

BEST PRACTICES FOR CHRONIC/PERSISTENT YOUTH OFFENDERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 2006, the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF) began work on the three-year project, *A Study of Youth Offending, Serious Habitual Offenders, and System Response in Calgary*. One objective of this study was to develop an understanding of the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending, as well as a knowledge base of best practices in Canada and internationally for this population of youth offenders. With funding from the Alberta Law Foundation and the National Crime Prevention Centre, and in partnership with the Centre for Initiatives on Children, Youth and the Community, City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services, and Calgary Police Service, CRILF researchers examined the literature on chronic and persistent youth offenders, and performed an environmental scan to assess what programs and strategies police agencies across Canada have in place to address this youth offending population.

The objectives of this report are to: 1) understand the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending; and 2) examine best practices used by police agencies across Canada for chronic and persistent youth offenders.

Methodology

The following research questions are addressed in this report:

- (1) What are the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending?
- (2) What decision-making strategies and tools have proven effective for targeting or identifying chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (3) What best practices have proven effective for chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (4) Which screening tools and decision-making instruments are currently being used in Canada to target or identify chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (5) What police strategies and programs are available for chronic and persistent offenders across Canada?

In order to address these research questions, two main research strategies were employed:

- (1) A detailed review of literature on chronic and persistent youth offending; and
- (2) An environmental scan of best practices used by police across Canada for chronic and persistent youth offenders.

Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

The literature review identified many factors that are correlated with youth entering a trajectory of chronic offending behaviour. These factors come from five main domains: individual, family, peer, school and community. Generally, chronic and persistent youth offenders experience a number of complex and influential factors, such as mental health diagnoses, family violence and breakdown, negative peer associations and gang involvement, school difficulties, and unsafe communities. An understanding of the impact of these factors at various stages in child and youth development, from early infancy to late adolescence, would allow for the development of more effective prevention and intervention strategies. As such, early identification of risk factors and subsequent intervention is important in order to nurture resiliency. Furthermore, according to the literature review, collaborative efforts among the different contexts in which a child develops are essential to increase the likelihood of success. While police are increasingly taking an early intervention approach in Canada, intervention programs for youth already heavily involved in the justice system are an ongoing need.

Given the results of the literature review, strategies that are most effective for intervening with chronic and persistent youth offenders encompass elements that impact upon risk factors in all of the five domains identified. Police services that work with community service representatives are likely to be the most effective in responding to chronic and persistent youth offending, as compared to those who operate programs in isolation from other agencies that the youth has contact with, such as probation and child protection services. The interagency strategies that are used in Manitoba, the Vancouver Police Department Youth Services Section and to some extent the SHOP program in Calgary and SHOCAP programs in Saskatchewan, suggest that programs that promote information sharing between police and other agencies in the community are the most effective; this finding is reinforced in the literature. Those involved are able to remain apprised of developments that occur within all domains of the youth's life and can further ensure that plans that are implemented are not counterproductive to each other. Interagency approaches also ensure that siblings of youth already in the program can receive early intervention.

One major implication of the environmental scan was the need for police strategies and programs across Canada to be formally evaluated. However, while most police agencies did not conduct formal reviews of their programs (with the exception of the three SHOCAP programs in Saskatchewan), many respondents interviewed were positive about their interventions for chronic and persistent youth offenders. On the other hand, many spoke to the need for increased resources to ensure program continuity and effectiveness. This need is amplified by the increase in community-based sentences under the YCJA, which places greater demands on police to work in partnership with community agencies to ensure that youth are successful with their court-ordered conditions of release in the community.

Another issue that was addressed in the literature review was how to define chronic and persistent youth offenders. A straightforward definition that is commonly used is youth who commit five or more recorded offences (Carrington 2007; Carrington, Matarazzo & deSouza, 2005; Wolfgang, Figlio, & Sellin, 1972). The change in youth justice legislation in Canada, however, raises concerns about the use of this definition at this time in this country. An important objective of the *YCJA* is to encourage more diversion, especially for youth accused of minor offences. Youth who successfully complete the terms of their extrajudicial measures and sanctions do not have a formal record for their offences. Therefore, youth may be involved in more offences than is reflected in their criminal record before they are considered chronic/persistent offenders.

It was evident in the environmental scan that the definition of chronic and persistent offenders used by police and agencies varies across Canada. Whereas in British Columbia police are mainly concerned with offenders who have accumulated a particular number of convictions or police contacts, other police programs rely on referrals from probation officers and social workers, who use assessment tools that measure a number of different risk factors. While some officers interviewed discussed the need for a standard screening tool to assess which youth should be included in their programs, it is also important to consider the role that mental health plays in the effectiveness of programs for chronic and persistent youth offenders. The literature consistently showed that youth who are heavily involved in the criminal justice system have often also experienced a history of mental health and substance abuse problems that need to be addressed before rehabilitation can occur. Police officers noted that mental health conditions may inhibit the success of programs that target youth solely based on their criminal history. Some officers spoke about the need for increased training on mental health issues and conditions such as FASD to ensure that police can be more effective in dealing with youth who are chronic and persistent offenders.

Overall, the environmental scan revealed that police initiatives for chronic and persistent youth offenders seem to be used more in Ontario and western Canada. Many police representatives cited the change in the youth justice legislation as the primary reason for focussing resources on chronic and persistent youth offenders. The *YCJA* provides more options for community-based sentencing, which means that an increased number of youth are serving their sentences in the community. As a result, some police services have found that increased monitoring and surveillance for chronic and persistent offenders is an effective approach for ensuring that youth comply with their court-ordered conditions.

Very few formalized programs were found in Québec, the Northern Territories and the Atlantic provinces. In Québec there were no police programs specifically designed to address chronic and persistent youth offenders. Nor are the Youth Centres in the province dealing with chronic and persistent youth offenders as a separate population. Instead, chronic and persistent youth offenders are dealt with primarily through the individual sentences that they receive. The respondents indicated that these young people were not being assessed for special programs outside of the continuum of services and programs that already exist in the province. Importantly, the respondents did not believe that such programs were necessarily required. This is due, in part, to the fact that those young people in Québec who could be characterized as

chronic and persistent youth offenders receive numerous interventions before they are given formal charges so that by the time these young people accumulate a number of convictions to be considered chronic offenders, they are likely to be over 18 years of age and in the adult system. As well, young people who come into conflict with the law are dealt with primarily on the basis of the sanctions imposed by the justice system. This includes extrajudicial measures and sanctions as well as specialized custodial dispositions. It is within this context that specialized services for youth offenders have been developed in Quebec, including those youth who present as chronic and persistent offenders.

The respondents also acknowledged that a majority of the Youth Centres in Québec have embraced a differential clinical intervention approach providing a full range of services to youth offenders. This often results in a case-by-case intervention strategy which negates the need to develop programs targeted at specific populations, including those for chronic and persistent youth offenders. The implication of this is that chronic and persistent youth offenders receive services on the basis of their dispositions and individual assessments during intake. Thus, a young person who presents with a record of numerous offences will receive more service and more intensive interventions.

In smaller communities, such as those found in the Atlantic provinces and Northern Territories, there may not be a need to have a formalized program in place for chronic and persistent offenders, given their small numbers. Results from the interviews revealed that smaller communities have smaller RCMP or police detachments, where members communicate with each other on a regular basis about youth and adult offenders who are chronically offending. Through this informal communication, police members are made aware of youth who should receive extra attention in their communities.

Other police representatives also spoke about using crime-specific strategies to manage chronic offenders in their community. Rather than targeting specific types of offenders, some police representatives identified strategies and programs that target a specific crime trend. For example, many auto theft units across the country target and monitor chronic auto theft offenders. Therefore, police services that decide to use a crime specific targeting strategy in their communities are unlikely to use an offender driven strategy as well.

The enactment of the *YCJA* has prompted police services across Canada to focus more attention on youth at risk of offending. Many police representatives interviewed spoke about allocating resources to preventative programs, such as school liaison and diversion programs. When resources were concentrated in early intervention programs, police were less likely to offer programs that target youth who are already in the justice system.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the focus of the current study was on police strategies and programs for chronic and persistent offenders. Police often measure success by assessing charge rates and youth custody counts. It is, however, well recognized that

while it is important to protect the public from being victimized by chronic and persistent youth offenders, the most effective long term solutions to the problem of persistent offending is to address needs and risk factors at an early age before youth embark on their criminal trajectory.

The literature review also pointed to the importance of examining the combined influence of factors on offending behaviour as well as the impact these factors have on different stages of development. It is important to conduct more studies in line with this direction of research as it can lead to better intervention programs that are targeted at particular risk factors that have the most influence on youth at a particular stage of development.

Evaluations of strategies and programs currently available in Canada are important in order to ensure that resources are being allocated in the most efficient ways possible and that youth are receiving maximum benefit. Programs in the U.K., U.S. and Australia provide established best practice models that may be adapted and implemented for local use in Canada.

Finally, it is also important to gather further information on strategies used by First Nations' communities, which may make use of culturally unique approaches for managing chronic and persistent youth offenders. Given the disproportionate number of First Nations youth in the justice system, it is important to develop culturally-sensitive responses for these youth that address the specific issues common to First Nations communities. The results of the literature review and environmental scan show that a community-based approach most likely provides the best chance for rehabilitating and reintegrating youth who have embarked on a trajectory of crime.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It is well documented that a relatively small number of offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime, holding true for both adult and youth offenders. The impact that these few offenders can have on communities can be far reaching and consequential. According to a recent national study of the court careers of a birth cohort in Canada (Carrington, Matarazzo, & deSouza, 2005), 16% of youth offenders with five or more incidents in their court careers were responsible for 58% of all alleged incidents. Similar findings were also reported in an international study of persistent youth offenders in the United Kingdom (Graham & Bowling, 1995). Overall, about 3% of offenders accounted for approximately 25% of all self-reported offences. Using recorded crime data from six provinces in Canada, Carrington (2007) also found that 10% of offenders from a 1987 birth cohort were responsible for almost half of all recorded crime committed by members of the same cohort. These “chronic offenders” on average committed an average of 11 offences each, with most offences consisting of property-related offences.

In 1995, the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF) conducted a study of youth victimization, crime and delinquency in Calgary (Smith, Bertrand, Arnold, & Hornick, 1995). This study compared the nature and scope of crimes committed by Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs) and non-SHO offenders in Calgary over a 12-month period using data from the Calgary Police Service’s Police Information Management System (PIMS). Smith et al. found that even though SHOs represented only 3% of the total number of youth offenders, they were involved in 14% of the occurrences. In 2006, CRILF received funding from City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services and the Alberta Law Foundation to conduct a three-year study of “Youth Offending Patterns, Serious Habitual Offenders and System Response in Calgary.” Results from the first year of CRILF’s study of youth offending in Calgary (MacRae, Bertrand, Paetsch, & Hornick, 2008) reinforced previous findings, concluding that youth SHOs, composing 1.2% (n=42) of Calgary’s youth offending population, were responsible for nearly 6% of police recorded chargeable incidents, any contact between a youth and police where there was sufficient evidence to charge.

Recent public reports on youth offending in Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and Ontario have further revealed the significant impact that youth offending has had in Canada, and the need to address youth offenders effectively. In 2006, an inquiry was conducted by retired Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice Merlin Nunn after a youth with a history of auto theft was released on bail and two days later became involved in a fatal police chase after stealing another car. The report made several important recommendations with regard to youth criminal justice reform in Nova Scotia, including: legislative reform to decrease court delays; prevention of offending by youths with learning disabilities; the appointment of youth court liaison police officers; and, the need to develop a consistent approach to pre-trial detention (Nunn, 2006).

In Ontario, in response to a fatal shooting of a high school student at school, Premier Dalton McGuinty requested a review of the roots of youth violence and possible long-term solutions to increase safety in Ontario. The five volume report, which included a literature review and research on the youth justice system in the province, revealed a number of important risk factors for youth violence, and recommended that Ontario focus on addressing these roots, particularly in neighbourhoods where poverty is highly concentrated (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). The authors asserted that this approach focus on five key rationales: focusing on the roots of violence involving youth; developing an asset-based approach that draws upon the strengths in neighbourhoods; tailoring responses to the complexity of issues in particular neighbourhoods; build communities by involving local agencies and residents in the solution; and, ensure that the approach involves collaboration among governments, communities, and agencies.

In a report prepared for the British Columbia Government (the B.C. Report), the Representative for Children and Youth and the Provincial Health Officer examined outcomes (e.g., justice, education, etc.) for a cohort of over 50,000 youth involved in the justice system in order to better understand the “risk factors and circumstances that too often lead to vulnerable youth, especially those living out of the parental home, becoming involved with the youth justice system” (2009:3). The report also gave special focus to the issues faced by Aboriginal youth. The report stresses early intervention in the lives of these vulnerable youth, particularly those who are in care and Aboriginal, and programs that are applied throughout the child’s life – from prenatal stages through the transition from youth to adulthood.

Given these reports, and the impact of chronic and persistent youth offenders on communities, it is important to further understand how youth offenders become chronic and persistent offenders, and to examine any best practices that are currently available in Canada to support and rehabilitate these youth. The literature has consistently shown that the best way to manage chronic and persistent offenders is to target youth early, providing intervention services at a young age to prevent the likelihood that youth will enter a trajectory that leads to chronic offending (Chung, Hill, Hawkins, Gilchrist, & Nagin, 2002; Howell, 2003; Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Kershaw, Beckerman, & Perkins, 2005). However, for those already on that trajectory, police are often the first point of contact for chronic youth offenders and it is important that the police have a strategic approach for managing chronic offenders in their community. For example, in the United States, many police services have adopted the SHOCAP program, which involves police partnering with community agencies to ensure accountability and rehabilitation of serious or habitual offenders in their community. Significant benefits of this approach have been seen not only for the youth, but the program also encourages interagency cooperation, better resource allocation and improved morale for many juvenile justice system personnel (Medaris, 1996).

1.2 Purpose of the Report

In 2006, the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF) began work on the three-year project, *A Study of Youth Offending, Serious Habitual Offenders, and System Response in Calgary*. One objective of this study was to develop a knowledge base of best practices in Canada and internationally for chronic and

persistent youth offenders. Therefore, the purpose of this report is to understand the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending, as well as the efficacy of police strategies and programs available in Canada that target this population of youth. This was accomplished in partnership with the Centre for Initiatives on Children, Youth and the Community, City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services, and the Calgary Police Service, and with funding from the Alberta Law Foundation and the National Crime Prevention Centre.

1.3 Objectives of the Report

The objectives of this report are to: 1) understand the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending; and 2) examine best practices used by police agencies across Canada for chronic and persistent youth offenders.

1.4 Organization of the Report

Chapter 2.0 outlines the research questions addressed in this report and summarizes the methodology used for this study. Chapter 3.0 presents a review of the literature related to chronic and persistent youth offending, while Chapter 4.0 presents the results of the environmental scan of best police practices used across Canada for chronic and persistent youth offenders. Chapter 5.0 concludes the report by summarizing the findings of the study and discusses implications for future best practices in Canada.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

In order to identify current best practices in Canada (and internationally, as appropriate) for chronic and persistent youth offenders, two main research strategies were employed:

- (1) A detailed review of literature on chronic and persistent youth offending; and
- (2) An environmental scan of best practices used across Canada for chronic and persistent youth offenders.

2.1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this report:

- (1) What are the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending?
- (2) What decision-making strategies and tools have proven effective for targeting or identifying chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (3) What best practices have proven effective for chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (4) What screening tools and decision-making instruments are currently being used in Canada to target or identify chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (5) What police strategies and programs are available for chronic and persistent offenders across Canada?

2.2 Literature Review

A detailed literature review using academic and internet searches for relevant published and “grey” literature was conducted in the following areas:

- Predictors of chronic, serious, and persistent offending by youth;
- Use of decision making instruments (i.e., screening tools); and
- Effectiveness of programs targeted at serious, persistent youth offenders (i.e., program evaluations).

2.3 Environmental Scan of Police Strategies and Programs

In order to examine the programs, strategies and decision-making instruments used by police organizations in Canada, CRILF conducted an environmental scan

involving interviews with key informants from a number of police agencies across Canada. Interviews with key French-speaking informants were conducted with funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre.

2.3.1 Participants

The key informants for the environmental scan included police and agency representatives from across Canada who had experience working with youth offenders. Police representatives were primarily identified through existing contacts, internet searches, the Canadian Police Information Centre National Directory, and referrals from interviewed participants. Key informants were asked to provide information on programs used by police to support chronic and persistent youth offenders – both police-based and police-referred programs – as well as best practices in screening and decision-making protocols (see Appendix A for the interview schedule used). Identified participants were contacted by phone, e-mail or fax, and interviews were conducted in the participants' language of choice over the phone.

In total, 255 police agencies and other organizations were contacted across Canada, with a total of 140 completed interviews. Police and other agencies that did not participate in the environmental scan either declined to participate or did not respond before the end of the data collection period. Details of the number of police services and other agencies contacted in each province are provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1
Police and Other Agencies Contacted and Interviewed, by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Number Contacted	Number Interviewed
British Columbia	25	15
Alberta	25	18
Saskatchewan	26	12
Manitoba	25	14
Ontario	50	20
Quebec		
Police Agencies	16	9
Centres jeunesse	16	12
New Brunswick	19	10
Nova Scotia	18	10
Newfoundland and Labrador	14	7
Prince Edward Island	9	5
Northern Territories	12	8
Total	255	140

While the focus in most provinces was police organizations, in Québec services for youth offenders are provided mainly through 16 Youth Centres (YCs) or “Centres jeunesse” located in communities across the province. These are para-governmental agencies almost entirely funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS). They provide a range of services to children, youth and their families, including young people up to 18 years of age who are subject to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA)

and/or the *Québec Youth Protection Act*. In order to get a comprehensive picture of the response of Québec authorities to chronic and persistent youth offenders, requests were sent to all 16 YCs in the province. Interviews were completed with representatives from 12 Youth Centres and the Director of Youth Protection in Inuulitsivik Baie who have direct responsibility for providing services to youth offenders in Québec. A total of 16 police services including the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) were also contacted. Interviews were completed with representatives from 9 of the police agencies contacted.

