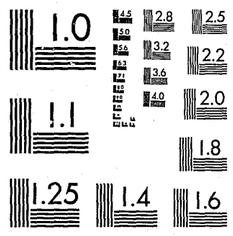




# Criminal Justice & the Elderly

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## Anti-Crime Programs for the Elderly: Combining Community Crime Prevention and Victim Services

by John Hollister Stein

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# ANTI-CRIME PROGRAMS FOR THE ELDERLY: COMBINING COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION AND VICTIM SERVICES

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1977, seven local agencies serving elderly residents of New York, Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Chicago, joined forces to design a national demonstration project attacking two of the greatest despoilers of old age: crime and the fear that it creates in older Americans. From the outset, the common strategy developed by these seven agencies contemplated having a single center to coordinate the work of all of the action projects, and to bring together the lessons that the projects developed in the course of their experimental work. That coordinating role fell to the National Council of Senior Citizens in Washington, D.C. and was housed in its "Criminal Justice and the Elderly" (CJE) program. This manual is one of the products of that learning experience.

One central features of the seven demonstration projects was unusual if not exactly unique: each of them, in its own way, attempted both to relieve the widespread fear of crime in its elderly constituents and to lessen the impact of actual victimization among elderly citizens who were unable to escape criminal harm. Both of these service approaches represent relatively new innovations in the criminal justice world, and even if they had not been frequently implemented in tandem before, it seemed only natural to the designers of the national demonstration program to apply both innovations to their service programs.

In sorting out the seven projects' lessons to others who want to reduce the suffering which crime inflicts on the elderly, it became apparent to the CJE staff that the original premise of the seven projects--one which called



for the combination of the two innovative services--may not be self-explanatory. As we reexamined the theory of combining both crime prevention and victim services, now based on two years of experience, we concluded that the idea of combined services might offer even more than we or any of our colleagues had appreciated. Perhaps the success of operating two parallel service programs would even be greater if an effort were made to integrate the two programs in a systematic fashion.

To properly judge that idea, it is helpful to envision it as the last of three "generations" of public service innovation in the criminal justice field. The first generation consists of the first crime prevention and victim assistance programs which began some five or ten years ago. The second generation involves the demonstration projects with which CJE is affiliated. And the third generation is yet to be born.

In its discussion of the past, present and future, this monograph will not attempt to elaborate on the techniques for planning and implementing the kinds of public services entailed in crime prevention and victim assistance. Instead, the reader is referred to two companion manuals prepared by CJE, each based on the working experience of the seven projects. In this publication, we will seek to confine the discussion to the theory of offering crime prevention and victim services in a single, local service agency. As social service theories go, this one appears to us

to be both interesting and easy to understand. It also appears to offer an increasingly hopeful method of relieving the extra-ordinary amount of suffering which crime inflicts on the older generation.



## II. THE MODERN ORIGINS OF THE CRIME PREVENTION AND VICTIM ASSISTANCF MOVEMENTS

It has been said that, together, the crime prevention and victim assistance movements offer a "consumer's perspective" on criminal justice. Neither of these service inventions would have come into being had not some ordinary people (and some extraordinary criminal justice professionals) become dissatisfied with the performance of the traditional criminal justice system. To this extent, both innovations are the outgrowth of citizen dissatisfactions or, in a sense, consumer grievances.

It is a harmful but popular myth, these complainants have generally concluded, that certain government bureaucracies can and should have a closed monopoly over the prevention and control of crime. Whether the justice agencies should change their ways or new kinds of organizations should be created (the critics have often called for both), the kinds of reforms adovated by the crime prevention and victim services movements involve far more responsiveness to and involvement of the individual client or "consumer" of the criminal justice agencies.

That outlook, shared by the pioneers of community crime prevention and victim services, can be seen clearly in retrospect. But there is little evidence that these similarly-motivated innovators were comparing notes when they helped to establish the first crime prevention and victim service programs in the early and mid-1970's. Instead, the two programs appears to have developed independently, along parallel tracks.

