- daily schedules (school and work)
- names and addresses of family members
- places of residence
- criminal history of family members
- modes of transportation (car, motorcycle, etc.)
- knowledge of juvenile's friends
- location of "hang outs"
- physical description
- driver's license number.

Surveillance officers may be required to carry field books that contain the information described above. These books also include the juvenile's picture and a map diagramming the inside of a juvenile's home. This information can be shared with law enforcement agencies in the event of a search or arrest.

Home Visits

When officers conduct surveillance the most frequent, and often times most beneficial, location is the juvenile's home. By conducting night time home visits, surveillance officers can obtain significant information regarding the juvenile and his family. As officers observe the interaction among family members and the juvenile, they can evaluate:

- the parent's attitude toward the minor
- the juvenile's relationship with parents
- the relationship between siblings
- level of family support toward the Intensive program
- signs of alcohol or drug use by the juvenile and/or parents
- signs of emotional, physical or sexual abuse within the family

Officers should look and listen as they approach the home. They need to listen for any sign of family disturbance and look for suspicious activities. If officers know that the family does not have a vehicle and there is a car in the driveway, they should realize that someone other than the family is in the house. When they enter the residence they should inquire as to who owns the vehicle and who else is in the home.

As officers conduct their home visits, they need to observe the interaction between family members and sense the atmosphere in the residence. Is it tense? Do family members seem upset? Officers should try to ask questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no and direct the questions to the juvenile and the parents. If the atmosphere is hostile, the officers may wish to ask the family what is going on. Watching family members eyes and hands could alert officers that the family is trying to hide something. Officers should remember that people tend to look in the direction where objects are hidden.

Officers should visit residences at various times on different days and not become predictable in their visits. After leaving the home, officers should either phone back later in the evening or "double back" and conduct a second visit. This is particularly important if upon the first visit the officers walked into a family crisis. Checking back a second time sends a message to the juvenile and the family that the officers are concerned. It also gives officers the assurance that the crisis has subsided.

Safety techniques that are helpful to surveillance officers when they are conducting home visits include:

- letting someone know their location
- not letting anyone between them and the exit door
- not entering the residence if they sense danger
- asking parents to come to the office if the officers are going to confront them.

School Visits

Juveniles typically spend the majority of their day in school. So it makes a great deal of sense to find out how they are doing there. Conducting surveillance on juveniles during the school day can be one of the most challenging aspects of Intensive Probation. However, it can be successfully accomplished if officers develop positive relationships with school staff. Historically, schools have not been receptive to having officers on school grounds to monitor students. If officers explain the Intensive Probation Program and that they are trying to reinforce many of the school's goals, this relationship can flourish. The officers should meet fairly regularly with the school disciplinarian (usually the principal or assistant principal) and attendance officer. Officers should explain that in the Intensive Program juveniles receive consequences for their negative behavior. Officers should assure school officials that when juveniles are referred to the school's office for negative behavior, the juvenile will receive a similar consequence by the officer. Consequences can range from earlier curfews to receiving community service hours. It is imperative that officers follow through with giving consequences and notifying school staff of the nature of the consequence.

Another person who can assist Intensive Officers in monitoring youths while at school is the attendance officer who keeps track of absences. If the attendance officer notifies the intensive officer each time a juvenile misses class, officers can track down the juvenile and return him to school. In some Intensive Programs, officers call the school each day and get a report on the status of each juvenile in the program. When a

juvenile has an unexcused absence, a consequence should be given by the Intensive Officer. Notifying the attendance officer that this has been done will assist in their continued cooperation.

There are some school districts that do not permit probation staff in their school. Although this makes school monitoring difficult, it doesn't make it impossible. Requiring juveniles to report to officers at lunch time is one way to overcome this obstacle. Juveniles can be required to meet with the surveillance officer at a designated location in front of the school say five minutes before the lunch hour ends. This meeting verifies that juveniles are at school, allows officers to check for signs of drug or alcohol use, gives juveniles an opportunity to talk about the problems they had so far that day and sends a message that officers are checking up on them.

Other methods that can be used to monitor minors while they are at school include: attending parent-teacher conferences or developing a homework check sheet that lists what homework is to be completed each evening. This form is to be filled out by the juvenile and initialed by the teacher. Another method is the development of a grade check form. This form is filled out by the juvenile's teachers biweekly and is similar to a report card.

Law Enforcement

Most Intensive Probation programs have some contact with law enforcement agencies. These agencies can be of enormous assistance when conducting surveillance. Police officers spend a majority of their time in the community and are usually aware of who associates with whom. By meeting with police officers and informing them of who is in the program, the surveillance officer can obtain additional information on a juvenile's activities. Some surveillance officers attend a police briefing once a week to inform police who is on Intensive Probation and what their restrictions are. In other programs, surveillance officers have police ban radios in their vehicles. This enables the surveillance officer to communicate with the police and respond immediately when needed. In Arizona, all juveniles on Intensive Probation are entered into a statewide computer network. If a police officer enters the name of a juvenile, the computer informs the officer whether the juvenile is on intensive probation and in which county. The computer also informs the police officer who to contact for assistance or information.

Employment Visits

Some minors in the Intensive Probation program are employed. This is especially true if a juvenile is not attending school. Most Intensive Probation programs allow their officers to conduct surveillance on juveniles at work. One of the controversies surrounding this is the belief that an employer is likely to terminate the youth's employment if they know he is on probation. Although this does happen on occasion, in most cases if the officer explains the program to the employer, the employer will refrain from terminating the juvenile. Officers conducting surveillance checks at work should be discreet. If the juvenile is employed at a fast food

restaurant, the officer can enter the business, observe the juvenile working and leave. If the juvenile works in an office, the officer can ask to see the juvenile without revealing his position. If the officer needs to speak with the juvenile, the conversation should be brief. If the discussion is going to take a long period of time, the officer can ask the juvenile to report to the office the next day.

Summary

A juvenile's success in the Intensive Probation Program will be effected by the surveillance officer's ability to monitor the juvenile's behavior. But officers also need to be able to build a relationship with the juvenile's family, school, employer and law enforcement. Building and maintaining these kind of relationships assists the Intensive Probation team to motivate minors to change their behavior and successfully complete the Intensive Probation Program.

For further information about Arizona's Intensive Probation Program, contact Bill Stanton at the Arizona Supreme Court, 1501 West Washington, Phoenix, Arizona 85007. (602) 542-9453.