2.3.2 Data Source

Key informant interviews were conducted between October 2008 and February 2009. The interview protocol (see Appendix A) asked questions regarding police-based and police-referred programs, screening tools, and other best practices used by police agencies. Interviews with key French-speaking informants were translated to English.

2.3.3 Data Analysis

Information from the key informant interviews was transcribed and examined qualitatively. Findings from the interviews were summarized, and the results are presented by province in Chapter 4.0.

2.3.4 Limitations

While every effort was made to include as many police representatives as possible, some police representatives chose not to participate in the study. On occasion, program information was also collected from representatives who were not formally involved in the program, which sometimes led to little information about the program being obtained. There was also very little representation of programs connected to aboriginal police services. In addition, due to the time constraints of the study, there were some requests for information that were still being processed when the data collection period ended. Therefore, while this report highlights police strategies and programs that police use for chronic and persistent youth offenders, it is not necessarily representative of all programs that are available across Canada.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Overview of Chronic Youth Offending

Youth crime, particularly chronic and persistent offending by youth, has received increasing attention in the literature in recent years. Although research on chronic youth offending is in its infancy in Canada, examples can be drawn from other countries, particularly the United States (U.S.) and the United Kingdom (U.K.), in order to better understand youth offending patterns and to improve policies and programming.

It has been established in the literature that a disproportionate amount of youth crime in a community is often committed by a relatively small number of youth (Graham & Bowling, 1995; Howell, 2003; MacRae et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2005; Smith et al., 1995). A recent study conducted in Calgary, Alberta by CRILF found that 42 youth designated as Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs) by the Calgary Police Service composed only 1% of the youth offending population, but were responsible for 6% of chargeable incidents in that city (MacRae et al., 2008). This finding is similar to results of a previous study conducted by CRILF (Smith et al., 1995), which found that even though SHOs represented only 3% of the total number of youth offenders, they were involved in 14% of criminal occurrences. A study of chronic youth offenders in a U.S. state (Mullis et al., 2005) found that although chronic youth offenders represented 2.4% of all youth offenders in 1995/1996, they committed 49.5% of all juvenile offences in that state. A study of persistent offenders in the U.K. (Graham & Bowling, 1995) yielded similar results: persistent offenders represented 3% of the youth offending population, but were responsible for roughly 25% of all self-reported offences. Clearly, chronic and persistent youth offenders represent a relatively small proportion of the population, but commit a disproportionate amount of crime.

One issue that has arisen is how persistent youth offenders are defined. A 1994 study in the U.K. (Hagell & Newburn, 1994) used three different definitions of persistence: the top 10% of the most persistent youth offenders in a one-year period, based on number of arrests, number of offences attributed to them, and number of offences known to have been committed by them; youth who had committed 10 or more offences in a three-month period; and youth who had committed 10 or more offences punishable by imprisonment, one of which must have been committed while the youth was under a supervision order. However, of the 193 youth offenders in the sample, only three met the criteria for inclusion in all three definitions. The U.S. study (Mullis et al., 2005) defined persistent offenders according to age: youth under 11 having 10 offence arrests in one year or youth age 12-15 having 15 offence arrests in 18 months. Some studies (MacRae et al., 2008; Wolfgang, Figlio, & Sellin, 1972) use the benchmark of five or more convictions to define chronic youth offenders. Le Blanc (2000) suggests a multi-dimensional definition of persistent youth offenders that accounts for not only the frequency of offending, but also the seriousness and use of violence. This issue of defining chronic youth offenders for the purposes of research is also reflected in practice, with police agencies often reporting difficulty in screening and identifying chronic youth offenders for supervision and program purposes.

The difficulty in both defining and identifying chronic youth offenders points to the complexity of these youth, and the need to understand both the risk factors associated with their behaviour and best practices for addressing their needs. Although there is little Canadian research speaking to risk factors and best practices, the literature available from the United States, United Kingdom, and increasingly, Australia can provide valuable insight into addressing Canada's chronic youth offenders, as well as developing effective policy and programming for them. Given that definitions of this youth offender group vary among studies, this review will look broadly at the literature addressing prolific, chronic, persistent, and serious youth offenders.

3.2 Predictors of Chronic Youth Offending

Academic efforts to examine the factors that predict chronic youth offending have increased in prominence over the past decade, the results of which have found value in public policy, notably by Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force. The Task Force's 2007 report, generated as a result of consultations with communities across the province, stressed the need to understand risk factors that determine why some young people engage in offending behaviours and others do not. Among the factors that place youth at risk of becoming involved in crime, particularly violent and persistent crime, the report identified offending behaviour and substance abuse at an early age, lack of involvement in conventional social activities, association with negative peers, social exclusion, poor school commitment and performance, and aggressive behaviour. The report further emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding individual, family, peer, school, and community protective factors that "buffer young people from risks and promote positive youth development," and in turn prevent them from becoming seriously involved in crime (Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007:34). The Task Force's identification of five major risk and protective domains – individual, family, peer, school, and community – that must be examined in order to understand offending behaviour among youth are echoed throughout the literature on predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending.

Recent writing on risk factors for antisocial behaviour and youth crime has pointed to the limitations of using causal factors alone in explaining and preventing youth crime, advocating for the development and testing of causal theories incorporating identified risk factors (e.g., Moffitt & Caspi, 2006; Yoshikawa, 1995). As Moffitt and Caspi (2006) identify, resources are often misused because programs have been developed and implemented based on risk factors alone, without research into causal processes.

3.2.1 Individual Domain

As noted by the Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force (2007), factors included in the individual domain may include, among others, attitudes toward crime, history of involvement in deviance, substance abuse, aggression, impulsivity, and mental health issues, as well as demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Demographic characteristics have long been used as predictors of youth offending, and chronic youth offending in particular. Gender is one characteristic that is consistently tested in many studies, with well-established findings indicating that males are more likely to become chronic offenders than females (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Chung et al., 2002; Howell, 2003; Turner, Hartman, & Bishop, 2007). While the literature continues to reinforce this finding, some studies (Haapanen, Britton, & Croisdale, 2007; Howell, 2003) suggest that research into criminal careers and life course offending is demonstrating that females are increasingly being represented in this population. Further, recent longitudinal studies (Trulson, Marquart, Mullings, & Caeti, 2005; Tyler, Johnson, & Brownridge, 2008) revealed that the factors that explain recidivism among male chronic offenders may not fit for female chronic offenders, suggesting a need for further investigation in this area. With regard to ethnicity and socioeconomic status, research suggests that low socioeconomic status and ethnic minority youth are more likely to become involved in offending (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Livingston, Stewart, Allard, & Ogilvie, 2008; Trulson et al., 2005). However, questions of whether these characteristics significantly distinguish between chronic and non-chronic youth offending have also been raised (Mullis et al., 2005), as has the observation that poverty as a risk factor may better explain youth offending if considered in combination with other risk factors (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). Furthermore, the possibility that ethnicity and socioeconomic status influence youth in different degrees at various stages of development is also under investigation (Howell, 2009).

Childhood behaviour and early onset of criminal activity have been examined as predictors of chronic youth offending (Chung et al., 2002; Loeber & Farrington, 2000; Mullis et al., 2005; Mullis, Cornille, Mullis, Beckerman, Perkins, Szapocznik, Kershaw, & Armstrong, 1999). Mullis and colleagues (2005) set out to identify developmental, contextual, and intervention characteristics of chronic youth offenders by conducting case studies of 63 male and female youth in this offender category from a south eastern American state. Among the individual themes noted was evidence of behavioural problems prior to involvement in the justice system. This finding is echoed by Chung et al. (2002), who found that childhood aggression is a significant predictor of future chronic offending. An earlier study conducted by Mullis et al. (1999) in Florida revealed that chronic youth offenders habitually commit a number of antisocial acts, compared to the majority of youth who only occasionally commit antisocial acts.

Aggressive and antisocial tendencies may have some basis in genetic pre-disposition, according to recent literature. Moffitt and Caspi (2006) point to the fact that a number of genetic studies examining the cycle of violence from abusive parent to aggressive child have revealed that genes may account for close to half the correlation between childhood antisocial tendencies and abusive parents. Moffitt (2003) also points to a number of rigorous genetic studies that have shown that life-course persistent aggression and antisocial behaviour is more likely to be associated with higher heritability than is short-term, late onset delinquency. Thus, genetic pre-disposition may in part explain the aggressive and anti-social behaviour leading to serious youth offending.

Aggressive behaviour in childhood may in turn result in early contact with the justice system. For example, a number of studies point to the importance of early

behavioural issues and contact with the justice system as indicators of future chronic offending (Loeber & Farrington, 2000; Mullis et al., 1999; Mullis et al., 2005; Truslon et al., 2005). Mullis and colleagues (1999) reported that among Florida chronic youth offenders, those who were arrested between the ages of 12 and 14 were more likely to become chronic offenders than those arrested for the first time between the ages of 15 and 18. Mullis et al.'s (2005) later study confirms this finding, as does Loeber and Farrington's (2000) extensive examination of early onset delinquency, which found that delinquency prior to age 13 increases the probability of later chronic, serious offending by a factor of 2-3. Canadian studies have yielded similar results (Carrington et al., 2005; MacRae et al., 2008; Smith et al., 1995). MacRae et al.'s (2008) historical comparison of police contacts by Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs) and non-SHOs in Calgary found that SHOs come into contact with the police as early as age 10, escalating more quickly and to a far greater extent than non-SHOs. Carrington et al.'s (2005) examination of court careers among a Canadian birth cohort found that youth whose first incident was at age 12 had a higher average number of court referrals over their careers than those who were older, and were more likely to become chronic offenders than those whose court careers started at an older age. Studies also suggest that youth who would become chronic offenders are more likely to commit a more serious offence (e.g., against the person) (Carrington et al., 2005), especially if committed at a young age (Mullis et al., 1999). Not surprisingly, as found in Benda and Tollett's (1999) study of predictors of recidivism among serious and persistent youth offenders in Arkansas, prior contact with the justice system was one of the best predictors of chronic offending, with the length of time spent in the community diminishing with each additional contact.

Though the role of mental health in chronic offending has not been well-researched, Howell suggests that in the U.S., approximately 65-70% of youth in juvenile correctional facilities and programs suffer from mental health and substance use disorders, 25% of whom have disorders "so severe that their ability to function is significantly impaired" (2009:63). Patterns are also beginning to emerge with regard to mental and emotional health. DeGusti, MacRae and Hornick (2008) found that in a study of 123 Calgary youth offenders with varied levels of criminal involvement, nearly three-quarters of the chronic and serious habitual offenders in the sample had at least one mental health diagnosis indicated in their probation file. Among the most common diagnoses, particularly for chronic offenders, were Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder. Day, Bev, Theodor, Rosenthal, and Duchesne's (2008) Toronto study of criminal trajectories found that 82% of the youth in the sample met the criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder, pointing to the importance of further exploring the role of mental health in criminal trajectories. Similarly, Mullis et al. (2005) reported that 60% of their sample had been diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) or attention deficit disorder (ADD) at one time or another. There is also increasing evidence that the presence of neuropsychological conditions (e.g., Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) is also related to chronic youth offending (Turner et al., 2007). In terms of substance abuse, MacRae et al. (2008) found that all of the chronic and serious habitual offenders reported having used illegal drugs, and were more likely to report the use of hard drugs than less serious offenders in the sample.

Finally, recent studies examining emotional and attitudinal characteristics have found links to persistent youth offending (Haapanen et al., 2007; Hawkins et al., 2000; McMurtry & Curling, 2008). McMurtry and Curling's (2008) review of the roots of youth point to the significance of low self-esteem and alienation, lack of empathy for others, feelings of oppression, and a lack of hope as significant risk factors for youth violence. A recent study by Haapanen and colleagues (2007) argues that resistance to social control (e.g., authority, rules, or laws) is perhaps the most important attitudinal factor when attempting to understand persistent offending – and that persistence in and of itself is a measure of resistance to social control

3.2.2 Family Domain

Research examining the relationship between family risk factors and chronic youth offending is substantial. Risk factors in the family domain may include parents or siblings with criminal records, family management and supervision issues, familial breakdown, separation from parents, and physical abuse or neglect (Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007).

Not surprisingly, some of the most commonly researched family risk factors are the presence of family violence, child neglect, and family breakdown, with these factors often being cited as significant predictors of youth offending (Arnull, Eagle, Gammampila, Archer, Johnson, Miller, & Pitcher, 2005; Benda & Tollett, 1999; Lemmon, 2006; MacRae et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2005; Stewart, Livingston, & Dennison, 2008; Turner et al., 2005; Trulson et al., 2005). In a study of 123 youth offenders, MacRae et al. (2008) found that chronic and serious habitual offenders were far more likely than less serious offenders to have experienced family violence, and to have divorced, separated or never married parents. Similarly, in a large scale study of persistent offenders conducted for the Youth Justice Board of England and Wales, Arnull et al. (2005) found that one of the risk factors with the greatest association to persistent youth offending was a history of family disruption (e.g., parental separation/divorce, not living with parents, parent receiving custodial sentence, family conflict). Additionally, the researchers found that persistent youth offenders experienced higher than average levels of loss (death of a parent or family member), bereavement, abuse and violence within the family setting. Lemmon's (2006) examination of the relationship between maltreatment recurrence and delinquency among a sample of disadvantaged male youth similarly revealed that child maltreatment was a significant predictor of chronic and serious youth offending. Australian research (Stewart et al., 2008) suggests that children who experience maltreatment during adolescence were more likely to reoffend than those who only experienced maltreatment prior to adolescence, speaking to the importance of understanding developmental pathways with regard to family violence.

Further, a few recent studies have demonstrated that youth who have had child protection placements (e.g., foster home, group home, residential treatment, etc.) may be at a greater risk for reoffending or chronic offending (British Columbia Representative for Children & Youth & Provincial Health Officer, 2009; MacRae et al., 2008; Ryan, 2006; Ryan, Hernandez, & Herz, 2007). In MacRae et al.'s Calgary study, youth who belonged to the chronic or serious habitual offender groups were more likely

to have had contact with child welfare, or to have been in foster care or a residential group home. In the British Columbia study of a large cohort of youth involved in the justice system (British Columbia Representative for Children & Youth & Provincial Health Officer, 2009), youth in care were more likely to be involved in the youth justice system than graduate high school. This observation is reinforced in U.S. studies, including one longitudinal study of youth in a residential treatment facility (Ryan, 2006), which found that dependant youth (youth in care), particularly those who had been mistreated, are more likely to reoffend than non-dependant youth. Added to this, findings from Ryan et al.'s (2007) subsequent study of developmental trajectories of male adolescents leaving foster care suggest that the most important predictors for reoffending were early arrests, placement instability, and failure to enrol in school. In Howell's developmental model, a child or youth having a non-intact family (e.g., not living with both biological parents) is an important factor in predicting serious delinquency (Howell, 2009).

A number of additional family factors, including family management, living arrangements, family attachment, and parental or sibling criminality have also been found to be important predictors of chronic offending. Both Howell (2009) and Chung et al. (2002) have shown that poor family management (e.g., lack of support, structure, supervision) is a significant predictor of serious (chronic) offending. In addition to poor parental relationships, Benda and Tollett (1999) found that not residing in a home with two parents is a significant predictor, a finding reinforced in Howell's (2009) developmental model of serious delinquency. MacRae et al.'s (2008) study similarly found that poor family attachment (e.g., running away from home and not residing with parents) is more common among chronic and serious habitual youth offenders, also a finding in Tyler et al.'s (2008) longitudinal study. Finally, research has often suggested that having parents or siblings involved in offending is a predictor of future chronic offending for youth (Arnull et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 2005), and is particularly influential in early adolescence (see Howell, 2009).

3.2.3 Peer Domain

Peer influence has long been discussed as a contributing factor to youth engagement in delinquent behaviour. Risk factors within the peer domain include gang affiliation and association with peers who engage in risky behaviour (Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007).

With regard to chronic offenders specifically, association with "the wrong crowd" – negative or deviant peers, or older adults – is a consistent finding among a number of studies of chronic youth offenders (Arnull et al., 2005; Chung et al., 2002; Howell, 2009; Johnson, Simons, & Conger 2004; MacRae et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2005). Johnson and colleagues (2004) suggest that deviant peer associations, particularly when youth get older, is a significant predictor of chronic offending, especially for those youth who have been involved with the justice system. This speaks to the possible role of the justice system (especially custody) in exposing youth to similar others, and the subsequent effect on future behaviour.

Importantly, gang affiliation or involvement is another peer factor that is related to chronic and persistent youth offending. According to the literature, chronic and persistent offenders are more likely to have gang involvement (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Howell, 2003; MacRae et al., 2008; Trulson et al., 2005). Benda and Tollett (1999) suggest that, although gang membership is a significant predictor of continued offending among serious and persistent youth offenders, frequency, intensity, duration and priority of gang membership, as well as the type of gang, must be considered in order for gang affiliation to be a more accurate predictor. Howell (2009) further suggests that gang membership and affiliation, as well as negative peer influences, may have more of an impact in adolescence.

Research into the relationship between chronic offending and peer/social relations has recently revealed an important protective factor: involvement in pro-social extracurricular activities. One example comes from MacRae et al.'s (2008) Calgary study of youth offenders, which found that the chronic and serious habitual offenders interviewed in the study were markedly less likely to report involvement in organized after school activities, adult-coached sports, organized non-sport activities, and clubs with adult leadership. The minor offenders interviewed were more likely to associate with pro-social peers and commonly participated in sports and groups in their spare time.

3.2.4 School Domain

According to the Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force (2007), risk factors in the school domain include low investment and commitment to school, early academic struggle and/or failure, problem behaviour in school, poor attitude, and truancy.