It is worth reviewing the two basic service innovations to get a sense about what they have sought to accomplish. For the differences in

the two innovations need emphasizing as much as their similarities--if either one of them had not been invented, it still would have made very good sense to nurture the other along. Each has an important and distinct contribution to make to the public good.

The Community Crime Prevention Movement

There are two branches of the modern crime prevention movement. The first involves the use of hardware and new technology to foil certain people from succeeding in their criminally-motivated actions. The introduction of automobile ignition locks that also lock the steering wheel in place is perhaps the most famous example. The other branch is the mobilization of natural social groupings, like neighborhoods, to become more attentive to the safety of their individual members. Block Watch programs are the most celebrated examples of this approach, which is commonly referred to as community crime prevention.

Bridging the two techniques is the work of Oscar Newman and the architects and urban planners who have worked with Newman's precepts about "defensible space". The idea is that people have a natural sense of protectiveness over their own "teritory," and that people's "territoriality" can be expanded by redesigning portions of the physical landscape. For example, when a residential street is blocked off at one end, residents start using their front yards more often, and are naturally watchful of strange cars in their dead-end street. Would-be burglars sense that and move on.

This describes the "natural" security-enhancing effect of defensible space at work. In practice, however, the best results seem to come not through the architectural changes alone but by working with the people affected, encouraging them to change their normal



behavior and to take maximum advantage of the new design changes. It is normal, then, to find a lobby patrol established in an apartment building that has been renovated in the defensible-space manner.

It must be recognized that most community crime prevention programs do not have the wherewithal to make major interior and exterior alterations in the physical environment -- it is as much as they can do, for example, to make new door locks available at discount prices to their clients. The emphasis on giving simple security advice to homeowners and tenants, on giving them and their families crime prevention tips, and encouraging them to band together with neighbors has, from the beginning, constituted the lion's share of the modern community crime prevention movement.

One of the earliest such projects began in a West Philadelphia neighborhood some years ago. A meeting called to discuss a then-recent series of rapes attracted far more neighbors then anticipated. When the group's initial determination to secure more police protection proved unproductive, the neighbors kept meeting and soon adopted a self-help approach, focused primarily on getting neighbors to get to know one another.

They reasoned that substituting acquaintanceship and friendship for the isolated, private lifestyles of their community would give them all a greater measure of safety. So they began to call block meetings, trying to get every resident on the block to attend. Half the meeting time was spent discussing crime problems and crime prevention ideas, while half was always reserved for socializing.

In time, the new block clubs formed the West Philadelphia Block Association, whose leaders later became the directors of the Citizens Local Alliance for Safer Philadelphia (CLASP). That organization

has for several years now been training volunteer and paid block organizers from all over Pennsylvania and the East Coast. Many of CLASP's crime prevention (and crime-interruption) techniques were home-grown inventions--like using a small, freon horn as a personal alarm signal, or getting teams of neighbors to stroll the streets in the evenings, equipped only with freon horns, a note pad, perhaps an arm band, and a desire to chat with the neighbors they encountered.

In most respects, CLASP is similar to Block Watch and other such crime prevention efforts, many of them organized by police departments. If the CLASP model differs somewhat, it is in its emphasis on the block club as a multi-purpose tool of neighborhood concern. It is perhaps more likely that a CLASP-organized club, rather than a Block Watch group, would sponsor a block party, an improved street lighting campaign, or a youth recreation program. The CLASP organizers do not steer a new club into any specific civic or social activities, but they continually encourage members to consider common interests beyond the members' mutual desire to be less vulnerable to crime.

CLASP therefore illustrates two elemental motivations that are found in the community crime prevention movement. The first is a sane aversion to being preyed upon, and with it, a faith in the old adage about safety in numbers. The second is a dissatisfaction with the anonymity of urban life, and with that, a desire to create new forms of the "village" culture that once characterized the way most Americans lived, even in their big cities. In fact, the "neighborhood-strengthening impulses of some community crime prevention programs are so strong as to make their organizations full-fledged members of what is often called "the neighborhood movement." Although neighborhood-



strengthening is rarely the primary goal of community crime prevention efforts, that aspect of the movement is often especially significant to elderly residents, who recall with affection the days when "everyone knew everyone on the block" -- and the crime rate was far lower.

