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OPERATION NIGHT LIGHT PROCESS EVALUATION

Preliminary Findings

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Report/Presentation to:
Kansas City Kansas Police Department
Wyandotte County Adult and Juvenile Court Services
Employees and Partners of The Unified Government of KCK

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- Youth Violence has been identified as a significant problem faced by the community.
- Past research shows a strong relationship between youth violence and
 - youth gang membership and/or drug trafficking (Howell and Decker 1999)
 - access to firearms for the purpose of criminal activity (Lizotte and Bordua 1980).

GOALS OF THE GRANT INITIATIVE:

To address the problem of youth who:

1. Show, the potential for violent crime
2. Are at risk of becoming serious habitual offenders
3. Become involved in loose associations and gangs

These goals will be met by:

1. Developing a juvenile/youth crime database
2. Establishing a police/probation response to bring the most serious repeat offenders under control

RISK FACTORS / INITIAL SELECTION CRITERIA

Participants must be on probation, be between the ages of 10-24 and have one or more of the following risk factors:

- History of Family Violence, drug, and/or gang activity
- Access to firearms
- Suspected gang affiliation
- Suspected Drug use/Involvement in Drug Sales
- Prior violent offense(s)
- Friends of Recent Homicide Victims/Perpetrators
- Current Warrant/Probation Violation Status
- Several Adjudications/Probation Violations

CONTACTS/INFORMAL INTERVIEWS

So far, our research team rode along with CSO's and police for 8 evenings during July and August 1999. We talked with 27 adult probationers, 22 juvenile probationers, 9 parents of juvenile probationers, 9 juvenile and adult CSO's, 6 community police officers, and 1 detective about Operation Night Light.

PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW RESULTS

Probationer and Parental interviews took place during the summer, when school was not in session. The questions in Table 1 targeted the last 3 months before probation vs. the time period during the ONL visits. All questions are perceptual in nature and have not yet been cross-checked for accuracy.

	<u>No Change</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
Time spent at home	64%	11%	25%
Time spent with Friends	41%	19%	41%
Quality time spent with family	61%	39%	0%
Household responsibilities/chores	71%	18%	11%
Evenings out planned in advance	67%	33%	0%
Evenings out include drugs/alcohol	50%	7%	43%
Hours under parental/adult supervision	71%	29%	0%

ADULT PROBATIONERS

Some of the adult probationers did not even know what ONL was. General consensus from most adult probationers is that ONL is either not beneficial or has no affect on their daily activities and attitudes since they are never home during the evening visits. Furthermore, there is no pressure to be at home since no negative action is taken. Of the ones who have changed their attitudes while on probation, all have said that the changes were due to the probation and not the ONL.

JUVENILE PROBATIONERS AND THEIR PARENTS

Most juvenile probationers were aware of ONL. The behavioral changes listed in Table 1 apply to the juveniles but not to the adults. Three of the nine parents of the juveniles on probation reported that parenting has become easier for them due to the close working relationship they have with the CSO and the home visits. On the other hand, two parents reported that their child has become more defiant and harder to handle, or more secretive while on probation. The other group of three parents reported no change.

Table 2 shows responses from probationers who were asked about their knowledge of shootings and gun preferences.

TABLE 2: Gangs and Guns		
<u>Victim</u>		
Have you known anyone who has been shot?	Yes-	87%
Was the shooting gang related?	Yes-	34%
Who was the shooting victim?	Friend-	62%
	Family-	10%
	Stranger-	14%
	Self-	14%
<u>Perpetrator</u>		
Have you known anyone who has shot someone?	Yes-	54%
Was the shooting gang related?	Yes-	24%
Who carried out the shooting?	Friend-	43%
	Family-	21%
	Stranger-	29%
	Self-	7%
Do you know anyone who carries a gun?	No	76%
	One or More Friends	14%
	One or More Associates	10%
How often do others carry a gun?	Always	75%
	When out of house/in car	16%
Why do people you know carry guns?	Protection/Image	83%
	Hunting/Work-related	16%
What types of guns are preferred?	Revolvers	88%
	Semi-automatic pistol	62%
	Rifle (Assault)	42%
	Shotgun	7%
How was the gun acquired?	Streets/stolen	75%
	Registered/pawn shop	25%

RIDE-ALONGS: OBSERVED USES OF ONL

- o To intensify the level of supervision for youths/young adults who fit the high risk profile
- o Get the parents involved with child's probation
- o Strengthen the relationships between CSO and client
- o Strengthen the relationships between court services and the police
- o Information Sharing among CSO's, community police, and detectives to locate individuals with high-risk warrants

Information Sharing Example: Juvenile suspected of shooting into vacant houses around 12th and Quindaro. Detective phoned CSO to see if any information was known on juvenile. CSO knew of juvenile due to previous probation contact, and was able to share enough information on juv's whereabouts, friends, and car driven to assist detectives in the juv's apprehension.

Recommendations and Suggestions:

L. SELECTION

A. Revisit the initial selection criteria. Currently, only one of the factors must be met to include a probationer on ONL. Although most probationers appeared to fit the profile, some probationers did not seem to "fit" at all (e.g., juveniles who were selected because they were convicted of possession of marijuana and do not fit any other criteria)

The survey data found that marijuana is the drug of choice for juveniles who were convicted of possession of a controlled substance or who admitted using drugs. In the current selection criteria, a juvenile convicted of possession of marijuana "fits" the profile. No research evidence exists of a direct correlation between juveniles who use marijuana (or even sell marijuana in small quantities) and propensity towards violence (Zimmer & Morgan 1997).