School is an important domain in youth development, one where a number of early warning signs of future chronic offending might be identified. A number of studies (Arnull et al., 2005; MacRae et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2005) have identified truancy as a common issue among chronic youth offenders. For example, Mullis et al.'s (2005) study of chronic offenders reported that over 60% of the study sample could be described as truant. MacRae et al.'s Calgary study found that although skipping school was common among all youth offenders in the sample, those who were identified as chronic or serious habitual offenders were far more likely to do so – and more often.

The literature suggests that chronic youth offenders often demonstrate a history of problems in school, including disciplinary, attainment, and learning issues (Arnull et al., 2005; MacRae et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2005). MacRae et al. (2008) reported that chronic and serious habitual youth offenders were more likely to report getting in fights at school and taking a weapon to school than the less serious offenders in the study sample. Further, as discussed previously, mental health diagnoses including ADD/ADHD and learning disorders were also most common among chronic offenders, which often impacts school investment and success. These youth were also less likely to report an expectation to go on to post-secondary education, or even finish high school, with over two-thirds of these offenders having considered dropping out. Arnull and colleague's U.K. study (2005) reported that low educational attachment,

attendance, and attainment were marked predictors of persistent offending among the study sample. Frequent school transitions (changing schools often) have also been noted as common among this offender population (Mullis et al., 2005).

3.2.5 Community Domain

The nature of a youth's community has also been found to be related to chronic offending. Factors within this domain include neighbourhood disorganization, crime, availability of weapons and drugs, low socioeconomic status, and poor neighbourhood attachment (Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007). In fact, a number of studies (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Chung et al., 2002; McMurtry & Curling, 2008) have examined the impact of community influences, finding that youth who live in disorganized, unsafe neighbourhoods, particularly where drugs or weapons are readily available are more likely to become chronic offenders. In addition, studies also suggest that carrying a weapon in the community is often associated with chronic youth offending (Benda & Tollett, 1999; MacRae et al., 2008).

However, studies have also suggested that the presence of a number of mitigating factors can decrease the impact of any negative influences present in the community. Patterson, Reid, and Dishion (1992) noted that children who are from violent or crime-ridden neighbourhoods but who have parents who effectively supervise and discipline them are more likely to resist criminal involvement than those who have poor parental management. Turner and colleagues (2007) found that a disadvantaged neighbourhood often interacts with other risk factors (neuropsychological deficits and family disadvantage) to place a child at increased risk for chronic offending. Thus, while community factors may be important risk factors to consider, protective influences such as parental supervision may buffer their influence.

3.2.6 Interactions and Trajectories

Although the impact of individual risk factors is well-established in the literature, studies have increasingly considered the combined impact of factors, and their impact on different stages in development (Chung et al., 2002; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Loeber & Farrington, 1998; Ryan et al., 2007; Tyler et al., 2008). Howell's examination of the literature on juvenile offender careers found that a number of longitudinal studies have shown that "serious-delinquency onset is a continuous process from childhood through the end of the teenage years" (2003:228). Ryan et al. (2007) reinforce this conclusion, stating that it is important to examine developmental trajectories in order to understand the complexity of risk factors at different developmental phases and ultimately their impact on future behaviour. As argued by Haapanen et al., "the study of the most active and persistent offenders should...help us to identify those factors or characteristics that have the greatest influence on criminal behaviour and career length" (2007:134).

In an attempt to contribute to this understanding, Lipsey and Derzon (1998) found that family influences, followed by peer group influences and school factors, are strongest earlier in life. For adolescents, lack of social ties (e.g., activities) and negative peers have the most influence on offending behaviour. Turner et al. (2007) found that the combination of early neuropsychological dysfunction, disadvantaged family, and

disadvantaged neighbourhood best predict chronic youth offending. Chung and colleagues (2002) examined the interaction between risk factors and developmental trajectories by testing the “Social Development Model,” which posits that youth who begin offending early continue to do so because they encounter antisocial influences over their life course that reinforce their behaviour. In their longitudinal study of Seattle youth, Chung et al. (2002) found that depending on the onset of offending, different risk factors were significant predictors of chronic offending.

These and other studies suggest that individual risk factors cannot be examined in isolation when attempting to understand or predict chronic youth offending. Howell (2009) synthesized the findings of a number of longitudinal, quantitative studies on risk factors and development, ultimately developing a model to predict and understand serious youth delinquency. Appendix B outlines those risk factors that Howell found to be most significant, and the developmental stages at which they are most influential. In the preschool stage, according to Howell’s theory, individual child characteristics, combined with community and family deficits, produce behaviour issues such as aggression and disruption at school entry. At school entry, these behaviours result in defiance, stubbornness, disobedience, and truancy, particularly for children from dysfunctional families and disadvantaged communities. This may also result in peer issues – rejection by prosocial peers and association with negative peers. In later childhood (age 6-12), rejection by prosocial peers ultimately leads to greater susceptibility to the influences of deviant and aggressive youth, and possibly gang members. Children become more aggressive, antisocial, violent, and may begin using drugs (marijuana) and alcohol. Weakened prosocial bonds and commitment to school and poor school performance accompany this behaviour. Community factors such as the availability of drugs and weapons, and feeling unsafe also begin to influence youth, particularly when negative family factors (e.g., abuse, poor parental supervision and management, poor parent-child relationships) are present. Finally, Howell (2009) suggests children who are on this trajectory are, by early adolescence, more likely to join a gang, and show risk factors in multiple domains.

3.3 Decision-Making and Chronic Youth Offending

As previously discussed, the definition of a chronic youth offender varies among studies. At a practical level, the question of screening for chronic youth offenders for the purposes of decision-making and program delivery is a difficult and contentious one, particularly given the complexity of this population of youth. As Loeber and Farrington (2000) argue, it is difficult to screen children early for the possibility that they will become chronic offenders, given differing exposure to risk and protective factors as they grow. The authors assert that “it is unlikely that a single screening method would be of the greatest utility in identifying those at highest risk” (Loeber & Farrington, 2000:746); instead, a combination of different methods applied over time would be a more effective approach. Further, issues of false positives and labelling are also raised in this regard. Simple risk assessment tools used to predict the possibility of future offending have yielded mixed and unreliable results (Sharkey, Furlong, Jimerson, & O’Brien, 2003), requiring additional tests of validity and reliability (Hannah-Moffat & Maurutto, 2003).

Benda and Tollett (1999) also assert that, where data regarding psychological testing are rigorously recorded, collecting and recording detailed family, interpersonal, and environmental data is equally vital. Further, the authors caution against the heavy use of psychological tests to determine whether a youth is at risk for chronic offending, as the results of psychological tests have not been proven to be effective in predicting reoffending. Screening and assessment must focus, rather, on collecting detailed individual, family, peer, neighbourhood, and educational information. As argued by Arnall and colleagues (2005), in their examination of strategies for persistent youth offenders in the United Kingdom, without thorough and complete information gathering and data recording, it becomes difficult to understand how and why particular interventions are used. The authors further point to the lack of training and knowledge among youth justice staff regarding the risk factors for persistent offending. As Arnall et al. (2005) argue, this often leads to a misunderstanding of the issues, and a tendency to view practices that emphasize social, educational, and developmental issues as “soft” or ineffective; thus, this group of high risk youth do not receive the interventions necessary.

3.4 Best Practices with Chronic Youth Offenders

3.4.1 Best Practices

As argued by Haapanen et al. (2007), persistent offenders by definition are those youth who do not respond to formal social control; thus, the question of why a youth continues to offend must also be accompanied by the question of why a youth fails to stop, despite being pressured to do so. It is clear that conventional methods may not address the very complex needs of persistent offenders. Therefore, best practices need to focus on the factors that place youth at risk for chronic or persistent youth offending in order to decrease reoffending behaviour.

An examination of the body of literature regarding effective prevention and intervention strategies yielded a number of important considerations for programs targeting chronic youth offenders. First, the results of a number of studies, particularly those examining developmental trajectories to chronic youth offending (Chung et al., 2002; Howell, 2003; Mullis et al., 2005), point to the importance of early intervention – identifying issues that may put a child on a trajectory for later chronic offending and nurturing resiliency to these risks. Howell (2003) stresses that, if not provided service at an early age, a substantial proportion of child delinquents will become serious, violent, chronic offenders. The authors of the B.C. Report (2009) on youth in care and the justice system argue that it is particularly important for programs and supports to be applied prior to involvement in the justice system – especially for those youth who are in care – and throughout all stages of development.

For those who are not identified to be at risk in childhood, first contact with police is vital. In a study of persistent offenders in the U.K., Arnall et al. (2005) stressed the first caution as vital in prevention and early intervention efforts, as the caution-to-custody window is quite short and there is little time for an intervention. This assertion is echoed by Mullis et al. (2005), who point to the importance of intervening at first arrest if risk factors for future offending are present.

Further, any early intervention effort should be a collaborative effort among the different social institutions in which a child develops – school, family, and for some, the justice system – in order to ensure the best response possible. Mullis et al. (1999), drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1999) ecological theory of development, term this a multi-component prevention strategy, spanning a number of domains of child development. To Mullis et al., practitioners and policy-makers must adopt a holistic approach that integrates developmental and contextual issues of growth, to “understand, predict, prevent, and treat adolescent antisocial behaviour” (1999:2). Further, collaboration among agencies is vital simply to ensure that any treatment plan is not conflicting (Arnull et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 2005).

In the spirit of this holistic approach, studies suggest that parental involvement in any assessment, treatment planning, and decision making is vital (Mullis et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 1999.). According to Mullis et al.'s (1999) recommendations resulting from their Florida study of chronic youth offenders, families should receive regular updates and have input into treatment planning, ensuring collaboration and consistency in treatment delivery. Further, as argued by Latimer (2005), evaluations of family focused treatment programs, particularly where parent training is involved, have proven their success in reducing delinquency.

The recognition of the diversity among chronic youth offenders is also a critical factor in program success. As observed by Mullis et al. (2005), a great amount of diversity in risk factors exists among chronic youth offenders. Arnull and colleagues' examination of persistent youth offenders in England and Wales revealed a clear disparity between the proven risk factors for persistent offenders among their study population and the availability of appropriate program responses, particularly in cases where there existed “a planned intervention for a clearly identified need” (2005:7). Innovative and appropriate strategies must be developed to support a very complex group of youth, giving attention to cultural sensitivity, age, familial relationships, neighbourhood, gender, and a number of other factors (Mullis et al., 1999).

One of the greatest barriers to effective programming is unavailability of resources. For example, Mullis et al. (2005) identified that 62% of the study sample, at one time or another, had to be placed on a resource waiting list. Often, these youth spend long periods of time incarcerated while waiting for placements. Additionally, studies (Mullis et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 1999) stress the importance of ensuring that chronic offenders receive placement close to home or, at the very least, should be placed in a facility where they can easily maintain communication with caseworkers and family members on their progress. Continuity of care – maintaining relationships with case workers, ensuring positive transitions to aftercare, etc. – are also important (Mullis et al., 1999). This includes consistent provision of specialized educational and mental health services both in and after care.

As Arnull and colleagues (2005) identify, engaging chronic and persistent offenders in programming and treatment is extremely difficult. A number of studies (Arnull et al., 2005; MacRae et al., 2008) have revealed that breach rates for both reoffending and non-compliance to orders is very high among this group. Although

frustrating for justice and community officials, this tendency is understandable given the lack of structure, support, and stability in most of these young people's lives. Research (Arnall et al., 2005) suggests that the key to engaging this group of youth is their relationship with the adult delivering programming and service. A positive adult figure has been proven to make a difference for at least some of these offenders.

3.4.2 Program Efficacy

The effectiveness of a number of specific programs for chronic offenders has been tested in recent years. Little, Kogan, Bullock, and Van Der Laan (2004) conducted an evaluation of the Intensive Supervision and Support Program, a multi-systemic response to persistent youth offenders that has been widely adopted in England and Wales. The program incorporates seven components, including: close police supervision; family group conferences; victim reparation and mediation; mentoring; improved information sharing among police, social services, and education professionals; improved diagnosis, assessment and individual treatment plans; and multi-agency case reviews. The program is targeted at youth age 15-17 who have been charged or cautioned three times within a 12-month period with an offence that carries a custodial sentence, and had previously been detained or failed to complete a community sentence. Program involvement is initiated by police, social services, and education sectors. The evaluation, focusing on the program in Kent, England, suggested that although the program did not have a significant impact on reconviction rates, it did have a significant impact on re-arrest rates, particularly when time spent out of custody was considered; the ISSP program decreased arrest rates by 30-50% for persistent offenders. Further, the overall impact of the program was more significant than any one component, speaking to the important impact of a multi-component, multi-systemic approach to chronic youth offenders.

Multi-systemic therapy (MST) is one holistic approach that focuses on many criminogenic factors, promoting family preservation while focusing on peer associations, supporting educational and career pursuits, and altering a youth's environment to promote pro-social behaviour (Latimer, 2005). MST is a pragmatic, goal-oriented approach that targets each factor in the youth's life that seems to be contributing to his/her behaviour. Dowden and Andrews' (2005 in Latimer, 2005) meta-analysis of family-focused therapies found that the MST approach has, in fact, resulted in significant program improvements when compared to other approaches; further, American studies (Henggeler, 2001) have shown that MST results in considerable cost-savings when compared to conventional youth justice approaches (e.g., incarceration). However, the only evaluation of MST in Canada, conducted at several sites in Ontario, revealed no significant impact, speaking to the need for program adjustment and future evaluation (Leschied & Cunningham, 2002). Regardless, MST has been implemented nationwide in Norway and in a number of locations across the United States.

The Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP), developed in the United States by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), is another example of a program that has seen some success. SHOCAP uses case management and extensive partnerships between criminal justice agencies and community services, with the goal of sharing information among agencies,

holding youth immediately accountable for their actions, and connecting them with services relevant to their needs in the community. SHOCAP is a model that may be implemented in any community based on the need, availability of resources, and opportunities for interagency cooperation. A screening tool is used, based on the youth's justice system involvement. Officers profile the youth, documenting a number of individual, family, community, and other relevant characteristics, and an interagency committee identifies which youth would most likely benefit from the increased monitoring offered by the program. An action plan is developed with the goals of accountability (e.g., meeting court-ordered obligations), competency development (e.g., developing life skills), and community protection (e.g., supervision and monitoring). An evaluation conducted in 1995 (Medaris, 1996) demonstrated the benefits of SHOCAP with regard to interagency cooperation, improvements in information-sharing, focused responses to serious habitual offenders, increased system responses, incapacitation of serious habitual offenders, improved resource allocation, and early intervention through identification of potential serious habitual offenders. SHOCAP also resulted in improved morale among youth justice system staff.

A comparative study of two Scottish projects designed for persistent youth offenders, Freagarrach and CueTen, also yielded useful results for consideration in intervention programming (Lobley & Smith, 2007). Freagarrach, the more successful of the two, was developed as a local, interagency strategy based on existing research evidence on proven approaches with persistent offenders and was reflective of Scotland's non-punitive welfare orientation to youth justice. According to Lobley and Smith (2007), Freagarrach was successful in part because of its collaborative approach, particularly its involvement of social and community education workers. These collaboration efforts resulted in positive outcomes, particularly with regard to school exclusion issues. Freagarrach's approach was based on relationships with youth and their families, based on care and respect, while setting limits for appropriate behaviour; group and individual counselling was also utilized. This was in contrast to CueTen, which involved staff with mixed backgrounds (not necessarily social or community education workers) and focused primarily on employment as a key issue in persistent offending. CueTen adopted a more cognitively structured, ambitious, and demanding approach, which did not work well with a population who came from unhappy and unstable familial situations, and struggled with drug and alcohol issues. CueTen was not based on the same local strategy and collaboration as Freagarrach, nor did it adopt the same family oriented approach. As a result, CueTen struggled to establish an image as a reputable program for persistent offenders in the community. Overall, outcomes suggested that Freagarrach was more highly rated among staff, and had a greater impact on recidivism rates and decreased the seriousness of offending. Freagarrach was also found to be more cost effective. This comparison speaks to the importance of a holistic, interagency approach to supporting persistent offenders.

The solution to serious, chronic, and persistent youth offending is as elusive as it is complex. Often, all of the risk factors that were previously discussed are not known by youth justice authorities at the youth's first arrest or court appearance, which points to the important role of communities, schools, child protection, and health services in being aware of those risk factors and identifying children and youth at risk.

As Doob (2004:261) argues, “it is probably not too much of an oversimplification to suggest that programs that lead to healthy children are likely to be effective in addressing many of the precursors to delinquency.” Further, as argued by Trulson and colleagues (2005), understanding and addressing risk factors for youth chronic offending must continue into adulthood, as their criminal careers often continue past the age of 18; this speaks to the need for communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the youth and adult systems.

4.0 Environmental Scan of Police Strategies and Programs

This chapter presents the results obtained from interviews conducted with police and related agency representatives from across Canada. While police programs were the focus of the environmental scan, it is important to note that there are many other services and agencies across Canada that work with youth offenders or youth who are at risk of offending. In particular, the new YCJA legislation has added a number of community-based sentences that provide youth court judges with more options for responding to youth offending. The Intensive Support and Supervision Program (ISSP) is a new sentence that is similar to probation, but provides more support to the young person as well as closer monitoring. Eligibility requirements vary across the country, but most cater to youth assessed as a high risk to re-offend. In general, a specialized probation officer works intensively with a smaller caseload, providing increased surveillance of their court-ordered conditions, and collaborates with the youth's family and relevant service providers in the community to encourage rehabilitation. While only five provinces and territories have opted to make use of the ISSP as a sentence that can be imposed by a judge (British Columbia, Alberta, Québec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Yukon), other provinces have opted to make the program available to candidates referred by corrections or probation. For example, Nova Scotia's Intensive Support Program is available to youth who are being supervised under a probation or conditional supervision order and generally targets youth who are at a high risk to re-offend. The Intensive Support Program available in New Brunswick aims to:

- Divert youth from entering the custodial system and support youth released from custody.
- Increase youth and family participation in pro-social activity.
- Improve physical health and psychological wellness.
- Enhance the youth and the family's awareness of resources required for effective parenting.
- Improve family, social and economic functioning.
- Ensure public safety through the active involvement of young persons in pro-social community based activities.
- Improve the youth's educational and vocational social functions and interactive skills (New Brunswick Public Safety, n.d.).