The Victim Assistance Movement

Just as crime prevention-in-action seems to have two branches, so does the victim assistance movement seem to come in two forms. The first, which grew out of the modern women's movement and similar citizen-action activities of the past decade, focuses on the crime victim as a person in distress. Projects which are mainly concerned with helping such people recover from their crime-induced pain tend to offer counseling and social services and lobby for less upsetting methods of dealing with victims by the criminal justice professionals the victims meet. The most prominent examples of this approach to victim-oriented reforms are the many rape crisis centers that have been established around the country.

The second and probably larger class of victim service programs was also fueled by a sense of compassion for the preyed-upon, but it has acted on some other concerns as well -- notably, the improved management of criminal justice agencies. Chief among these new service systems are prosecutors' victim/witness assistance units, whose aims are to make the experience of being a witness as agreeable as possible and to reduce the bad side-effects (like having witnesses drop out) or such common, bureaucratic problems as having hearings and trials repeatedly postponed.

While both the victim-oriented and system-oriented services are welcome to crime victims as a general class, the more attractive

of the two from the consumer's perspective is probably the services rendered to crime victims soon after they have contacted the police. After all, the majority of them never see their cases result in an arrest, much less a prosecution, so even the best of courthouse-based services is irrelevant to them. It has also been argued that the worst impact of crime on its victims is on their psychological well-being, which would suggest that rapid "crisis intervention" services deserve being made the highest priority of all the service reforms.

Many of the earliest counseling/social service projects were based in public and private agencies outside the criminal justice system. But today, there appears to be a growing trend for law enforcement agencies to sponsor such services, partly to respond more fully to the unhappiness their officers confront every day (a community-relations or community service rationale) but also, in part, to serve some of their own organizational needs.

Among these is the growing recognition that police officers are neither inhuman nor superhuman--that their constant exposure to sadness and seaminess is very wearing, and adds greatly to their occupational stresses, especially when, as is often the case, they have no choice but to end an interview by simply getting back in their police car, knowing they left behind a very distressed victim.

Another attraction for increased law enforcement involvement in victim services is the apparent connection between "crisis intervention" skills and good police investigation skills. As a number of detective squads are finding, the craft of "crisis counseling" not only helps to calm down an upset victim but it also makes two other things more likely: the victim will remember the criminal event more clearly, and will be a more appreciative and cooperative witness should an arrest



be made. (A growing number of police officers are evidently finding professional self-esteem in the convictions they help to bring about, not just from the numbers of arrests they make. Thus, many take pride in helping victims get over the worst of the trauma so that they can be more effective prosecution witnesses.)

If for these or other reasons, there is a growth in law enforcement sponsorship of (or collaboration with) victim services programs, then a series of projects begun in Florida in the mid-1970s will be remembered as the pathfinders of the new services. The first of these half-a-dozen police-affiliated projects was one established in the Ft. Lauderdale Police Department by Chief Leo Callahan. The design of that two-person unit (staffed by civilians) is a prototype that most of the later projects would seek to copy when they could.

Its first feature is the staff's immediate availability to the officers on duty (a service which requires the so-called victim advocates to carry pagers on nights and weekends). Even officers who have a reassuring way with victims sometimes find that the victims are too upset or their emergency needs are too great to handle, and they welcome the availability of their civilian colleagues to take over these cases.

The second is a back-stopping service whereby the victim advocates cull the police crime reports of the previous day, from which they select cases in which the victim had not already been seen by the advocates but may well be having a number of problems. (In this and other similar projects, the age of the victim can be determinative, so that elderly victims of seemingly minor crimes are often selected for service).

That service is simply one of offering help with anything that is troubling the victims. When indicated, the initiating telephone call is followed by a home visit, and the advocate not only offers some kinds of emotional support in these sessions but looks for other service needs--for emergency food, for example--to which he tries to respond.