B. Decrease the age range at which ONL participants are selected.

- o Preliminary interview results show no attitude or behavioral change for adult probationers. There were no penalties mentioned by our adult sample when they were not at home. Some were motivated to stay away from home more often to avoid ONL home visits. There are currently no adult "curfews" or "house arrest" mandates in place.
- o Past studies show that violence among males peaks between the ages of 15-17 and then begins to decline (Tatum-Kelley et al., 1997).

Increase juvenile sample by including other high-risk juveniles in other placements (see "D" below)

C. Weight the criteria rather than treating each measure as equal. Assign each criteria a numerical value and then sum the criteria.

To disentangle some of these effects on violence, Howell and Decker (1999:8) found:

- o Gang involvement, drug trafficking, and violence occur together.
- o Gangs recruit or attract potentially or already violent individuals.
- o Involvement in violence increases during periods of gang membership, even among those who enter the gang with a history of violent crime.
- o Drug trafficking predicts more assaultive violence and handgun possession among nongang youth
- o Gang member involvement in *drug sales* does not necessarily result in more frequent violent offenses.

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>
o Suspected gang affiliation	4
o Drug trafficking (any drug)	4
o Family member/Close friend suspected of gang affiliation	2
o History of Family Violence	2
o Conviction for possession/ Sales of Heroin, Cocaine, Crack, Meth	2
o <u>Each</u> prior violent conviction	2 (per offense)
o Friends of Recent Homicide Victims/Perpetrators	2
o History of Family Drug Sales/Trafficking (not use)	2
o Current Warrant/Probation Violation Status	1
o Access to handguns: carry for protection/non-sporting	1
o Suspected drug use/sales (any drug)	1

ONL participant must score a minimum of 2 points
ONL participants who score 3 and above are at the highest risk

D. Do we wish to include any other groups of high-risk juveniles (e.g., juveniles who remain on supervision in the community after a period of time spent in a juvenile correctional facility, juveniles on parole who were adjudicated as adults, juveniles in community placements/community supervision)?

47% of youth in juvenile correctional facilities in 1998 committed a crime against persons

ASSEMBLING HOME VISIT LISTS

A. I recommend that the Adult CSO's be able to exercise control over who/how often they want to visit their own caseload while on ONL. It seems to make sense to visit clients as needed, since some clients are higher risk than others. This will also give each CSO the freedom to "reward" a lower risk client with less frequent home visits while increasing the visits for a client who may require closer supervision.

In order to do this, the CSO's may wish to make up their own home visit list of their own caseload. This will bring the Adult CSO's up to speed with what the Juvenile CSO's are already doing.

B. Include more high-risk juveniles with outstanding warrants on the list. Removing certain young people off the street using ONL may be a significant way to curb some forms of youth violence.

TIMES/DAYS OF ONL

A. Go out after curfew during the week for juveniles. In this way, a home visit and a curfew check can be accomplished.

B. Conduct home visits on Saturday and/or Sunday mornings. This is a great way to determine what may have transpired the previous night.

AFTER THE HOME VISIT

A. I like the idea that some CSO's left a card at the door to let those probationers who were not at home know that their CSO "paid them a home visit." I recommend that each CSO follow-up with those probationers who are in violation as a result of them not being at home the previous evening (e.g., follow-up with a phone call the next morning and get them to come in to the probation department within the hour). This may or may not be feasible with current schedules.

B. If in cases where, upon further inspection/knowledge of the individual, the client *does not fit the profile*, the client should be Removed from ONL (with supervisor approval and documentation).

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Youth violence patterns vary by region of the country. What works in Boston may not work in Kansas City Kansas. An **Analysis of youth violent crimes** (who, when, where, why, how) may assist us in developing a tailored response to KCK violence.

For example, a nighttime curfew for juveniles presupposes that most youth violence occurs at the same time as adult violence: evenings and weekends.

- o What about violence that occurs before and after school?
- o What about violence that occurs on school grounds?
- o Do patterns of violence change between the summer and when school is in session?

B. Strongly recommend that at minimum, twice per month be used as an *information sharing session* between community police, gang enforcement officers, detectives, and CSO representatives- locate individuals, conduct pick-ups, serve warrants on high-risk individuals. Use a laptop during each meeting to record info to be added to developing database.

Variables that Will be Measured During Second Part of Grant Initiative^a:

*Contingent on access to database

- I. ONL participants in Program:
 - Rate of CSO contact
 - school and/or work attendance
 - Completion of treatment programs
 - Referrals to other agencies/services

- II. While on probation: ONL participants vs. group of past probationers (e.g., 1997 or 1998) who would have fit the ONL profile:
 - Success Rate
 - Rate of re-arrest for new crime
 - Type of probation violations

- III. When off probation: ONL participants vs. group of past probationers (e.g., 1997 or 1998) who would have fit the ONL profile: **
 - Did juveniles/adults of both groups re-enter the system
 - What was the charge
 - Date of re-arrest
 - Date of conviction

** NCIC system needed to check re-arrest, reconviction information for adults

- IV. Official Crime rate (1998 and 1999)
 - By age and offense type

- V. Neighborhood Self-Report Crime surveys

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