A number of provinces also make use of programs offered through other agencies, such as the John Howard Society to work with high risk youth. In addition, there are many residential and attendance programs offered across Canada that are specifically targeted toward chronic and persistent youth offenders. Camp Trapping in British Columbia is one such residential program targeted to young male offenders, with referrals to the program made through British Columbia's Youth and Probation Services;

youth are required to attend as a condition of their probation. The PASS (Progressive Accountability through Supervision and Support) program in Ontario similarly works with youth who are deemed medium to high risk to re-offend, offering services that include anger management and victim awareness courses, as well as family/individual and school support.

The remainder of this chapter documents police strategies and programs that are targeted at chronic and persistent youth offenders in each province and territory. The information presented is meant to give an indication of the initiatives taking place across Canada and is not meant to serve as a compendium of all police strategies and programs that are available for chronic and persistent youth offenders.

4.1 British Columbia

In general, the province of British Columbia adheres to a provincial Crime Reduction Initiative that aims to decrease crime by targeting prolific offenders. Prolific offenders are defined as individuals who have been criminally active within the past year, have a history of frequent offending, a history of non-compliance with the court or release authorities, engage in criminal behaviour that has a serious impact on public safety, and are assessed to be at a high risk to re-offend. In 2005/06, an initial RCMP Crime Reduction Initiative was piloted in Coquitlam, Comox Valley, Maple Ridge, Port Moody, Penticton, Port McNeill and Fraser Lake. In these sites, partnerships with health, social services, and justice reform agencies were formed with the intent of targeting enforcement on prolific and priority offenders. Since this initiative has begun, the pilot sites have seen a significant drop in crime rates, especially with respect to property crime.

Communities that use the Crime Reduction Initiative often focus on the top-ten prolific offenders in their community by assigning the targeted offenders to special crime reduction units who monitor their associations and conduct curfew and street checks. In Comox Valley, offenders with 25 or more convictions are targeted as prolific offenders, while an additional 75-80 offenders are designated as priority offenders. These offenders are defined as individuals who have negative contact with the police more than five times within a three month period. A crime analyst takes information from their police information system and ranks offenders according to the number of incidents that offenders are involved in, the nature of their crimes, their propensity to re-offend, and their release conditions. A top-ten priority offender list is compiled every week for the special crime reduction units to monitor. Eight officers are assigned to the crime reduction unit, and at the time of the interview a two-person youth detail was also starting to compile their own list of top-ten priority youth offenders. While the focus for adult priority offenders is mostly enforcement, officers assigned to youth priority offenders try to integrate services into their targeted enforcement. The youth officers partner with schools, the Ministry of Children and Family Development and families to provide rehabilitation with their enforcement. While on average there are often 15-20 youth assigned to the priority offender list at any given time, the two officers assigned to the youth detail often find it difficult to manage just the top-ten youth priority offenders amidst their other regular duties. Overall, in Comox Valley it was indicated that the

program is working well, but additional resources could make the program even more successful.

Maple Ridge also uses a similar strategy, but further targets all youth who come in contact with the police. The analyst in the detachment compiles a list of all youth who come into contact with the police and forwards the information to youth officers who partner with agencies in the community to offer more rehabilitative services to the youth. The Maple Ridge RCMP representative stated that youth are a detachment priority and monitoring conditions and curfews is a shared responsibility among all detachment members.

In Port Moody, the police work in partnership with probation to initiate checks on offenders who are serving their sentences in the community. Both youth and adult offenders are subject to regular curfew checks by police, who work closely with probation to ensure that court-ordered conditions are respected.

In 2008, a pilot project referred to as the Prolific Offender Management Program was also initiated and is currently being tested in six pilot sites: Kamloops, Nanaimo, Prince George, Surrey, Victoria (Capital Regional District) and Williams Lake. While this project is aimed at both adult and youth offenders, the project generally includes only adult offenders or youth who are very close to turning 18. The criteria to be considered a prolific offender are quite stringent and it is often unlikely that youth will have acquired enough convictions to be considered a prolific offender. Offenders targeted by the program are subject to increased supervision and timely interventions that can include referrals to drug treatment programs, mental health professionals and job or housing programs. Each community team manages 20 to 40 prolific offenders with involvement from a variety of agencies including: Police (RCMP and municipal police), BC Corrections, Correctional Service of Canada, provincial and federal Crown Counsel, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Health Authorities (mental health and addictions), Ministry of Housing and Social Development, B.C. Housing, Forensic Psychiatric Services, and Victim Services (B.C. Criminal Justice Reform, n.d.).

In accordance with B.C.'s Crime Reduction Initiative, Prince Rupert also assembled their own crime reduction team in 2008 to manage prolific offenders in their community. While they do not use a formalized criterion to identify prolific offenders, they do focus on a list of ten offenders who are widely known to both probation and watch members in their detachment. Given that the community is small, there are generally not enough youth offenders to maintain a separate list for youth offenders. Therefore, at any given time, the top-ten list can include up to two chronic and persistent youth offenders. Targets stay on the list unless they are in custody or maintain a crime free status for a certain period of time, at which point a new target takes their place on the list. The list is re-assessed weekly, but most changes to the list take place on a monthly basis. Typically targets on the list are subject to increased checks on their curfew and community conditions, but RCMP officers and probation also strive to make use of rehabilitative services from the community as much as possible. Though the program has not been in effect for very long, representatives interviewed felt that the initiative is successful.

There are also a number of other strategies and programs that police in British Columbia use to manage chronic and persistent youth offenders in their communities. In Nanaimo, RCMP have established a Youth Response Team that works with youth who are at risk of offending, are engaged in high risk behaviour that is dangerous to themselves or others, or are at risk of becoming prolific offenders. The team came about after the YCJA came into force (in early 2006) in response to an increase in the number of youth who were serving their sentences in the community. The six-person team strives for daily coverage both during the day and at night in order to monitor youth activities in and out of school, as well as to respond to calls concerning youth. They also maintain a list of chronic youth offenders and youth who engage in dangerous activities for night-watch members to target. Officers on the team conduct checks on youth with curfew and non-association orders in partnership with youth probation. The representative interviewed believed the Nanaimo Youth Response Team to be very effective, and further noted the satisfaction that youth probation has expressed with the initiative.

The North Vancouver RCMP's Project OWN is a program that is also utilized in other parts of B.C., such as the Abbotsford Police Department. In this program, general duty police members actively monitor curfew conditions of youth and adults who have a chronic history of involvement in property offences. The program has been in existence since the year 2000 in Abbotsford, where police on average monitor eight offenders with a chronic history or involvement in property crime. The duration of those in the program is determined by their level of compliance with their court ordered conditions. In North Vancouver, five to ten chronic youth offenders are targeted by the program at any given time. The program is coordinated by one constable and targets are referred to the program by general duty detachment members and probation officers. The North Vancouver RCMP representative believed that the program is effective as long as general duty members are able to complete the checks assigned to them.

Finally, the Vancouver Police Department's Youth Services Section assigns members to work in a team with social workers and probation officers in programs called Yankee 20 and Yankee 10. The teams specifically target and monitor high risk youth, while also providing rehabilitative services to them. Yankee 20 members work in the daytime with social workers, while Yankee 10 police members partner with probation officers in the evening to monitor youth and their court ordered conditions. Police members from the Youth Services Section meet with key representatives from probation and social work every second week to determine who should be monitored. They do not use a formal protocol to target youth, but rather assess risk factors for specific youth who have been referred to them. The goal of the cross-disciplinary teams is to achieve wrap-around services for targeted youth by involving agencies from around the city. Each agency provides funding for their own members and the teams usually average over 200 checks per month. Considering the large amount of resources that have been allocated to youth, it was felt that the program is very successful. However, police in Vancouver also struggle with the limitation that services are only directed at youth under the age of 18. The officer interviewed expressed a desire to extend wrap around services to youth into their early 20s and also identified a need for increased training for police on dealing with youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

4.2 Alberta

Very few formal police programs for chronic or persistent youth offenders were found in the province of Alberta. The program that has existed the longest appears to be the Serious Habitual Offender Program (SHOP) administered by the Calgary Police Service. The program was launched in 1988 and was recently expanded to allow officers to continue working with youth even after they reach the age of 18. Specifically, officers from the SHOP unit identify and monitor youth aged 12-24 who are serious repeat offenders. SHOP targets are referred to the unit by a multidisciplinary resource team made up of representatives from the Calgary Young Offender Centre, the Calgary Youth Attendance Centre, Calgary and Area Child and Family Services, the Calgary Board of Education, the Calgary Separate School District, City of Calgary Youth Probation Services, Calgary Police SHOP Unit and Calgary Police Youth Serving Sections. Once referred, potential targets are assessed according to an in-house assessment tool that examines the potential target's:

- historical risk factors (previous non-violent and violent acts, early initiation of violence, past supervision/intervention failures, history of self harm or suicidal attempts, exposure to violence in the home, childhood history of maltreatment, parent/caregiver criminality, early caregiver disruption and poor school achievement);
- social/contextual risk factors (peer delinquency, peer rejection, stress or poor coping, poor parental management, lack of personal/social support and community disorganization); and
- individual risk factors (negative attitudes, risk taking/impulsivity, substance use difficulties, anger management problems, low empathy/remorse, attention deficit/hyperactivity difficulties, poor compliance and low interest/commitment to school).

The main goal of the program is to curtail the criminal activity of the targets monitored; however, officers also work with social workers to ensure that SHOP targets have access to rehabilitation and reintegration services. The SHOP team consists of one sergeant, nine constables, one social worker, one crime analyst and one clerk, with funding for the positions provided by the Calgary Police Service. It is felt that the program is effective because it promotes information sharing between members of the police and probation services, and also decreases the criminal activity of their targets. In addition, SHOP targets are entered into the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database, a computerized information system that provides information on crimes and criminals in Canada. If a SHOP target is picked up outside of Calgary or by a front line police officer within the city, they are alerted about the offender's SHOP status on CPIC, which also lists contact information for the target's monitoring officer. Consequently, SHOP officers are able to maintain the latest information on their targets. One frustration mentioned was that the YCJA puts more pressure on officers to make sure that youth are staying out of trouble because of the increase in offenders who are serving the terms of their sentences in the community.

While the Lethbridge Regional Police Service also has a Serious Habitual Offender program, the program is mainly geared toward adult high risk offenders and only operates on a case-by-case basis for youth. In general, officers in Lethbridge monitor high risk offenders who have been released into the community and endeavour to ensure that past criminal behaviours do not continue into the future. At the time of the interview, only two youth were receiving services under the program.

There are also other initiatives across the province for chronic and persistent offenders that exist on a more informal level. For example, one constable with the Medicine Hat Police Service takes responsibility for conducting checks on youth with enforceable conditions, such as curfews. The officer works with the local youth probation officer to determine who should be on the list of youth to be checked. On average there are 15-20 youth on the list at any given time; however, given that only one officer is responsible for coordinating with probation and conducting the checks, the list is sometimes neglected during busy periods, such as the summer months. Current discussions are taking place about formalizing the process in order to make it more consistent.

In Chestermere, RCMP rely on informal information sharing amongst detachment members to keep up to date on chronic and persistent youth offenders. In this way, detachment members are aware of youth who need to be targeted and police members take responsibility for ensuring that these particular youth are complying with their curfews and other court imposed conditions. It was felt that while they have had some success with this approach, increasing gang violence in their community sometimes makes this ad hoc approach ineffective. It was suggested that an integrated community approach to youth offending would be most effective for decreasing youth incidents; however, the respondent conceded that such an approach is likely most effective in smaller communities rather than larger ones. Similarly, RCMP officers in Airdrie also informally target chronic and persistent youth offenders based upon informal information sharing among detachment members. The Airdrie RCMP member felt that this approach was currently sufficient in curtailing youth crime in their community.

4.3 Saskatchewan

The youth crime rate in Saskatchewan is the highest of all the provinces in Canada, and it also has the highest rates for youth accused of violent crime and property crime (Dauvergne, 2008). It is therefore not surprising that Saskatchewan would also have the most police strategies and programs to address chronic/persistent youth offenders. The most common program among Saskatchewan police agencies is the Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP), which is utilized in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford and Yorkton. SHOCAP is “an interagency effort designed to provide a coordinated approach and enhanced communications between agencies working with young persons who are habitual offenders” (Saskatoon Police Service, nd). While each police service has modified the program to fit the needs of their communities, including an expansion of the program to address specific criminal trends such as break and enters and auto theft, all of the services have maintained a similar focus on monitoring and enforcement.

Generally, youth who are selected as SHOCAP targets receive additional monitoring and supervision by police and probation. Police also work closely with social services and probation on case planning and reintegration into the community for SHOCAP targets, while ensuring that there is strict compliance of their court-ordered conditions (e.g., curfews, non-association, and drug and alcohol conditions).

As stated in a recent review of the SHOCAP program conducted by retired Police Chief William Miller for the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing of Saskatchewan (Miller, 2008), the main objectives for SHOCAP in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert's are to:

- (1) Have serious habitual offenders designated as SHOCAPs;
- (2) Maintain constant checks on a designated SHOCAP;
- (3) Arrest and charge, if found breaching or re-offending;
- (4) Bring back before the court with incarceration being the end result;
- (5) Maintain positive relationships with its partners (Department of Social Services, Department of Justice Prosecutors Office, Community Corrections, local school boards, Tribal Council and families) through positive communications and information flow; and
- (6) Constantly monitor crime trends within their community.

The program was first initiated in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert in 1999 and was based on similar programs being utilized in the United States. SHOCAP is attached to the Criminal Investigation Division of the police departments in each of the three cities, with most of the program funding coming from the provincial government. In Regina, the SHOCAP unit consists of one supervisor, four police members and an administrative assistant. Similarly, Saskatoon Police Service employs one supervisor and four police members in its SHOCAP unit. The Prince Albert Police Service, on the other hand, has two members who coordinate the program, but only one member is fully funded by the province to work in SHOCAP. While the focus of SHOCAP in Prince Albert includes a broad spectrum of criminal offences, the Saskatoon Police Service instead focuses on youth who commit violent offences. The focus of SHOCAP in Regina is on auto theft, break and enter property crimes and armed robberies (Miller, 2008). Generally SHOCAP is intended to work with offenders aged 14-25 and candidates are monitored until they complete one year crime free in the community, age out, or move to another jurisdiction. SHOCAP in Saskatoon further restricts participation in the program to a three-year maximum and is for youth aged 12-21.

In Regina, monitoring of the SHOCAP targets is split between the Patrol division of the Regina Police Service, and youth and adult probation officers. On average there are approximately 40 serious habitual offenders designated as SHOCAP targets. At the time of the interview, most of the SHOCAP targets in the program were over the age of 18. In the Saskatoon Police Service, the SHOCAP unit is responsible for checks and

will also periodically team up with probation to conduct checks (Miller, 2008). On average the unit monitors close to 40 SHOCAP targets. The Patrol Division is responsible for SHOCAP checks in the Prince Albert Police Service and also responds to request for checks from other units in the service. The majority of SHOCAP targets in Prince Albert are youth, with an average of 22 targets in the program at any one time.

Both Saskatoon and Prince Albert use a point system to determine if a suggested candidate should be designated as a SHOCAP. The selection of SHOCAP candidates takes place every three months in Saskatoon, with referrals for the program coming from police, probation and the Crown Prosecutor's office. Each potential candidate is scored according to the severity and number of convictions. The highest number of points (7) is awarded for the most serious crimes; termed "Category 1," offences in this category include crimes such as murder, violent sexual offences, violent robberies and serious assaults. "Category 2" offences are given four points for each conviction of lesser crimes such as possession of controlled substance, arson, forcible entry and theft or possession over \$5,000. The final category, "Category 3," includes offences such as assault, theft under \$5,000, public mischief and failure to appear, which are given 2 points per offence. Youth scoring below a total of 70 points are not considered eligible for SHOCAP. The police meet with a SHOCAP candidate selection committee to discuss the possible SHOCAP candidates and only make the decision to designate an offender a SHOCAP target with the consensus of the entire committee. Youth considered for SHOCAP in Prince Albert must have a minimum of 50 conviction points, determined through their justice computer system. Interagency meetings are held every three months to determine whether youth would be good candidates for the program.

Regina Police Service does not use a point system for the designation of a SHOCAP candidate. Instead a board consisting of representatives from corrections, probation services, the prosecutor's office and police meet once per month to discuss possible program candidates, who are referred by police and probation. The board considers the possible candidate's criminal record, risk to re-offend and the seriousness of crimes that were committed. Upon consensus of the board, the candidate is then designated a SHOCAP target.

Police officers in all three cities agreed that SHOCAP is effective in reducing crime committed by serious habitual offenders. However, they all identified a need for more resources in order to increase the success of the program. For example, one officer interviewed identified a semi-transient population that is not reached with the program, but are also responsible for a great deal of crime. The officer also noted that many of the SHOCAP targets in their program are often in custody and are therefore not as big of a threat as those who are not targeted by the program.

In addition to an increase in resources for police, probation and prosecutors who deal with SHOCAP targets, a yearly meeting for general information exchange between all of the SHOCAP selection committees as well as with the Deputy Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, the Deputy Minister of Justice, and the Executive Director of Policing in Saskatchewan was also recommended. The Saskatoon Police Service would also like to extend SHOCAP to adult offenders and continue the program for SHOCAP targets beyond the age of 21.