Note that in cases handled by the advocate which result in a prosecution, the Ft. Lauderdale project has a counterpart unit in the local prosecutor's office. Good relations between the staff of the two agencies ease the victims' transition from the law enforcement to the prosecution stage.

The basics of most victim service programs, in short, may be described in two words: civility, in the form of institutional courtesy to the endless parade of victims and witness who come through the criminal justice system, and compassion, requiring new kinds of services designed to ease the shocks which victimization often brings, sometimes with permanently-disabling effects.

When one lines up the motivational aims of crime prevention and victim services programs--looking for personal security and stronger neighborhood networks on the one hand, and civility and compassion to the victimized on the other--it is easy to see why the two movements have developed independently of one another. Despite the common emphasis on responding to the personal concerns of program clients, it obviously makes a world of difference if the concerns are those of an actual victim or a potential victim. It was therefore only natural for the two movements to have had independent origins.



Yet, as we shall see, there are some equally "natural" forces at work encouraging the close affiliation (if not yet the merger) of these new service systems.

## III. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: REACHING FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

From the moment they knew of one another's existence, the crime and victim assistance movements have recognized each other as kindred spirits. By understanding some of the forces that have attracted these two service systems to each other, one can begin to understand the logic of programs (such as those which serve the elderly) that were purposefully designed to house both services under a single roof. A brief description of how these two services work in collaboration can then suggest what the first stage of service integration looks like.

### CLASP and Ft. Lauderdale Revisited

The Citizens Local Alliance for a Safer Philadelphia (CLASP) is one community crime prevention program that always felt a special affinity for the idea of victim service. It will be recalled that the West Philadelphia Block Association, from which CLASP got its original leaders and experience, was initiated partly out of the fear of crime happening sometime in the future but also out of the wrenching shock of past crimes already committed--in this instance, a series of rapes. That formulative experience, so common to many self-generated crime prevention programs, is a reminder that in the real world, the crime prevention specialist is often seen as arriving too late. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges of the crime prevention specialist's job is to convert the discouragement and bitterness he finds among recent victims at a block meeting into the collective will to organize a local crime prevention campaign.

For the CLASP leaders, an ability to demonstrate responsiveness to the crime victims they met was not simply the product of normal human instincts. In their judgement, the unrequited disappointments of crime victims had the effect of sabotaging the neighborhood self-



confidence they were trying to build. They felt that some form of victim services was necessary in order to accomplish their mission.

There is nothing unusual in this. Many block club organizers all over the country have learned something about the psychological dynamics of victimization and have applied these in block meetings in order to get the group to be supportive of its victimized members. However, the West Philadelphians went further, attempting to establish a more formal victim assistance component.

That unit, called "Friends in Need", was composed of volunteers who had some background in the helping services and taught themselves additional skills in crisis intervention. Even though this cadre of helping neighbors had no formal link with the local police precincts, it did begin to receive many referrals through its neighborhood contacts of people who had been recently victimized.

That proved to be its undoing: although an effective service, it eventually overwhelmed the volunteer service providers, and "burn-out" eventually caused the organization to disband.

Nonetheless, in CLASP and many other community crime prevention organizations, one can still find block organizers who have a sophisticated kind of sympathy for crime victims which they use to good effect both with the victims themselves and their neighbors. Conversely, many block organizers continue to report frustration in their work for lack of anything constructive to do or say in meetings where recent crime victims are venting their unhappiness. Lacking skills to be helpful to these victims, the organizers too often find them dampening the group's morale rather than strengthening it.

In a similar fashion, practical, day-to-day experiences caused the victim assistance staff in Ft. Lauderdale to expand their repertoire of skills somewhat. For the Victim Advocates in that program discovered that many of their clients had been hurt in part because of their own carelessness. In fact, a few of them could be described as "recidivistic" victims. These discoveries caused the Victim Advocates to weave crime prevention advice into their counseling services for crime victims.

As many victim assistance workers have found, clients are frequently eager to get suggestions on how to make themselves less vulerable in the future. At the same time, the victim counselors have found that anticipating or even responding to requests for crime prevention information is a very delicate task. Nothing is more common for a crime victim than to blame himself for his misfortunes, and a primary task for the victim assistance worker is to help that victim to resolve those feelings of guilt. Only with careful timing and good tact can the victim assistance worker present some crime prevention suggestions in a way that does not reinforce the victim's depressing feeling that he had been at fault.

Even so, many victim assistance workers have come to understand that it is irresponsible to avoid giving crime prevention tips altogether, and the victim assistance worker who is unable to respond appropriately often feels a frustration which is quite similar to that of the crime prevention specialist who lacks victim assistance skills.

The "Criminal Justice and the Elderly" Demonstration Program

The seven action projects with which Criminal Justice and the Elderly is affiliated are all designed on a common understanding of the elderly's crime problems and the appropriate public service responses to those problems. It is easy to



imagine how difficult it was to get seven separate agencies located in six cities across the country to join forces in a common demonstration program. But in one respect all the project designers were in agreement from the very outset: whenever possible, the projects should provide both crime prevention and victim assistance services to their clientele. Some explanation of that operational premise is in order.

As we have seen, many clients of a crime prevention program also want and need victim services, and the same is true of victim service clients. Both groups keep refusing to be seen in a one-dimensional, single-service perspective.

When one begins to consider the criminal justice needs and concerns of a total sub-population like the elderly, one need not wait to be told that their crime-related concerns are hardly confined to a single issue. Just like the elderly-serving health planner who is necessarily interested in matters of health insurance, in the workings of hospitals and of nursing homes--and other such concerns--so does the criminal justice planner have to consider all the issues that crime presents to the elderly community when that whole community becomes his "client".

An inclination to be worried about actual victimization and potential victimization was particularly strong in the demonstration programs because the clients to be served were not just any sub-population but were the elderly. Even before there was much research on this subject, the widespread impression among the program's designers was that the elderly are particularly fearful about crime and suffer more acutely than others when crime strikes them. Subsequent research findings have sadly confirmed both impressions.[1]

[1]See, for example, Victimology: An International Journal, Volume 3, Number 3-4, 1978; and Paul H. Hahn, Crimes Against the Elderly: A Study in Victimology, Santa Cruz, California, Davis Publishing Company, 1976 (especially Chapter VI, "The Effects of Crime Against The Elderly")

In fact, one can now say that large sectors of the elderly community are crime victims in two ways. First, some of them are actually ripped off by burglars, robbers and the rest. We have every reason to believe that the elderly would be victimized at the same rate as younger people if they maintained the same lifestyle as they did when they were younger. But a retired person stays at home for much of the time, so his risk of being, say, burglarized diminishes. Hence, the lower level of victimization one finds in the elderly community is not altogether comforting. The elderly couple who calculates that an evening stroll in the neighborhood is at least as dangerous now as it ever was is probably showing sound judgement.

The second way that older people are made victims is through the fear that crime inflicts on old age, often causing it to be lived as if under siege.

Some of the precautiosness of older age is, of course, due to the appreciation of diminished strength and mobility, a disinclination to subject their less-hardy selves to the risks they have always faced. But we are discovering that much of the elderly's fear and attendant changes in lifestyle are the result not of a general anxiety but are directly related to the victimization experience of a friend or a acquantance. Such victimizations, in other words, are experienced vicariously, and thus do the acts of criminals have a chilling effect throughout a network of elders. With the insight that a criminal act against one is felt by many, a functional distinction between crime prevention and victim services begins to break down, at least for the elderly. Fearfulness in a community of elders often has the quality of psychic injury that victim assistance workers are called on to treat in their clients.



To respond to the interrelated kind of distress crime inflicts on the elderly, the seven projects affiliated with Criminal Justice and the Elderly each established a crime prevention and a victim assistance component. The crime prevention sub-units were often targeted on inner city neighborhoods that had a high concentration of elderly residents (although their lecture programs--generically called "crime prevention education"--were frequently offered to senior citizen groups throughout the city in which the program operated.)