As previously noted, the cities of North Battleford and Yorkton also make use of SHOCAP in their communities. In North Battleford the RCMP administer the program to youth aged 12-18, but also monitor youth into adulthood if necessary. The program was announced in April 2003 and is modeled on the SHOCAP model used in Saskatoon. Similar to the program in the originating cities, members of the RCMP SHOCAP Unit in North Battleford monitor SHOCAP targets and meet with partner agencies (schools, corrections, crown prosecutor and tribal council members) to discuss cases and ensure constant supervision of the youth in the program. While they previously used a formal screening tool to identify youth for the program, recently they have only been monitoring youth who are referred by youth services. They are currently in discussion with youth probation to work out a new agreement about how to target youth for the program. They are keen to use a formal screening tool and point system, as is used in Saskatoon. At the time of the interview there were 33 SHOCAP targets, with an overwhelming majority of them being First Nations youth. Two full-time officers from the RCMP (funded by shared support from the provincial and municipal governments) work with two members of Corrections and Public Safety to administer the program. Most often, youth transition out of the program when they have completed their community sentences; however, the officer interviewed from the SHOCAP Unit expressed a desire to maintain supervision of the SHOCAP targets beyond their court-mandated supervision period to further prevent their re-entry into the system. Overall, it was felt that the program is successful, but it was also noted that there is a need for more resources to staff the program. There are many more chronic/persistent offenders who could be added to the program, as well as many youth transitioning in and out of the program who could be monitored for a longer period of time.

Initiated in 2005, the RCMP detachment in Yorkton administers a SHOCAP program that is used for both youth and adult serious habitual offenders. Based on the SHOCAP program in Regina, officers from the Yorkton detachment monitor SHOCAP targets to ensure that they are compliant with their court ordered conditions. While the program previously had two full-time positions funded by the province to administer the program, due to a shortage of manpower, general officers in the detachment are now sharing the responsibility of maintaining the program. Candidates for the program are determined through regular consultations with youth and adult workers from Corrections and Public Safety. Youth and adult offenders who are released into the community with conditions and are a high risk to re-offend are the most common targets for the program. RCMP officers have also created a new initiative within the program called Positive Ticketing, which involves the use of incentives such as coupons and recreational passes for youth who are compliant with their conditions. It was felt that the program has been successful in reducing crime for those who are in the program, but the vacant full-time positions create difficulties for identifying candidates for the program. The suggestion was made that having at least one officer who is responsible for the program would ensure that no one is "falling through the cracks."

In order to further manage chronic offenders in their communities, Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert Police Services also developed additional programs and strategies. In Regina, police developed two additional programs called the Carwash program, for entry level repeat auto theft offenders who remain at risk to re-offend, and

the CRO Program, for chronic repeat offenders with a high probability to re-offend. These additional programs were developed to ensure that there is an earlier intervention for youth who are chronically offending and that SHOCAP becomes a last stop along the path of offending. Most youth who enter the Carwash program transition into it from the HEAT (Help Eliminate Auto Theft) program, a program for first time auto theft offenders. If they continue to offend then they graduate to the CRO program and receive more monitoring and supervision. The programs target youth aged 12-25 and youth stay in the program until they complete one year crime free in the community, age out, move to another jurisdiction or graduate to a more intensive program (with SHOCAP being the most intensive). Candidates for each program are selected once per month by the same board that is used for selecting SHOCAP targets. Possible program candidates are brought forward by police and probation and the board considers the possible candidate's criminal record, risk to re-offend and number of offences committed. Upon consensus of the board, the candidate is then selected to be targeted by the specific program.

Due to a high number of break and enter crimes occurring in Saskatoon, the police added a second program called BECAP (Break and Enter Comprehensive Action Program) in 2004. This program is modeled on SHOCAP and intensely monitors both youth and adult offenders who habitually commit break and enter offences. In order to identify potential candidates for the program a point system based on convictions and/or pending charges is used. Scored offence categories include break and enter involving violence or threats (7 points), break and enter and attempted break and enter (4 points), and possession of a break-in instrument (2 points). In addition to the scoring of offences, selection into BECAP is also based on other considerations such as a pattern of non-compliance with current or previous court orders, being identified as a suspect in current break and enter investigations, and being identified as a known associate of other break and enter offenders. The selection committee for the program is made up of representatives from Corrections and Public Safety, the Crown Prosecutor's office and police members from the Break and Enter Unit and BECAP/SHOCAP Unit. BECAP targets remain in the program for a period of at least six months, and only are removed if they complete required programming and remain crime free (including breaches). BECAP targets are also removed from the program at the expiration of their court orders; however, in situations where new orders are anticipated in the near future, these offenders may be held in the program for the new order. Two officers from Saskatoon Police Service work with two youth workers and one adult worker from Corrections and Public Service to administer the program. On average 20 youth are targeted by BECAP and officers agree that the program has been very successful in decreasing the number of break and enter offences in Saskatoon.

In addition to BECAP, police officers in Saskatoon are also requesting funding for another program called VOCAP (Violent Offender Comprehensive Action Program). This program is designed to pick up where SHOCAP leaves off and will consist of intensive monitoring of serious habitual offenders into adulthood. Typically SHOCAP in Saskatoon does not admit offenders who are beyond the age of 18. Therefore, VOCAP will be an adjunct to SHOCAP and will target offenders aged 16 and up. Given that this program is not yet implemented, very little information about VOCAP is currently available.

In Prince Albert additional programs for chronic/persistent offenders include Project Filter and Adopt an Offender, which target criminally active youth and adults in Prince Albert. Project Filter is a pilot program that the Prince Albert Police Service initiated in May 2008 with funding currently being sought from the provincial government to make it a permanent program. The program involves police members regularly checking on court-ordered curfew conditions of youth and adults. The names of youth and adults who have court-ordered curfew conditions are sent to a police member, who organizes a list for police on evening duty to perform checks. Those who are complying with their conditions get transferred to the bottom of the list, while those who are not are breached and sent back to court, which keeps them current on the list. On average, 60-100 youth and adult offenders are checked per month, with a sizable portion of these checks being performed on youth offenders. During the time that Project Filter was in effect, police in Prince Albert found that property crime dropped substantially.

The Adopt an Offender program is a smaller program that involves a patrol member from the Prince Albert Police Service being paired up with a youth or adult offender who is criminally active and is continually breaching the conditions of their community sentences. The police member takes responsibility for the offender by conducting regular checks on the offender and keeping up to date on their life. On average 20 youth are targeted by the Adopt an Offender project. While it was initiated in 2005, the effectiveness of the program has been difficult to assess because of the often sporadic nature of checks conducted by police members. Given that the program is added to the regular duties of police members, it is sometimes difficult to regularly conduct checks on “adopted offenders.” The suggestion was made that an increase in police resources as well as the addition of a criminal analyst may be helpful for increasing the effectiveness and evaluation of their programs.

4.4 Manitoba

Overall, results from the environmental scan show that Manitoba uses an interagency approach to manage chronic and persistent youth offenders. The approach involves the collaboration and cooperation of community agencies in order to develop and implement effective intervention strategies for youth at risk. For example, the city of Brandon operates a not-for-profit organization called the Multi-Agency Preventative Program (MAPP), which includes a network of agencies: the Brandon School Division, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, Child and Adolescent Treatment Centre, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services, Métis Child, Family and Community Services, Community and Youth Correctional Services, Manitoba Justice Crown Attorney’s Office, Brandon University Psychology Department, the Brandon Fire Department, and the Brandon Police Service. The organization does not replace agency involvement, but rather endeavours to co-ordinate service provision and exchange of information among the various agencies by providing

...reports of youth activity in the community, school and home environments; information regarding police, courts and or probation; administrative support upon request; a measuring tool to assess areas of improvement and decline over time; a means of exchanging ideas

between individuals and agencies, comprehensive files that can be used in case conferences or multi agency meetings; and a means of networking with others in the community who share the same goals and ideas in helping at risk youth. (MAPP for High Risk Youth, n.d.)

Representatives from all of the agencies meet once per month to exchange information and help with case planning for youth who are part of the program. A youth can be referred to the program from any of the participating agencies as long as they meet three criteria:

- the youth is under the age of 18;
- the youth is involved with or soon to be involved with a minimum of three participating agencies; and
- the youth's parent/legal guardian signs a form consenting to the sharing of information between participating agencies.

The organization is mandated to serve 40 youth from the city of Brandon and youth are assessed throughout their time in the program to see if they are making progress. The assessment tool used was developed by the Brandon University Psychology Department and is used when youth enter the program and every year thereafter. The assessment tool examines all aspects of the youth's life including their current living arrangement, parental and educational situation, history of offences, drug and alcohol use, and cognitive or attitudinal deficiencies. Youth who are at a significant high risk to reoffend also have a MAPP designation entered on CPIC. Youth typically remain in the program until they reach the age of 18, enter custody, drop to a very low risk level, or no longer have agency involvement. The program is also often expanded to include siblings of youth who are chronic and persistent offenders in order to decrease the probability that they too will become high risk offenders. Funding for the program comes primarily from the partnering agencies. On average, there are 40 representatives who are part of the organization and one individual who coordinates all of the partnerships. To date the program has been very effective and is also being expanded to other communities in Manitoba.

Similar interagency committees are also being utilized in Fisher Branch, Killarney and Oakbank. In Fisher Branch, the RCMP work with agencies in the community to target youth with multiple agency involvement. The RCMP meet with representatives from various agencies, including child and family services, probation services and psychological services, while also coordinating with First Nations communities to develop individualized strategies to help youth. Strategies can include referring youth to drug awareness programs or various leisure and skill development programs, and meeting with school and community justice committees. The comment was made that it is sometimes difficult to put strategies in place for chronic and persistent youth offenders because officers have to spend a great amount of time in enforcement and the youth are often in custody. Overall, it was felt that an interagency approach is effective for working with youth offenders.

In the same way, the Killarney RCMP also participates in a multi-agency committee called the Turtle Mountain School Division Multi-Agency Committee. The committee meets once per month and includes representatives from the RCMP, Child and Family Services, Mental Health, the Turtle Mountain School Division, Probation Services, Community Health, and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. Similar to MAPP, the committee obtains consent from parents and guardians to allow agencies to share information about the youth. The number of youth the committee works with varies, from as few as 5 to as many as 20 youth aged 12-18. The referral process for youth to the committee is very informal with agency representatives forwarding recommendations to the committee chair. The committee strives to ensure that plans of action are consistent across all the agencies that youth have contact with. The role of the RCMP is to work closely with probation to ensure that youth are in compliance with their court-ordered conditions. It was felt that the committee is useful not only for youth, but also for the members of the different agencies who have an opportunity to learn about each other's roles and experience. Given that committee members contribute their time on a voluntary basis, it was suggested that increased funding might provide an opportunity to expand and increase the effectiveness of the committee.

The Oakbank RCMP detachment also participates in what is referred to as the Springfield Inter-Agency Committee, which aims to share information and take a team approach to working with high risk youth. In addition to a representative from the RCMP, the committee also includes representatives from education, Child and Family Services, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and the Child Guidance Clinic.

While not all communities in Manitoba have an inter-agency approach, RCMP detachments that have taken the initiative to work with probation to ensure that high risk offenders comply with their court ordered conditions, even where there are no formalized processes. Officers with the Thompson detachment assign members of their watch to check on the compliance of chronic offenders' release from custody. One RCMP member keeps the list of adult and youth chronic offenders up to date for regular members to check on, while officers also try to engage other agencies to help offenders on a case-by-case basis. At any given time there are a dozen chronic youth offenders that police check on in Thompson, which the representative interviewed felt was effective because "at the very least it inconveniences them." In Swan River, police work closely with probation to determine which offenders need extra monitoring and often accompany them to conduct checks. They also sit on various committees, including the Violent Student Directional Group and a high risk youth steering committee that includes representatives from probation, mental health, the school division and aboriginal groups who discuss ongoing problems and trends with youth offending in their community.

4.5 Ontario

Police in the province of Ontario have established a number of interesting initiatives to work with chronic and persistent youth offenders. While a single strategy across the province was not evident in the environmental scan, the variety of strategies and programming available suggest that chronic and persistent youth offenders are a priority for police.

One program that is well developed is the High Enforcement Repeat Offender (HERO) program of the Halton Regional Police Service. The program was initiated in 2002 and is aimed at adult and youth repeat offenders who show a high likelihood to re-offend. While the intent of the program is primarily enforcement of judicially imposed conditions, HERO officers also assist with referrals to services in the community, provide support and guidance to the HERO candidate, and provide patrol members with information about HERO candidates. The criteria for selection into the program are (Halton Regional Police Service, 2008):

- (1) ongoing criminal behaviour;
- (2) demonstrated non-compliance or disrespect for court ordered conditions; and
- (3) residence or employment within the Halton region; or
- (4) recommendation for participation by the HERO committee and/or the HERO coordinator.

The HERO coordinator positions are assigned by each district Detective Sergeant, within the four municipalities of Halton. Each HERO coordinator is responsible for maintaining the HERO database, which documents the candidates' charges/cautions, court dates, court-ordered conditions, and details of strategies and contact used to manage the offender. The HERO coordinator works with officers selected by the district Detective Sergeant and also meets with the HERO committee, comprised of community partners, including probation and parole, members of the District Criminal Investigation Bureau and other participants as requested (e.g., patrol members, youth officer, crime analyst, drug and morality bureau, district social worker) once per month. The HERO committee acts as an advisory group and also oversees the overall activities of the HERO program within a district, in particular, sharing information and working collectively to discuss strategies for the management of HERO candidates (Halton Regional Police Service, 2008). Each police district in Halton manages ten HERO candidates and contact with each candidate is expected a minimum of once every five days. Interview information suggested that the program is effective; however, much more so in the smaller municipalities than the larger ones. It was indicated that a higher population in South Halton, as well as a lower police to population ratio, means that targeting just ten chronic offenders does not have a large impact upon crime in those communities. It was suggested that increased resources would allow the program to target more offenders in the larger municipalities.

The Hamilton Police Service operates the Strategic Targeting Offender Program (STOP) for high risk chronic youth offenders aged 12-18. Each division of the service targets 25 offenders, for a total of 75 targets. Targets are referred to each youth divisional officer by other police officers and representatives from probation and schools. In most cases, targets are youth with multiple convictions for personal and property offences; however, youth with serious or sophisticated first offences may also be included in the program. Officers also consider other factors that may inhibit success in the program and generally do not include youth with mental health conditions. Each divisional youth officer keeps the list of targets up to date in order for

patrol officers to conduct checks. Once the check is completed, the officer forwards the information to the divisional youth officer, who is responsible for taking action (e.g., charge, crown package). Each target's STOP status is also entered into CPIC, which includes a brief description of the program as well as the target's youth officer contact information. Targets can only be monitored by the STOP program for the duration of their court-imposed conditions, after which a new target takes their place; however, the divisional youth officer will often continue to monitor targets even once they are no longer part of the program. Since the introduction of the program, the police representative interviewed revealed that the service has increased the number of STOP checks, but the number of charges have been staying the same or decreasing, suggesting that youth are increasingly obeying their court ordered conditions. In 2008, the Hamilton Police service conducted 322 STOP checks. While the service has not conducted a formal evaluation of the program, they do meet with probation and other community groups regularly to assess how the program is working and try to address any challenges that are identified. Typically, the biggest recognized challenge is keeping the program present in the minds of frontline officers. In 2007, the service experienced a decline in the number of checks conducted, but was able to increase the number completed in 2008. The service is mindful of the time commitment that is required when conducting checks and has strategically placed the responsibility for preparing Crown packages in the hands of each divisional youth officer to encourage frontline officers to conduct as many checks as possible.

In 2005, the Peel Regional Police started a pilot project that eventually became a regional program called the Youth Intervention Monitoring Program. This program targets youth under the age of 18 who are on some form of judicial release or court ordered supervision and have a gang association. Neighbourhood police officers are assigned three to five youth targets that meet the above criteria and are responsible for monitoring the youth's enforceable conditions (e.g., non-association, curfew). Approximately 60 officers take part in this program, making the number of youth targets one of the largest of any single police program across Canada. Youth are referred by probation or police. It was indicated that the program is successful, as long as there is strong buy-in from parents and the school board. A formal evaluation of the program was not available; however, police generally measure success by the targeted youth's decrease in offending behaviour. While police are encouraged to refer youth and their families to services in the community to encourage rehabilitation, it was suggested that an equal emphasis on intervention and monitoring could increase the effectiveness of the program.

The London Police Service initiated a program in April 2006 called Project Crime, which tracks both youth and adults who have been released by the courts on bail or probation. On a daily basis, London police officers are provided with two names per beat to check on their conditions. Criminal investigation officers also conduct bail checks on high risk offenders. There are no specific criteria for individuals to be targeted; however, those who have never been checked are given priority, followed by those who have shown non-compliance and finally, those who were compliant. The officer interviewed also mentioned that if the city is experiencing an above average occurrence of a particular crime, then specific individuals who are on bail for this particular crime are also given priority to be checked. Even though there has not been

an evaluation of the program, the representative from the service reported that London has seen a reduction in auto theft, break and enter crimes, and robberies in 2007, and felt that this program contributed to this success.

The Durham Regional Police also conduct compliance checks on adult and youth who have been released into the community subject to court imposed conditions. While primarily a program for adults, 25-30 youth per year are also checked. The process for determining which offenders get checked is informal and often depends upon the index of the offence, their criminal history, as well as recommendation from other police members.

In Timmins and Ottawa, police team up with probation officers to conduct curfew checks. In Timmins, the initiative was established by the Youth Division of the local Probation Services office, where police aim to partner with probation once or twice per month to assist them with their checks. In Ottawa, the number of targets checked is limited to ten youth, and probation officers are responsible for selecting the youth who are checked. They have also initiated a Direct Action Response Team (DART), a team that targets a particular problem or person that is significantly disrupting a community. Similarly, the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service also uses a problem oriented policing approach, where they target offenders depending on what they have identified as a problem or crime trend that they need to address. Therefore, the offenders who are targeted vary by the particular crime trend that police decide to focus their resources on.

Finally, the Dryden Police Service is currently in the process of hiring a Youth Liaison Officer to work in partnership with the Criminal Investigation Unit to monitor youth who are released into the community on conditions, among other duties.

4.6 Québec

It is important to note at the outset that historically, the province of Québec has had a unique approach to youth justice. More than the other Canadian provinces, Québec has promoted a child welfare-child protection approach to youth at risk. It has a long history of paying special attention to both the needs and the rights of young people including those who may be in conflict with the law. The province provided legal counsel to young people charged with criminal offences and mandated voluntary alternatives to formal court processes predating the enactment of the *Young Offenders Act* and the current *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Québec has consistently adopted a strong social development philosophy where rehabilitation and reintegration are primary goals. Their experience with diversion and alternative sentences dates back to the late 1970s when Québec's *Youth Protection Act* was introduced.

What this has meant in practice is that Youth Centres (YCs) or "Centres jeunesse," which are located in communities across the province, are responsible for both youth in need of protection as well as those in conflict with the law. These are para-governmental agencies almost entirely funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS). They provide a range of services to children, youth and their families, including young people up to 18 years of age who are subject to the *YCJA* and/or the *Québec Youth Protection Act*. The philosophical perspective informing youth services is

based on the notion that there is little difference between the services provided to children and youth who are in need of protection and those who are youth offenders. Indeed, Québec's philosophy on youth offenders views them as adolescents who are in a stage of development requiring special support. They are seen as susceptible to making errors, having special needs and requiring structure and counselling to develop and mature. Given this context, it was important to conduct interviews with representatives from the YCs in the province as well as with the police, since the YCs play such a prominent role in responding to young people including chronic and persistent youth offenders.

The unique approach to youth justice in Québec is also reflected in the fact it had the third lowest police reported youth crime rate in the Canada in 2006. In addition, it had the lowest youth charging rate in the country, and the lowest youth charging rate for violent crime. The province had a high diversion rate under the *Young Offenders Act* and continues to have a high rate of diversion under the *YCJA*. In fact, data on youth justice from Québec shows that youth crime rates in the province are going down (Caputo & Vallée, 2008). For example, the number of youth offenders serviced by the YCs decreased by 32% from 2002-03 to 2005-06. Those services provided by community-based agencies also showed a decrease of 23%. Similarly, the number of cases referred by the Crown Attorney has decreased by 22.5% since the implementation of the *YCJA*. In a recent examination of the impact of the *YCJA* (Bala, Carrington, & Roberts, 2009), when compared to other provinces, Quebec was found to consistently have the lowest rate of youth court cases, youth in remand custody, and proportions of youth sentenced to custody in recent years, and was second to B.C. in the proportion of chargeable youth who were charged since the implementation of the *YCJA*. This suggests both that the police are handling cases more informally under the *YCJA* and that the rates themselves are decreasing.

The interviews conducted with police representatives revealed that none of the police agencies that participated in this study had programs specifically designed for chronic and persistent youth offenders. With the exception of one small pilot project in Montréal, most are mainly involved in prevention programs and extrajudicial measures. In the Montréal project, a Youth Worker from the Montréal YC arranges meetings with neighbourhood police officers and young people being released from custody when they are beginning the community supervision portion of their custodial sentences. The objective of this initiative is to provide police officers with access to better information on youth residing in the neighbourhood. They want to encourage a better rapport between the neighbourhood police officers and the young people being released back into the community. They are also trying to get better supervision of these young people. Importantly, this is not a formal or comprehensive program. There has been no formal evaluation of it; however, the YC representative mentioned that he believed that most of the neighbourhood police officers did not follow-up with the young people they had been introduced to through the program. In his view, follow-up really depended on the individual officer's approach because there are no formal requirements on the part of the police to follow-up.

Another project that was mentioned during the interviews is currently in the developmental stage. It is a gang prevention and intervention project based on a

collaborative effort between the Montréal police, the Montréal and Badshaw YCs and several other agencies from the Montréal area. While the police have been involved in the planning of the project and will be involved in its on-going coordination, their specific role in the implementation of the program remains unclear for the time being. The project will target the YC clientele that have or are believed to have youth gang affiliations or who are at high risk to commit further offences. This program will focus primarily on those youth offenders who are on probation and deferred custody sentences, as well as on post-custodial community supervision. The interventions provided through this program will involve intensive supervision by YC's and other clinical intervention strategies.

As was the case with the police, interviews with representatives of the YCs revealed that there are no specific programs or services for chronic and persistent youth offenders in the province. A number of YCs are trying to establish working protocols with the police in regard to their dealings with youth offenders and related staff safety issues. However, developing protocols with the police appears to be challenging for many of the YCs because each must deal with several police services within their geographic areas. As a result, protocols have focused mainly on consultation and coordination rather than joint programming, case review or intervention. Indeed, historically there has been little joint programming between the YCs and the police. However, representatives advised that the Montréal YC has been more successful in doing this primarily because, in their view, they have to deal with only one police service. The interviews with YC representatives highlighted a number of issues that are related to their response to chronic and persistent youth offenders. A brief discussion of these is presented below.

An important result of the interviews with representatives of the YCs was that they have varying definitions of chronic and persistent youth offenders. For example, several indicated that they are dealing with fewer chronic and persistent youth offenders. In their view, a large percentage of their more chronic and persistent clients have typically experienced a number of extrajudicial measures and sanctions before they have a formal conviction entered on their record. This means that they might only have two or three incidents on their record for which they have been found guilty while having received numerous interventions. In addition, they reported that the average age of youth offenders in custody has increased significantly in recent years, with most of the youth in institutions being 16-18 years of age. As a result, by the time young offenders have acquired five or more guilty findings, they are likely to be dealt with as adults. This includes those youth offenders who breach their probation orders, especially if they have already gone through adult court at least once after they have reached their eighteenth birthday. The respondents also reported that more and more chronic and persistent youth offenders are given probation and intensive probation supervision.

The respondents also indicated that a majority of the Youth Centres in Québec have embraced a differential clinical intervention approach providing a full range of services to youth offenders. This often results in a case-by-case intervention strategy which leaves little room for the development of more specialized or targeted programs including those for chronic and persistent youth offenders. The implication of this is that

chronic and persistent youth offenders receive services on the basis of their dispositions and individual assessments during intake. Thus, a young person who presents with a record of numerous offences will receive more service and more intensive interventions.

The interviews revealed that a number of the YCs are participating in the Boscoville 2000 initiative, which is a large action research project based on a psycho-education, therapeutic strategy described as “cognitive développemental et comportemental” (cognitive, developmental and behavioural). This initiative involves the collaboration of several university research centres, including the University of Montréal and University of Québec and a number of Youth Centres including Montréal, Sherbrooke, Québec, and Lanaudière. The actual name of the model being used in this initiative varies depending on who is using it and how it is being used. The key is that it is based on psycho-education and focuses on cognitive development and behaviour. Initially, this approach focused on children who were under 14 years of age and who were, for the most part, under the jurisdiction of the Québec *Youth Protection Act*. Currently, the intervention is also being used with youth offenders who have been found guilty of an offence. The respondents indicated that this intervention or variations of it are used primarily with youth offenders who are in custody or being supervised in the community. The interviews revealed that the interventions given to young people are more related to their sentences rather than their criminal activity or criminal history. This includes the interventions used with the most chronic and persistent youth offenders. The respondents indicated that the dispositions given to their clients played a major role in determining the type of intervention they would receive.

A few of the smaller YCs suggested that it was very difficult for them to offer any specialized programs or services simply because they did not have a sufficient number of youth offenders to justify specialized interventions. In such cases, the task was more to identify the proper level of programming for each of their clients based on a continuum of services available in each community. What this means in practice is that all of the YC clients are provided access to the same services. What varies is the number of interventions provided and their intensity.

The Youth Centres in the province have a variety of specialized programs for youth offenders. For example, the Montréal YC has a specific program for youth offenders who are on an intensive probation supervision order or post-custodial community supervision. They modeled their intervention on the Boscoville 2000 psycho-education approach where the intervention strategies are based on a cognitive development and behavior model. While there have not been any comprehensive evaluations of this approach by the YCs to date, there is an on-going evaluation strategy. Additionally, there has been at least one study conducted by the “Institut de recherche sur le développement social des jeunes” and by the University of Québec in the Outaouais on the effectiveness of the intensive supervision provision of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* by the Montréal Youth Centre. A summary of the study indicates that referrals to the program were high risk youth offenders (Cournoyer & Dionne, 2007). The evaluation found that the community intervention was effective in preventing recidivism in 76.2% of the cases compared to 47.7 % for those youth offenders who were given open custody dispositions.

Another analysis of the potential effectiveness of this treatment approach focused more on chronic youth offenders. It is described in detail in a paper by Le Blanc (2007). Le Blanc suggests that taking a psycho-educational approach enhanced by cognitive behavior treatment (“approche cognitive emotive comportementale”) represents the most effective way of dealing with the more difficult or chronic youth offenders.

Nearly all of the medium to large YCs offer special intervention programs to youth offenders in custody. Several provide the cognitive/behaviour interventions previously referred to while others focus more on approaches encouraging intervention negotiation strategies or more control-related elements. One example of the cognitive/behaviour programs for youth offenders in custody is offered by the YC Abitibi-Témiscamingue. This program is based on the developmental, cognitive-behavior approach, the psycho-educational model and the long term experience of the two youth institutions under their jurisdiction. A formal evaluation of this program has not been completed.

Two additional YCs (Mauricie & Centre du Québec and Québec) have special intervention programs for youth offenders receiving deferred custodial sentences because they believe these youth are at high risk and require differential intervention. A number of YCs (Montréal, Estrie, Québec, and Mauricie) indicated that they offer similar programs to youth offenders completing their custodial sentence through community supervision. The YC Laval, for example, has a program that pairs youth offenders with the case workers who work with them in the institution and an external youth educator/counselor. The two staff members work together with the young people and their families. The YC Mauricie et Centre du Québec provides specialized group counseling to youth offenders found guilty of sexual offences. However, the more serious or chronic youth offenders involved in sexual offences are excluded from this program.

In Québec, assessment tools are used principally in the preparation of pre-sentence reports and in cases where young people have received intensive probation supervision, deferred custody sentences or custodial sentences. In the view of the YC representatives interviewed, youth given these types of sentences represent the most chronic and persistent youth offenders. The YCs utilize a variety of assessment and screening tools which have been adapted for the Québec youth population. At the present time, there is a movement to try to standardize the assessment tools being used in Québec but there is still variation across the province.

4.7 New Brunswick

According to the scan conducted in New Brunswick, specific police programs for chronic and persistent youth offenders are not available. The province does provide funding for analyst positions within police and RCMP detachments to help identify crime trends and specific offenders that require police attention. Police members from the Saint John Police Force are also currently meeting with probation and school officials to discuss strategies for decreasing persistent youth offending. One suggestion is to

standardize school hours of alternative learning centres so that they are consistent with those of other schools.

4.8 Nova Scotia

After a tragic incident involving a youth with a long history of crime who had been recently released from pre-trial remand custody and then killed a person while driving a stolen vehicle, the province of Nova Scotia conducted a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the incident. The *Nunn Inquiry Report* (2006) made a number of recommendations to strengthen the youth justice system. In response to one of the recommendations, youth court liaison officers are being hired across the province to keep track of youth court files, coordinate with prosecution and ensure that youth get through court system in a timely fashion. A representative from the Amherst Police Department also envisioned the youth court liaison working with community agencies to identify and rehabilitate chronic youth offenders.

In the last few of years, the Halifax Regional Police has also started an initiative for both youth and adult offenders called Operation Breach. Police in Halifax target youth and adults released into the community on court-ordered conditions, focusing mainly on violent and serious offenders. Every day the police receive a court disposition report of all individuals who have received enforceable conditions. Each division commander reviews the disposition report, meets with probation, and determines who should be added to the list of offenders to target. On average 30 individuals including both youth and adults are on the Operation Breach target list. The Halifax representative interviewed felt that the program has been effective, citing a decrease in charges associated with the program from 70% to 30%. He did express, however, that on occasion the way some conditions are written by the courts make them difficult to enforce.

In Stellarton, police conduct checks on conditions at the request of probation officers. They also post a list of regular offenders and those who have been released from custody and are on probation on a notice board to make police members aware of offenders who require extra monitoring. The notice board also tracks the known offenders' associates and the particular area where they are active. On average, eight to ten offenders are posted on the board at any given time. For the size of their community (a population of approximately 6,000) it was felt that this was an effective approach for dealing with chronic offenders.

Similarly, the RCMP in Richmond County also maintains a list of offenders released on conditions. Every time a check is conducted, the officer places their initials beside the offender's name and picture, so that other members are also aware of the check. While this strategy was not official until December 2008, members were already engaging in this practice up to and including six months prior. It was indicated that this strategy was very effective for reducing violations of court-ordered conditions.

4.9 Newfoundland and Labrador

The results of the scan revealed that none of the police agencies that participated in this study in Newfoundland and Labrador had programs specifically targeting chronic and persistent youth offenders. Some representatives suggested that since many of the communities are small, most officers are aware of youth who need extra police attention. In the Bonavista District, officers keep up to date on youth with curfew conditions by sharing information through e-mails or informal discussions.

4.10 Prince Edward Island

Again, interviews with police representatives in Prince Edward Island revealed that police do not have any specific strategies or programs in place for chronic and persistent youth offenders. On occasion, police will conduct curfew checks for youth on recognisance orders.

4.11 Territories

Many RCMP detachments in northern Canada are very small and have a small number of officers serving a largely dispersed population. Representatives from RCMP detachments in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut reported that there are very few strategies and programs available for chronic and persistent youth offenders in the north. Youth involved in the justice system mainly receive services from the probation officers they are assigned to. Some detachments also acknowledged that there are low youth populations in their community or that the communities they serve are so dispersed that it is difficult to administer any programs. However, officers in Ranklin Inlet, Nunavut and Whitehorse, Yukon indicated that they will occasionally team up with probation officers to conduct curfew checks, especially for those on an ISSP order in the Yukon.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The major objectives of this report were to understand what factors lead to chronic and persistent youth offending, as well as learn about the best practices that are used across Canada and internationally to manage and rehabilitate these youth. Five research questions guided the study:

- (1) What are the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending?
- (2) What decision-making strategies and tools have proven effective for targeting or identifying chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (3) What best practices have proven effective for chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (4) What screening tools and decision-making instruments are currently being used in Canada to target or identify chronic and persistent youth offenders?
- (5) What police strategies and programs are available for chronic and persistent offenders across Canada?

To answer these questions, two main strategies were employed. First, a detailed literature review in the area of chronic and persistent youth offending was conducted using academic and internet searches. Second, an environmental scan of police strategies and programs available for chronic and persistent youth offenders was carried out using information from interviews with key informants from police and community agencies across Canada. Highlights of the findings from Chapters 3.0 and 4.0 are presented, while the second part of this chapter presents a discussion and conclusions from the findings of the study.

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 Literature Review

Overview of Chronic Youth Offending

- It has been established in the literature that a small number of youth commit a disproportionate amount of youth crime in a community.
- One issue that has arisen is how persistent youth offenders are defined, with studies using a variety of definitions. The issue of defining chronic youth offenders for the purposes of research is reflected in practice as well, with police agencies often reporting difficulty in screening and identifying chronic youth offenders for supervision and program purposes.

- The difficulty in both defining and identifying chronic youth offenders points to the complexity of these youth, and the need to understand both the risk factors associated with their behaviour and best practices for addressing their needs.
- Though there is little Canadian research addressing risk factors and best practices, the literature available from the United States, United Kingdom, and increasingly Australia, can provide valuable insights into addressing Canada's chronic youth offenders, as well as developing effective policy and programming for them.

Risk Factors

- Academic efforts to examine the factors that predict or are correlated with chronic youth offending have increased in prominence over the past decade, the results of which have found value in public policy, notably by Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force.
- Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force Report emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding individual, family, peer, school, and community protective factors that "buffer young people from risks and promote positive youth development," and in turn prevent them from becoming seriously involved in crime (2007:34).
- Recent writing on risk factors for antisocial behaviour and youth crime has pointed to the limitations of using causal factors alone in explaining and preventing youth crime, advocating for the development and testing of causal theories incorporating identified risk factors.

Individual Domain

- As noted by the Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force (2007), factors in the individual domain include, among others, attitudes toward crime, history of involvement in deviance, substance abuse, aggression, impulsivity, and mental health issues, as well as demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.
- Demographic characteristics have long been tested as predictors of youth offending and chronic youth offending in particular. Gender is one characteristic that is consistently identified in many studies, with well-established findings suggesting that males are more likely to become chronic offenders than females. However, the literature has recently suggested that females are increasingly being represented in this offender group.
- With regard to ethnicity and socioeconomic status, research often suggests that low socioeconomic status and ethnic minority youth are more likely to become involved in offending; however, questions have arisen as to whether these characteristics distinguish between chronic and non-chronic offenders, and what impact they have at different stages of development.

- Research has shown that antisocial behaviour prior to involvement in the justice system and early onset of criminal activity have also been found to be predictors of chronic youth offending.
- Recent research has demonstrated a relationship between genetic predisposition to aggressive antisocial behaviour and persistent, life-course criminality.
- Though the role of mental health in chronic offending has not been well-researched, recent studies have shown that the incidence of mental health diagnoses such as ADD, ADHD, and FASD are higher among chronic youth offenders.
- In terms of substance abuse, research has shown that chronic and serious habitual offenders are more likely to have used illegal drugs and were more likely to report the use of hard drugs than less serious offenders.
- Recent studies examining attitudinal characteristics, such as resistance to social control, have found links to persistent youth offending.

Family Domain

- The relationship between family factors and youth offending has been long researched. Risk factors in the family domain include parents or siblings with a criminal record, family management and supervision issues, familial breakdown, separation from parents, and physical abuse or neglect.
- One of the most commonly researched family risk factors is the presence of family violence, child neglect, and family breakdown, with these factors often being cited as significant predictors of youth offending. Recent research has suggested that children who experience maltreatment during adolescence are more likely to reoffend than those who only experienced maltreatment prior to adolescence.
- A few recent studies have demonstrated that youth who have had child protection placements (i.e., group home, foster care) may be at a greater risk for reoffending or chronic offending.
- A number of additional family factors, including family disruption, living arrangements, and parental or sibling criminality have also been found to be important predictors of chronic offending.

Peer Domain

- Peer influence has long been discussed as a contributing factor to youth engagement in delinquent behaviour. Risk factors within the peer domain include gang affiliation and association with peers who engage in risky behaviour.