The victim assistance components, on the other hand, were less likely to be centered exclusively in a particular neighborhood, or if they started out that way, most of the victim counselors ended up accepting cases from outside of the target areas.

Some projects did see to it that a recent crime victim was provided services by both of the project's two basic units: the victim assistance staff offered counseling and other kinds of direct social services or referral aid, while the crime prevention team provided a home security survey, assistance in upgrading the quality of the security hardware in that residence, and a number of crime prevention suggestions, often by way of printed materials.

However, even here, the two units were only partially coordinated. Most of the projects' crime prevention staff were employed as block organizers or as crime-prevention education specialists, and in these roles came across few individuals, elderly or otherwise, who were recent crime victims. Whereas the victim assistance staff attempted to be of help to particular individuals identified in recent police reports, and offered that individual a kind of personally-tailored service. The crime prevention specialists then, worked hard on creating a social environment that improved the quality of life for its elderly members, while the victim assistance staff members

sought to repair the well-being of individual senior citizens whose lives had been violated by a criminal act.

The overall picture, therefore, is one in which crime prevention and victim assistance operated in a partially-coordinated fashion, but did not fully integrate the two services into one basic kind of service. Typically, clients of the two service components, even if they lived in the same parts of the city (which was not always the case), were substantially unaware of what their counterpart groups were receiving by way of project services.

This effectively describes the state of the art in providing combined crime prevention and victim assistance services through a single agency as of 1979. It may also hold out an ideal service model for the 1980s. Or it may describe a mid-stage towards a truly integrated service model that has yet to come into being.



## IV. TOWARD A FULL INTEGRATION OF CRIME PREVENTION AND VICTIM SERVICES

In June, 1979, a coalition of 19 organizations in New York City, all receiving grants from the Community Anti-Crime Program of the Law Enforcement Assistance Association, hosted a conference on neighborhood-based crime resistance programs. At one of the conference workshops, an elderly lady from Queens recounted her three experiences as a crime victim.

Evidently, in at least one of the first two cases, the woman was so terrified of her accused assailant that she refused to testify in his prosecution--even after her son, a judge, pleaded with her to serve as a witness. In the third incident, however, the woman was assisted first by a special team of police officers who investigate only crimes against the elderly, and then was helped by a team of victim counselors and crime prevention specialists from a local social service agency. As a result, the woman said, she would willingly call the police at any time for assistance and would gladly testify in court. She also spoke warmly of the crime prevention suggestions she had received, and proudly introduced a neighbor who was sitting next to her--my "buddy", she said, referring to the "buddy buzzer" system that the neighbors had installed.

The woman's story affected the workshop participants in several ways. By her testimony and her demeanor, the woman was apparently far more cheerful, sociable and optimistic in her outlook than she had been before she met some talented police officers, victim assistance workers and crime prevention advisors. There was also something heartening in the fact that the woman who told the story and her neighbor were of different races.

But perhaps most important, in the telling of her story, the woman conveyed the effectiveness of a team of kindly, skillful people who helped her recover from a past misfortune and from a constant state of dread. There was no sorting out in the woman's or her listeners' minds which of those services might be labeled victim assistance and which might be described as crime prevention because both eased the complex of stresses she was suffering from. Thus, the one service served the other's ends and vice versa, weaving the kind of fabric that has the feel of human experience.

A few months earlier, outside Tucson, Arizona, a captain in the sheriff's office was describing a similar kind of pheonomenon, again without ever using the labels victim assistance or crime prevention. Instead, he was describing a new service which a team of civilian "crisis intervenors" had been performing for several months in co-operation with his law enforcement officers. The crisis team, he explains, would respond to a deputy sheriff's call for assistance just after he had calmed down a family fight, whereupon the trained civilians would attempt to serve as mediators between the combatants. The mediation techniques were evidently successful, the captain said, because now his officers were simply not going back to households where weekend calls for assistance had once been routine. In other words, the victims of past domestic violence (typically the female spouse) had been helped, and a pattern of criminal assault had been broken, had been prevented.