- Association with “the wrong crowd” – negative or deviant peers or adults – has been consistently found to be associated with chronic youth offending.
- Importantly, gang affiliation or involvement is another peer factor that is often associated with chronic and persistent youth offending.
- Peer association also serves as a protective factor with regard to chronic offending, with involvement in pro-social extracurricular activities being reported in the literature as a protective factor.

School Domain

- Risk factors in the school domain include low investment and commitment to school, early academic struggle and/or failure, problem behaviour in school, poor attitude, and truancy. School is an important domain in youth development, one where a number of early warning signs of future chronic offending can be identified.
- A number of studies have identified truancy as a common issue among chronic youth offenders.
- The literature also suggests that chronic youth offenders often demonstrate a history of problems in school, including disciplinary, attainment, and learning issues.

Community Domain

- The nature of a youth’s community has been found to be related to chronic offending. Factors in this domain include neighbourhood disorganization, crime, availability of weapons and drugs, low socioeconomic status, and poor neighbourhood attachment.
- A number of studies have examined the impact of community influences, finding that youth who live in neighbourhoods where drugs or weapons are readily available, or youth who carry weapons in their community, are more likely to become chronic offenders.
- Studies have also suggested that the presence of a number of mitigating factors, such as effective parenting, supervision, and discipline can moderate the impact of any negative influences present in the community.

Interactions and Trajectories

- Although the impact of individual risk factors is well-established in the literature, studies have increasingly considered the combined impact of factors and their impact on different stages in development. Individual risk factors cannot be examined in isolation when attempting to understand or predict chronic youth offending.
- Howell (2009) synthesized the findings of a number of longitudinal, quantitative studies on risk factors and development, ultimately developing a model to predict and understand serious youth delinquency.
- In the preschool stage, individual child characteristics, combined with community and family deficits, correlate with behavioural issues such as aggression and disruption at school entry.
- At school entry, aggressive and disruptive behaviours manifested during the preschool stage result in defiance, stubbornness, disobedience, and truancy, particularly for children from dysfunctional families and disadvantaged communities. This may also lead to peer issues – rejection by prosocial peers and association with negative peers.
- In later childhood (age 6-12), rejection by prosocial peers ultimately leads to greater susceptibility to the influences of deviant and aggressive youth, possibly gang members. Children become more aggressive, antisocial, violent, and may begin using drugs (marijuana) and alcohol. Weakened prosocial bonds and commitment to school and poor school performance may accompany this behaviour. Community factors such as availability of drugs and weapons and feeling unsafe also begin to influence youth, particularly when negative family factors (i.e., abuse, poor parental supervision and management, poor parent-child relationships) are present.
- Children who are on this trajectory are, by early adolescence, more likely to join a gang, and show risk factors in multiple domains.

Decision-Making and Chronic Youth Offending

- At a practical level, the question of screening for chronic youth offenders for the purposes of decision-making and program delivery is a difficult and contentious one, particularly given the complexity of this population of youth and the dangers of inappropriate labelling.
- Developmental changes, differential exposure to risk and protective factors, and issues of false positives and labelling add to this difficulty.

- Where data regarding psychological testing is rigorously recorded, collecting and recording detailed family, interpersonal, and environmental data is also important. Screening and assessment must focus on detailed individual, family, peer, neighbourhood, and educational information.
- The literature cautions against the heavy use of psychological tests to determine whether a youth is at risk for chronic offending, as the results of psychological tests have not been proven to be effective in predicting reoffending.
- A lack of training and knowledge among service providers regarding the risk factors for persistent offending often leads to a misunderstanding of the issues, and can lead to misidentification of youth at risk.

Best Practices with Chronic and Persistent Youth Offenders

- It is clear that conventional methods may not address the very complex needs of persistent offenders. Therefore, best practices need to focus on the factors that place youth at risk for chronic or persistent youth offending in order to decrease reoffending behaviour.
- The results of a number of studies, particularly those examining developmental trajectories to chronic youth offending, point to the importance of early intervention – identifying issues that may put a child at risk of being on a trajectory for later chronic offending and nurturing resiliency to these risks.
- Any early intervention strategy should be a collaborative effort among the different social institutions in which a child develops – school, family, community, and for some, the child welfare or justice system – in order to ensure the best response possible. Policy-makers should adopt a holistic approach that integrates developmental and contextual issues of growth.
- Studies suggest that parental involvement in any assessment, treatment planning and decision-making is vital.
- The recognition of the diversity among chronic youth offenders is also a critical factor in program success. Innovative and appropriate strategies must be developed to support a very complex group of youth, giving attention to cultural sensitivity, age, gender, familial relationships, neighbourhood and a number of other factors.
- Engaging chronic and persistent offenders in programming and treatment is extremely difficult; breach rates for both reoffending and non-compliance to court orders is very high among this group. Research suggests that the key to engaging this group of youth is their relationship with an adult delivering programming and service. A positive adult figure can make a significant difference for many youth.

- Continuity of care – maintaining relationships with case workers, ensuring positive transitions to aftercare, etc. – is also important.
- One of the greatest barriers to effective programming is availability of resources.

Program Efficacy

- The Intensive Supervision and Support Program in England and Wales is a multi-systemic response to persistent youth offenders that incorporates close police supervision, family group conferences, victim reparation and mediation, mentoring, improved information sharing among police, social services and education professionals, improved diagnosis, assessment and individual treatment plans, and multi-agency case reviews. This program has had a significant impact on arrest rates (a decrease of 30-50% for persistent youth offenders). Further, the overall impact of the program was more significant than any one component, indicating the importance of a multi-component, multi-systemic approach to chronic youth offenders.
- Multi-systemic therapy (MST) is a holistic approach that addresses many criminogenic factors, promoting family preservation while focusing on peer associations, supporting educational and career pursuits, and altering a youth's environment to promote pro-social behaviour. U.S. evaluations of the MST approach have found significant improvements among persistent offenders when compared to similar other approaches, although one Canadian evaluation of MST did not report significant improvement compared to regular probation and services.
- The Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP) uses case management and extensive partnerships between criminal justice agencies and community services, with the goal of sharing information among agencies, holding youth immediately accountable for their actions, and connecting them with services relevant to their needs in the community. SHOCAP is a model that may be implemented in any community based on need, availability of resources and opportunities for interagency cooperation. A U.S. evaluation conducted in 1995 demonstrated the benefits of SHOCAP with regard to interagency cooperation, improvements in information-sharing, focused responses to serious habitual offenders, increased system responses based on patterns of misbehaviour, incapacitation, improved resource allocation, and early intervention.
- A comparative study of two Scottish projects designed for persistent youth offenders, Freagarrach and CueTen, also yielded useful results for consideration in intervention programming for chronic youth offenders. Freagarrach, the more successful of the two, was developed as a local, interagency strategy based on existing research evidence on proven approaches with persistent offenders and was reflective of Scotland's non-punitive welfare orientation to youth justice. Overall, outcomes suggested that Freagarrach was more highly rated among

staff, and had a greater impact on recidivism rates and decreased the seriousness of offending. Freagarrach was also found to be more cost effective.

5.1.2 Environmental Scan of Police Strategies and Programs

- While police programs were the focus of the environmental scan, it is important to note that there are many other services and agencies available across Canada that work with youth offenders or youth who are at risk of offending. The Intensive Support and Supervision Program (ISSP) is a new sentence that is similar to probation, but provides more support to high risk youth as well as closer monitoring.
- Many provinces also make use of programs offered through other agencies such as the John Howard Society to work with high risk youth. There are many residential and attendance programs that are offered across Canada that are specifically targeted toward chronic and persistent youth offenders, e.g., Camp Trapping in British Columbia and the PASS (Progressive Accountability through Supervision and Support) program in Ontario.

British Columbia

- British Columbia has a provincial Crime Reduction Initiative that aims to decrease crime by targeting prolific and priority offenders. In 2005/06 the initiative was piloted in Coquitlam, Comox Valley, Maple Ridge, Port Moody, Penticton, Port McNeill and Fraser Lake. In these communities, special RCMP crime reduction units monitor the associations of prolific offenders and conduct curfew and street checks on them.
- In Comox Valley, a two-person youth detail is also starting to compile their own list of top-ten priority youth offenders to monitor. In contrast to the adult list of priority offenders, the youth detail also endeavors to integrate services into their targeted enforcement to aid with rehabilitation of the youth.
- An analyst in Maple Ridge compiles a list of all youth who come into contact with the police and forwards the information to youth officers who partner with agencies in the community to offer rehabilitative services to the youth.
- In 2008, the Prolific Offender Management Program was established as a pilot program and is currently being tested in six sites: Kamloops, Nanaimo, Prince George, Surrey, Victoria (Capital Regional District) and Williams Lake. While this project is aimed at both adult and youth offenders, the project largely only includes adults or youth who are very close to turning 18.
- The RCMP in Prince Rupert has also assembled their own crime reduction team to manage prolific offenders in their community. At any given time the top-ten list of offenders that they target can include up to two youth offenders, who are subject to increased checks on their curfew and community conditions and referred to rehabilitative services in the community.

- In Nanaimo, RCMP have established a Youth Response Team that works with youth who are at risk of offending, are engaged in high risk behaviour that is dangerous to themselves or others, or are at risk of becoming prolific offenders. The six-person team strives for daily coverage (day and night) of youth activities, which includes monitoring and responding to calls about youth.
- North Vancouver RCMP and the Abbotsford Police Department make use of a program called Project OWN, where general duty police members actively monitor curfew conditions of chronic adult and youth property offenders.
- The Vancouver Police Department's Youth Services Section allocates members to work in a team with social workers and probation officers in programs called Yankee 20 and Yankee 10. The teams specifically target and monitor high risk youth, while also providing rehabilitative service to them.

Alberta

- There are few formal police programs for chronic or persistent youth offenders in Alberta. The program that has existed the longest appears to be the Serious Habitual Offender Program (SHOP) administered by the Calgary Police Service, which identifies and monitors youth aged 12-24 who are serious, repeat offenders. The main goal of the program is to curtail the criminal activity of the targets monitored; however, officers also work with social workers to ensure that SHOP targets have access to rehabilitation and reintegration services.
- The Lethbridge Regional Police Service also has a Serious Habitual Offender program, but the program is mainly geared toward adult high risk offenders and only operates on a case-by-case basis for youth.
- There are also other initiatives that are taking place across the province on a more informal level for chronic and persistent youth offenders. For example, one constable with the Medicine Hat Police Service takes responsibility for conducting checks on youth with enforceable conditions, such as curfews. In Chestermere, RCMP rely on informal information sharing amongst detachment members to keep up to date on chronic and persistent youth offenders. Similarly, RCMP officers in Airdrie also informally target chronic and persistent youth offenders based upon informal information sharing that takes place between detachment members.

Saskatchewan

- The most common police program in Saskatchewan for serious and persistent youth offenders is the Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP), which is utilized in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford and Yorkton. Generally youth who are selected as SHOCAP targets receive additional monitoring and supervision by police and probation.

- While the focus of SHOCAP in Prince Albert includes a broad spectrum of criminal offences, the Saskatoon Police Service instead focuses on youth who commit violent offences. The focus of SHOCAP in Regina is on auto theft, break and enter property crimes and armed robberies.
- In Regina, monitoring of the SHOCAP targets is split between the Patrol division of the Regina Police Service and youth and adult probation officers. On average there are almost 40 serious habitual offenders designated as SHOCAP targets.
- The Saskatoon Police Service's SHOCAP unit is responsible for checks and will also periodically team up with probation to conduct checks. On average the unit monitors close to 40 SHOCAP targets.
- The Patrol Division is responsible for SHOCAP checks in the Prince Albert Police Service and will also respond to request for checks from other units in the service as well. The majority of SHOCAP targets in Prince Albert are youth, with an average of 22 targets in the program.
- Both Saskatoon and Prince Albert use a point system to determine if a suggested candidate should be designated as a SHOCAP. Regina Police Service does not use a point system for the designation of a SHOCAP candidate. Instead a board consisting of representatives from corrections, probation services, the prosecutor's office and police meet once per month to discuss possible program candidates who are brought forward by police and probation.
- In North Battleford the RCMP administer SHOCAP to youth aged 12-18, but will also monitor youth into adulthood if necessary. At the time of the interview there were 33 SHOCAP targets, with an overwhelming majority of them being First Nations youth.
- The RCMP detachment in Yorkton administers SHOCAP to both youth and adult serious habitual offenders. Youth and adult offenders who are released into the community with conditions and are a high risk to re-offend are the most common targets for the program.
- Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert Police Services also developed additional programs and strategies for chronic offenders in their communities. In Regina, police developed two additional programs called the Carwash program, for entry level repeat auto theft offenders who remain at risk to re-offend and the CRO (Chronic Repeat Offender) Program, for chronic repeat offenders with a high probability to re-offend.

- Due to a high number of break and enter crimes occurring in Saskatoon, the police added a second program called BECAP (Break and Enter Comprehensive Action Program) in 2004. This program is modeled on SHOCAP and intensely monitors both youth and adult offenders who habitually commit break and enter offences. Police officers in Saskatoon are also requesting funding for another program called VOCAP (Violent Offender Comprehensive Action Program), which will be designed to pick up where SHOCAP leaves off and will consist of intensive monitoring of serious habitual offenders into adulthood.
- In Prince Albert additional programs for chronic/persistent offenders include Project Filter and Adopt an Offender, which target criminally active youth and adults in Prince Albert. Project Filter involves police members regularly checking on court-ordered curfew conditions of youth and adults in Prince Albert. The Adopt an Offender program is a smaller program that involves a patrol member being paired up with a youth or adult offender who is criminally active. The police member takes responsibility for the offender by conducting regular checks on the offender and keeping up to date on their life.

Manitoba

- Overall, results from the environmental scan show that Manitoba uses an interagency approach to manage chronic and persistent youth offenders. The approach involves the collaboration and cooperation of community agencies in order to develop and implement effective intervention strategies for youth at risk.
- The city of Brandon operates a not-for-profit organization called the Multi-Agency Preventative Program (MAPP), which includes representatives from various agencies in Brandon, including the Brandon Police Service, that meet once per month to exchange information and help with case planning for youth who are part of the program. Youth under the age of 18 with multiple agency involvement are targets for the program, provided that their parents have given consent to information sharing. The organization is mandated to serve 40 youth from the city of Brandon and youth are assessed throughout their time in the program to see if they are making progress.
- Similar interagency committees are also being utilized in Fisher Branch, Killarney and Oakbank. In Fisher Branch, the RCMP work with agencies in the community to target youth with multiple agency involvement.
- The Killarney RCMP also participate in a multi-agency committee called the Turtle Mountain School Division Multi-Agency Committee that meets once per month to share information about specific youth. The committee strives to ensure that plans of action are consistent across all the agencies that youth have contact with.
- The Oakbank RCMP detachment also participates in what they call the Springfield Inter-Agency Committee, which aims to share information and take a team approach to working with high risk youth.

- While not all communities in Manitoba engage in an inter-agency approach, there are RCMP detachments that have taken the initiative to work with probation to ensure that high risk offenders comply with their court ordered conditions. Officers with the Thompson detachment assign members to check on the compliance of chronic offenders' released from custody. In Swan River, police work closely with probation to determine which offenders need extra monitoring and often accompany them to conduct checks.

Ontario

- Police in the province of Ontario have established a number of interesting initiatives to work with chronic and persistent youth offenders. One program that is well developed is the High Enforcement Repeat Offender (HERO) program of the Halton Regional Police Service. While the intent of the program is primarily enforcement of judicially imposed conditions, HERO officers also assist with referrals to services in the community, provide support and guidance to the HERO candidate, and provide patrol members with information about HERO candidates.
- The Hamilton Police Service operates the Strategic Targeting Offender Program (STOP) for high risk chronic youth offenders aged 12-18. A divisional youth officer is responsible for keeping a list of STOP targets up to date for patrol officers to conduct checks on. Once the check is completed, the officer forwards the information to the divisional youth officer, who is responsible for taking action (e.g., charge, crown package).
- The Peel Regional Police operate a program called the Youth Intervention Monitoring Program. This program targets youth under the age of 18 who are subject to a court order and have a gang association. Neighbourhood police officers are assigned three to five youth targets to monitor their enforceable conditions (e.g., non association, curfew).
- The London Police Service initiated a program called Project Crime which keeps track of both adults and youth who have been released by the courts on bail or probation. On a daily basis, London police officers are provided with two names per beat to check on their conditions.
- The Durham Regional Police also conduct compliance checks on adult and youth offenders who have been released into the community. While primarily a program for adults, 25-30 youth per year are also checked.
- In Timmins and Ottawa, police team up with probation officers to conduct curfew checks. They have also initiated a Direct Action Response Team (DART) in Ottawa, which targets a particular problem or person that is significantly disrupting a community.

Québec

- In Québec, Youth Centres (YCs) or “Centres jeunesse,” which are located in communities across the province, are responsible for both youth in need of protection as well as those who are offenders. The YCs provide a range of services to children, youth and their families, including young people up to 18 years of age who are subject to the YCJA and/or the Québec Youth Protection Act. Therefore, interviews were conducted with representatives from YCs as well as police agencies in Québec.
- The interviews conducted with police representatives revealed that none of the police agencies contacted had programs specifically designed for chronic and persistent youth offenders. With the exception of one small pilot project in Montréal, most are mainly involved in prevention programs and extrajudicial measures.
- In the Montréal project, a Youth Worker from the Montréal YC arranges meetings with neighbourhood police officers and young people being released from custody when they are beginning the community supervision portion of their custodial sentences. The objective of this initiative is to provide police officers with access to better information on youth residing in the neighbourhood.
- Another project that was mentioned during the interviews is currently in the developmental stage. It is a gang prevention and intervention project based on a collaborative effort between the Montréal police, the Montréal and Badshaw YCs and several other agencies from the Montréal area. The project will target the YC clientele who have or are believed to have youth gang affiliations, or who are at high risk to commit further offences.
- As was the case with the police, interviews with representatives of the YCs revealed that there are no specific programs or services for chronic and persistent youth offenders in the province.
- A number of YCs are trying to establish working protocols with the police with regard to their dealings with youth offenders and related staff safety issues.
- An important result of the interviews with representatives of the YCs was that they have varying definitions of chronic and persistent youth offenders. In their view, a large percentage of their more chronic and persistent clients have typically experienced a number of extrajudicial measures and sanctions before they have a formal conviction entered on their record. In addition, they reported that the average age of youth offenders in custody has increased significantly in recent years, with most of the youth in institutions being 16-18 years of age.
- The respondents also acknowledged that a majority of the Youth Centres in Québec have embraced a differential clinical intervention approach providing a full range of services to youth offenders on a case-by-case basis, which leaves little room for the development of more programs aimed at a specific population.

- The interviews revealed that a number of the YCs are participating in the Boscoville 2000 initiative which is a large action research project based on a psycho-educational, therapeutic strategy based on a cognitive, developmental and behavioural approach. Currently, the intervention is being used with youth offenders who have been found guilty of an offence.
- The interviews revealed that the interventions given to young people are more related to their sentences rather than their criminal activity or criminal history. For example, the Montréal YC has a specific program for youth offenders who are on an intensive probation supervision order or post-custodial community supervision.
- Nearly all of the medium to large YCs offer special intervention programs to youth offenders in custody. Two additional YCs (Mauricie & Centre du Québec and Québec) have special intervention programs for youth offenders receiving deferred custodial sentences.
- In Québec, assessment tools are used principally in the preparation of pre-sentence reports and in cases where young people have received intensive probation supervision, deferred custody sentences or custodial sentences.

New Brunswick

- Specific police programs for chronic and persistent youth offenders were not available in New Brunswick. The province provides funding for analyst positions within police and RCMP detachments to help identify crime trends and specific offenders that require police attention.

Nova Scotia

- In response to the Nunn Inquiry, youth court liaison officers are being hired across the province to keep track of youth court files, coordinate with prosecution and make sure that youth get through the court system in a timely fashion.
- In the last couple of years, the Halifax Regional Police has also started an initiative for both youth and adult offenders called Operation Breach. Police in Halifax target youth and adults released into the community on court-ordered conditions, focusing mainly on violent and serious offenders.
- In Stellarton, police conduct checks on conditions at the request of probation officers. They also post a list of regular offenders, as well as those who have been released from custody and are on probation, on a notice board to make police members aware of offenders that require extra monitoring.
- Similarly, RCMP in Richmond County also maintain a board of offenders released on conditions for regular duty officers to check.

Newfoundland and Labrador

- None of the police agencies in Newfoundland and Labrador that participated in this study had programs specifically targeting chronic and persistent youth offenders.

Prince Edward Island

- Interviews with police representatives in Prince Edward Island revealed that police do not have any specific strategies or programs in place for chronic and persistent youth offenders. On occasion, police will conduct curfew checks for youth on recognisance orders.

Territories

- Representatives from RCMP detachments in the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut reported very few strategies and programs available for chronic and persistent youth offenders in the north.
- Officers in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut and Whitehorse, Yukon reported that they will occasionally team up with probation officers to conduct curfew checks, especially for those on an ISSP order in the Yukon.

5.2 Discussion and Conclusions

The primary purpose of this report was to identify the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending as well as the efficacy of police strategies and programs available in Canada that target chronic and persistent youth offenders. The previous section outlined research that documented the predictors of chronic and persistent youth offending, as well as strategies and programs that are available internationally and specifically in Canada to curtail offending behaviour and rehabilitate this particular group of youth. The following section discusses the implications of these findings and outlines areas for future research.

5.2.1 Discussion

The literature review identified many factors that are correlated with youth entering a trajectory of chronic offending behaviour. These factors come from five main domains: individual, family, peer, school and community. Generally, chronic and persistent youth offenders experience a number of complex and influential factors, such as mental health diagnoses, family violence and breakdown, negative peer associations and gang involvement, school difficulties, and unsafe communities. An understanding of the impact of these factors at various stages in child and youth development, from early infancy to late adolescence, would allow for the development of more effective prevention and intervention strategies. As such, early identification of risk factors and subsequent intervention is important in order to nurture resiliency. Furthermore, according to the literature review, collaborative efforts among the different contexts in which a child develops are essential to increase the likelihood of success. While police

are increasingly taking an early intervention approach in Canada, intervention programs for youth already heavily involved in the justice system are an ongoing need.

Given the results of the literature review, strategies that are most effective for intervening with chronic and persistent youth offenders encompass elements that impact upon risk factors in all of the five domains identified. Police services that work with community service representatives are likely to be the most effective in responding to chronic and persistent youth offending, as compared to those who operate programs in isolation from other agencies that the youth has contact with, such as probation and child protection services. The interagency strategies that are used in Manitoba, the Vancouver Police Department Youth Services Section and to some extent the SHOP program in Calgary and SHOCAP programs in Saskatchewan, suggest that programs that promote information sharing between police and other agencies in the community are the most effective; this finding is reinforced in the literature. Those involved are able to remain apprised of developments that occur within all domains of the youth's life and can further ensure that plans that are implemented are not counterproductive to each other. Interagency approaches also ensure that siblings of youth already in the program can receive early intervention.

One major implication of the environmental scan was the need for police strategies and programs across Canada to be formally evaluated. However, while most police agencies did not conduct formal reviews of their programs (with the exception of the three SHOCAP programs in Saskatchewan), many respondents interviewed were positive about their interventions for chronic and persistent youth offenders. On the other hand, many spoke to the need for increased resources to ensure program continuity and effectiveness. This need is amplified by the increase in community-based sentences under the *YCJA*, which places greater demands on police to work in partnership with community agencies to ensure that youth are successful with their court-ordered conditions of release in the community.

Another issue that was addressed in the literature review was how to define chronic and persistent youth offenders. A straightforward definition that is commonly used is youth who commit five or more recorded offences (Carrington 2007; Carrington, Matarazzo & deSouza, 2005; Wolfgang, Figlio, & Sellin, 1972). The change in youth justice legislation in Canada, however, raises concerns about the use of this definition at this time in this country. An important objective of the *YCJA* is to encourage more diversion, especially for youth accused of minor offences. Youth who successfully complete the terms of their extrajudicial measures and sanctions do not have a formal record for their offences. Therefore, youth may be involved in more offences than is reflected in their criminal record before they are considered chronic/persistent offenders.

It was evident in the environmental scan that the definition of chronic and persistent offenders used by police and agencies varies across Canada. Whereas in British Columbia police are mainly concerned with offenders who have accumulated a particular number of convictions or police contacts, other police programs rely on referrals from probation officers and social workers, who use assessment tools that measure a number of different risk factors. While some officers interviewed discussed the need for a standard screening tool to assess which youth should be included in their

programs, it is also important to consider the role that mental health plays in the effectiveness of programs for chronic and persistent youth offenders. The literature consistently showed that youth who are heavily involved in the criminal justice system have often also experienced a history of mental health and substance abuse problems that need to be addressed before rehabilitation can occur. Police officers noted that mental health conditions may inhibit the success of programs that target youth solely based on their criminal history. Some officers spoke about the need for increased training on mental health issues and conditions such as FASD to ensure that police can be more effective in dealing with youth who are chronic and persistent offenders.

Overall, the environmental scan revealed that police initiatives for chronic and persistent youth offenders seem to be used more in Ontario and western Canada. Many police representatives cited the change in the youth justice legislation as the primary reason for focussing resources on chronic and persistent youth offenders. The YCJA provides more options for community-based sentencing, which means that an increased number of youth are serving their sentences in the community. As a result, some police services have found that increased monitoring and surveillance for chronic and persistent offenders is an effective approach for ensuring that youth comply with their court-ordered conditions.

Very few formalized programs were found in Québec, the Northern Territories and the Atlantic provinces. In Québec there were no police programs specifically designed to address chronic and persistent youth offenders. Nor are the Youth Centres in the province dealing with chronic and persistent youth offenders as a separate population. Instead, chronic and persistent youth offenders are dealt with primarily through the individual sentences that they receive. The respondents indicated that these young people were not being assessed for special programs outside of the continuum of services and programs that already exist in the province. Importantly, the respondents did not believe that such programs were necessarily required. This is due, in part, to the fact that those young people in Québec who could be characterized as chronic and persistent youth offenders receive numerous interventions before they are given formal charges so that by the time these young people accumulate a number of convictions to be considered chronic offenders, they are likely to be over 18 years of age and in the adult system. As well, young people who come into conflict with the law are dealt with primarily on the basis of the sanctions imposed by the justice system. This includes extrajudicial measures and sanctions as well as specialized custodial dispositions. It is within this context that specialized services for youth offenders have been developed in Quebec, including those youth who present as chronic and persistent offenders.

The respondents also acknowledged that a majority of the Youth Centres in Québec have embraced a differential clinical intervention approach providing a full range of services to youth offenders. This often results in a case-by-case intervention strategy which negates the need to develop programs targeted at specific populations, including those for chronic and persistent youth offenders. The implication of this is that chronic and persistent youth offenders receive services on the basis of their dispositions and individual assessments during intake. Thus, a young person who presents with a record of numerous offences will receive more service and more intensive interventions.

In smaller communities, such as those found in the Atlantic provinces and Northern Territories, there may not be a need to have a formalized program in place for chronic and persistent offenders, given their small numbers. Results from the interviews revealed that smaller communities have smaller RCMP or police detachments, where members communicate with each other on a regular basis about youth and adult offenders who are chronically offending. Through this informal communication, police members are made aware of youth who should receive extra attention in their communities.

Other police representatives also spoke about using crime-specific strategies to manage chronic offenders in their community. Rather than targeting specific types of offenders, some police representatives identified strategies and programs that target a specific crime trend. For example, many auto theft units across the country target and monitor chronic auto theft offenders. Therefore, police services that decide to use a crime specific targeting strategy in their communities are unlikely to use an offender driven strategy as well.

The enactment of the YCJA has prompted police services across Canada to focus more attention on youth at risk of offending. Many police representatives interviewed spoke about allocating resources to preventative programs, such as school liaison and diversion programs. When resources were concentrated in early intervention programs, police were less likely to offer programs that target youth who are already in the justice system.

5.2.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the focus of the current study was on police strategies and programs for chronic and persistent offenders. Police often measure success by assessing charge rates and youth custody counts. It is, however, well recognized that while it is important to protect the public from being victimized by chronic and persistent youth offenders, the most effective long term solutions to the problem of persistent offending is to address needs and risk factors at an early age before youth embark on their criminal trajectory.

The literature review also pointed to the importance of examining the combined influence of factors on offending behaviour as well as the impact these factors have on different stages of development. It is important to conduct more studies in line with this direction of research as it can lead to better intervention programs that are targeted at particular risk factors that have the most influence on youth at a particular stage of development.

Evaluations of strategies and programs currently available in Canada are important in order to ensure that resources are being allocated in the most efficient ways possible and that youth are receiving maximum benefit. Programs in the U.K., U.S. and Australia provide established best practice models that may be adapted and implemented for local use in Canada.

Finally, it is also important to gather further information on strategies used by First Nations' communities, which may make use of culturally unique approaches for managing chronic and persistent youth offenders. Given the disproportionate number of First Nations youth in the justice system, it is important to develop culturally-sensitive responses for these youth that address the specific issues common to First Nations communities. The results of the literature review and environmental scan show that a community-based approach most likely provides the best chance for rehabilitating and reintegrating youth who have embarked on a trajectory of crime.

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APPENDIX A

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

YOUTH OFFENDING PATTERNS AND SYSTEM RESPONSE IN CALGARY: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduce Yourself/Ourselves

1.2 Project Overview

The Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF) in partnership with the City of Calgary and Calgary Police Service, has undertaken a project to identify programs and best practices targeted at chronic/persistent young offenders in Canada. One of the aims of the project is to review decision making instruments/protocols with regard to chronic/persistent young offenders (youth who have five or more substantive criminal incidents of which they have been found guilty), as well as programs used by police to support these youth.

1.3 Interview Date and Time:

2.0 Interviewee Information

2.1 Name:

2.2 District/Office/Organization:

2.3 Position:

3.0 Program Information

3.1 Do you have a program available to you that targets chronic/persistent young offenders?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Is the program part of your organization, or do you refer youth to a program in the community?

3.2 Program Name:

3.3 Is this program based on an already existing program in the province/country? If so, which program?

3.4 Please describe the youth you target:

3.5 Youth Target Age:

3.6 Program Description:

- length of program
- involvement of family members
- voluntary participation
- focus of program: rehabilitative, preventative, monitoring

3.7 Do you have a website for the program, or can you send me information about your program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3.8 How is the program funded? (e.g., federal, provincial, municipal source? Police funded etc.?)

3.9 How long is the program funded for? (e.g., pilot program or permanent?)

How many youth are part of the program?

3.10 Where is the program located? (geographic location)

3.11 Are the services in the program offered by paid employees or volunteer staff?

3.12 What is the current number of employees and volunteers in this program, and what are their positions and qualifications?

3.13 When did this program begin offering services?

3.16 How are clients referred/targeted to the program?

3.17 What program activities typically take place after referral to the program?

3.18 Have there been any major shifts in how or to whom the program offers services?

4.0 Screening Tools

4.1 How do you determine who to refer/target to your program?

4.2 Do you have a screening tool or protocol in place to determine which youth are referred to the program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4.3 What kind of screening tool/protocol do you use?

4.4 What factors are considered in the screening tool/protocol?

4.5 Where did you obtain this screening tool/protocol? (i.e., Is it based on existing research or did you develop it in house?)

4.6 Is it possible to obtain a copy of this screening tool/protocol?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ NA

- 4.7 Are you aware of any validation research on the screening tool?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ NA
- 4.8 Is it possible to obtain a copy of this validation research on the screening tool/protocol?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ NA
- 4.9 Do you believe this tool is effective for screening youth into the program?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ NA
- 4.10 Do you have any suggestions on how to improve upon the effectiveness of the screening tool/protocol?
- ☐ Yes – see below
☐ No
☐ NA
-

5.0 Effectiveness of the Program

- 5.1 Do you feel that the program is effective for chronic/persistent youth offenders?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other Comments:
-
- 5.2 Is there an evaluation of the program?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
-

5.3 Is the evaluation available to the public? Could we obtain a copy of it?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ NA

5.4 Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the program?

6.0 Referrals

6.1 Do you know of any other programs for persistent/chronic offenders across Canada? Do you know of any experts on persistent/chronic offenders in the country?

APPENDIX B

RISK FACTORS FOR SERIOUS YOUTH OFFENDING, BY DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE (HOWELL, 2009)

Appendix B
Risk Factors for Serious Youth Offending, by Developmental Stage

Age	Domain				
	Individual	Family	School	Peer	Community
Ages 0-3	Pregnancy and delivery complications Difficult temperament Hyperactivity, impulsivity and attention problems	Having a teenage mother Maternal drug, alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy Maternal depression Parental substance abuse Parental criminality Poor parent-child communication Poverty or low socioeconomic status Serious marital discord			
Ages 3-6	Aggressive or disruptive behaviour Persistent lying Risk taking and sensation seeking Lack of guilt and empathy Low intelligence quotient	Harsh or erratic discipline practices Child maltreatment (abuse or neglect)			

Appendix B (cont'd)

Age	Domain				
	Individual	Family	School	Peer	Community
Ages 6-12	General delinquency involvement	Abusive parents	Low achievement in elementary school	Peer rejection	Residence in a disadvantaged or disorganized neighbourhood
	Antisocial or delinquent beliefs	Low family socioeconomic status	Truancy and suspension	Association with delinquent peers	Availability of firearms
	Aggression	Antisocial parents	Identified as learning disabled	Association with aggressive peers	Availability or perceived access to drugs
	Hyperactivity	Sibling antisocial behaviour	Poorly organized and functioning schools		Feeling unsafe in the neighbourhood
	Early and persistent antisocial behaviour	Poor parent-child relations	Low school attachment		Low neighbourhood attachment
	Psychological condition	Poor parental supervision, control, monitoring, and child management	Low academic aspirations		Neighbourhood youth in trouble
	Medical or physical condition	Family violence (child maltreatment, partner violence, conflict)			
	Few social ties (not involved in social activities, popularity)	Family poverty			
	Authority conflict, rebellious, stubborn, disruptive, antisocial, conduct disorders	Broken home			
	Early initiation of violent behaviour	Parent proviolent attitudes			
	Victimization and exposure to violence				
	Poor refusal skills				
	Substance use (especially marijuana and alcohol)				

Appendix B (cont'd)

Age	Domain				
	Individual	Family	School	Peer	Community
Ages 12-16	Few social ties (involved in social activities, popularity)	Poor parent-child relations or communication	School attitude and performance	Antisocial peers	Community laws and norms that tolerate crime
	General delinquency involvement	Antisocial parents	Academic failure	Association with delinquent peers	Poverty
	Drug dealing	Broken home or parent-child separation	Low bonding and commitment to school	Association with aggressive peers	Community disorganization
	Physical violence or aggression	Low family socioeconomic status or poverty	Truancy and dropping out of school	Peer drug use	Availability and use of drugs in neighbourhood
	Violent victimization	Family history of problem behaviour or crime	Frequent school transitions	Gang membership	Exposure to violence and racial prejudice
	Mental health problems	Delinquent siblings	Negative labeling by teachers (as either bad or disturbed)		High-crime neighbourhood
	Conduct disorders (disruptive, antisocial)	Having a young mother	Low academic aspirations		Availability of firearms
	Illegal gun ownership or carrying	Low attachment to child	Low attachment to teachers		
	Early dating	Poor parental supervision, control, monitoring, and child management	Low parent college expectations for child		
	Precocious sexual activity and early fatherhood	Low parent education	Low math achievement test score (males)		
	Antisocial or delinquent beliefs	Child maltreatment (abuse or neglect)			
	Alcohol or drug use	Family transitions (change in parent figures)			
	Depression				
	Life stressors				

Source: Howell, 2009