These anecdotes could be expanded tenfold, but perhaps the point has already been made: from the consumer's perspective, crime prevention and victim assistance are often so organically connected



as to be indistinguishable from one another. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the specialists in crime prevention and victim assistance today is to bring about a genuine merger of their two public services so that an integrated service response becomes routine.

Were that to happen, perhaps it would occur along the lines suggested below:

Immediate Implications of Service Integration for Existing Crime Prevention Programs

Most community crime prevention projects have a working relationship with local law enforcement, typically with the officers of the police precinct serving the neighborhood which is being mobilized to resist crime. Indeed, it would be unusual not to have those cordial contacts, given the fact that a large portion of crime "prevention" techniques actually consists of crime "interruption" measures, in which alert citizens are encouraged to call the police at the first indication that a crime is being, or perhaps is about to be, committed.

This suggests that there is usually a good basis on which to expand a crime prevention effort into one of victim assistance as well, for it should be possible to obtain crucial police cooperation in that expansion effort. This is not to minimize the delicacy of getting the police to routinely inform the project staff about the identities of recent crime victims in the neighborhood; as is discussed in another CJE publication[2/], the task of getting law enforcement to cooperate or collaborate in a victim assistance effort is a sensitive one. Still, a project which has already earned its stripes with the police in its crime prevention work should have some very helpful allies in fashioning a victim assistance component.

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[2]James H. Ahrens and John H. Stein, "Victim Service Programs and Law Enforcement: Toward a New Partnership", 1979 (in draft).

Several projects affiliated with CJE had a sufficiently large victim services staff that they assisted victims outside the neighborhoods targeted for crime prevention organizing. For an existing crime prevention project, however, it may make more sense to limit victim assistance to residents of the target neighborhood, the better to complement and support the original project mission. If that strategy is followed, the number of staff needed to make a victim services program possible may be quite small--indeed, may consist of any existing staff member newly trained, plus a string of trained volunteers in the neighborhood.

In short, the indicators are that it is well within the reach of many crime prevention projects to add victim assistance to their battery of services.

Immediate Implications of Service Integration for Existing Victim Assistance Projects

Most victim assistance programs serve an entire city or county, not just smaller neighborhoods or larger communities within the jurisdiction. Thus, for a victim services program to get into community crime prevention--neighborhood organizing and all--may seem like a staggering proposition.

Nonetheless, it is certainly feasible to emulate projects whose victim assistance counselors are equipped with crime prevention brochures, are knowledgeable about crime prevention measures, and who share these with their victimized clients.

In fact, the more coordinated of the CJE-affiliated projects hold out the proposition that a victim assistance worker enhances his helpfulness if, on his first visit to a recently-victimized person, he or an accompanying colleage performs some concrete, immediate crime prevention services. Conducting a home security survey and marking valuables for Operation Identification are feasible, and so, these projects have demonstrated, is installing certain kinds of security hardware like a dead-bolt lock and a door viewer. This either requires the victim counselors to learn certain carpentry skills (which might cause them to spend an extra half-hour or hour on initial calls) or it necessitates the recruitment of new staff to get the job done. Either way, the rewards, in terms of alleviating victim anxieties, are thought to be high indeed.



The Long-Term Implications of Service Integration

The kind of expanded services dicussed above does not involve an extensive retooling of the primary service being delivered, whether it be crime prevention or victim assistance. Finding a staff member in a prevention program who is trained to do crisis counseling for the occasional victim among a group of neighbors being organized, or equipping a victim counselor with the ability to help individuals be more secure, does not entail a major redefinition of either person's job. Only when one puts both kinds of services on a par, each continuously seeking to stretch its influence as far as it will go, does a new kind of service system take shape.

The picture comes quickly into focus when one contemplates a victim counselor visiting a recently burglarized apartment dweller. What can that counselor do by way of crime prevention after he has helped secure the victim's own apartment? To the community crime prevention specialist, the answer is obvious--help organize the victim's fellow tenants into a crime-prevention network.

Using the personal crisis of a victimization to promote these larger group aims is appealing on several counts. First, the danger of strengthening the victim's self-accusations, a risk that is always run when one replaces ineffectual security hardware with more burglar-proof equipment, is diminished when the victim sees that his neighbors were just about as "careless" as he had been. From a victim-counseling perspective, it is easier to convey the dual message that "It wasn't your fault, but be more careful next time" if the messenger is seen to be saying much the same thing to others as well.

Second, from a crime prevention organizer's perspective, it should be far easier to get people to come to a tenants' meeting if the flyer reads, "Yesterday, one of the apartments in this building was hit by burglars. Come to a meeting with our neighborhood crime prevention specialist to learn how you can keep your apartment from being next . . ." Incidentally, the example of organizing an apartment building in this way is especially intriguing: community crime prevention specialists consistently report that it is especially difficult to organize renters in such buildings.

Third, some past victims have found it personally therapeutic to get involved in crime prevention efforts. By offering that possibility to the victim in this hypothetical example, the victim counselor may be providing a very constructive outlet for the victim's distress. At the same time, when the counselor puts on his crime prevention hat, he may be delighted to find that he is beginning his tenant-organizing campaign with an enthusiastic convert already identified.



And fourth, improving the security of an apartment building, just like a block of single-family dwellings, involves more than getting burglar-resistant hardware installed. It also involves a collective willingness on the residents' part to look out for one another, as well as a concerted effort to reduce the invitations to criminality built into the landscape--by trimming back shrubs that can hide robbers, by improving the security in common entranceways, and so on. With a group of tenants confronted directly with evidence that they can be picked off one-by-one, the impulse to band together may be especially strong.

The hypothetical example discussed here merely reaffirms knowledge conveyed to us by CLASP and many other grass-roots, self-generated crime prevention programs: when responded to thoughtfully, the event of an individual's being victimized can bring about a highly constructive crime prevention campaign. Under the integrated service model, therefore, victim assistance would be treated consistently as a handmaiden of crime prevention.

Something like the obverse can also be attempted. One of the primary tasks of a victim assistance counselor is to be a go-between from the distressed victim to his supportive friends and relations. Often, in calling such people to ask them to help their just-victimized friend or relative, the counselor needs to explain the normal emotional response to the shock of becoming a victim--and to indicate what kinds of help from friends are therapeutic. The fact is that, left to our own devices, many of us make the experience worse for the victim without meaning to. Often, some guidance by a victim counselor is welcomed because it makes us feel helpful and, in fact, be more helpful.

There is no reason why a group of neighbors, banded together in a crime prevention effort, would not also respond well to such information and guidance, and serve as an excellent support group when someone

who lives nearby has been victimized. It may be that the victim in question has others who are offering comfort and support, but there is probably something special when the same kindnesses are also extended by neighbors. After all, the person who has been victimized in or near his home typically sees his immediate neighborhood in a new and menacing light; to discover genuine neighborliness in that setting at just that time is, in all likelihood, especially comforting.

With this in mind, the crime prevention specialist could encourage the block clubs he helps organize to become a victim assistance resource-in-reserve, first, by introducing the club members to the psychological dynamics which follow victimization and, second, by getting back in touch with the group whenever a neighbor needs help.

Again, the effects could be mutually reinforcing--a sense of group purpose is sustained because its members have useful roles to perform, and a new dimension of victim assistance is created. The reminder that crime continues to be a neighborhood problem can also be useful, suggesting that the once-organized neighbors should stay together.

These examples of service integration are speculative. While something like the apartment building hypothetical or the one involving a victimized neighbor may well have happened in various parts of the country at different time, it did not happen because a crime prevention or victim assistance project systematically planned it that way in advance--at least, we know of no programs that have purposefully combined the two services in this manner. It seems to us that such a merger is well worth attempting.

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