


**US Latino Youth Street Gangs: Prevention and Intervention Strategies for Service Providers (Part 2)**

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Pasadena, TX

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**Evidenced Based Practices for Treating Issues Related to US Hispanic and Latino Adolescent Street Gang Membership**



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**Learning objectives**

- Address community responses to consequences in the form of model intervention and prevention programs.
- Present practical suggestions of how to conduct outreach and engage gang members into services.

Also...

- Recognize the importance of assessing for ACEs:  
A-Adverse  
C-Childhood  
E-Experiences
- Also, *The New Jim Crow* by Alexander (2010) provides a contemporary view of structural impacts of profiling young people of color



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**What strategy works best to address gang problems?**

- The current consensus of informed opinion holds that there is no single strategy or easy solution for Hispanic/Latino gang problems.
- A promising approach is to think of different strategies that can be combined in meaningful ways.
- Drug using behavior and the attachment to the gang can be significantly reduced by evidenced based and culturally relevant interventions.




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**What strategy works best to address gang problems? (cont.)**

- Comprehensive community mobilization strategies involving the participation of broad-based community coalitions ranging from the police and prosecutors to street outreach workers.
- In order to be effective strategies needs to offer enhanced options to incarceration and probation; including employment-training programs in either after care or alternative sentencing forms as well as integrated substance abuse and mental health services.




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**OJJDP (2010)  
Juvenile Justice Bulletin:  
Promising and Effective Programs for  
Gang Prevention**

Programs are scored on the following:

- Soundness/clarity of the program's framework,
- Program fidelity ( i.e., adherence to original program operational guidelines.
- The strength of the evaluation's design.
- The empirical evidence demonstrating that the program prevents or reduces problem behaviors.




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**OJJDP (2010)  
Juvenile Justice Bulletin:  
Promising and Effective Programs  
for Gang Prevention**

Scores promising programs on three levels:

Level 1: program has been scientifically proven to prevent delinquency, reduce risk...high quality research design.

Level 2: program has all the same aspects as level 1 but provides a more experimental or quasi-experimental component.

Level 3: program displays a strong theoretical base, and have proven to reduce delinquency, etc.

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**Evidenced Based Strategies-  
Theoretical Background**

There is a wide range of theories, both scientific and "faith-based" that have guided and legitimized the development and implementation of prevention and intervention programs and strategies targeting gangs.

These theories can be roughly classified as "individual-oriented" or "environment-oriented".

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**Evidenced Based Strategies-  
Intervention**

**Intervention Programs:** provide services and undertake actions directed to active gang members.

Common across both intervention and prevention programs and strategies has been the scarcity of a science-based evaluation of their impact.

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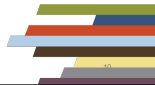
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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

**Individual-oriented** target critical mechanisms in the individual which need to be changed. Those directed at active gang members, aim to change behavior and divert them from crime to alternatives (after-school programs, sports, and job training).



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- An assessment of the individual and the population in terms of risk and protective factors is a prerequisite to designing appropriate curriculum, counseling or therapeutic plan for the individual.
- Risk and resiliency theory is a general approach for the programming of intervention and prevention strategies for a wide range of socially unacceptable behaviors.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

**Youth-oriented Treatment:** Youth-oriented strategies tend to recruit individual gang members into specially designed counseling or individual, group, or family therapy programs.

- Treatment interventions deliver therapeutic rehabilitative services to gang-affiliated individuals, families, and communities, such as psychotherapy, job training, recreational services, and arts and culture, along with re-entry, relocation, and transition services.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- Individual and family therapy interventions attempt to mold individual gang member personality and character traits and relieve emotional and cognitive distress.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- Treatment strategies can include medication and behavioral therapies to tackle underlying psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Family therapeutic approaches attempt to change the perception parents have of children and improve family communication.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- Many programs provide educational support to re-establish connection to schools, emergency housing (since many gang members have periods of residential instability), spiritual and moral guidance by clergy and ex-gang members, employment and leadership skills training.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

**Psychosocial Intervention:** Innovative psychosocial interventions can integrate psychosocial support and law enforcement suppression. Irving Spergel's Comprehensive Gang Model consists of five strategies.

- Mobilizing community leaders and residents to expand and develop networks that link existing organizations that work with gang members and high-risk youth.
- Using outreach workers to contact and motivate gang members for existing organization services.

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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- Facilitating access to academic, economic and social opportunities.
- Conducting gang suppression actions and holding gang members accountable for their criminal behaviors.
- Promoting organizational change that prepares community agencies for a team problem-solving approach to gangs that is consistent with the philosophy of community policing and corrections.

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### Cultural Relevance

**Cultural Relevance:** Effective intervention programs must address the cultural values of the Hispanic/Latino gang members. Strategies may include:

- mobilization of adult male "compadre"
- extended kinship support
- youth development "rites of passage" activities
- culturally appropriate research/evaluation methodologies

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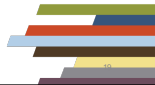
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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

**Environment-oriented Programs:** view the cause of gangs to lie primarily in the social environment and not the individual. They typically seek to change gang structure and processes by influencing key social (environmental) factors such as the gang itself, peer groups, families, churches, schools, youth groups, and neighborhood resident organizations.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- Midnight basketball programs increase the opportunities for high risk youth to exercise and provide a positive structured and adult-supervised activity.
- The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative is an environment-oriented strategy that focuses on security promotion and preventing gang influences from entering or taking root in schools.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

Environment-oriented strategies identify specific gangs in a given neighborhood and employ 'detached workers' who develop gang member contacts. Simultaneously, community residents and organizations are mobilized.

- Detached street work involves problem-oriented, group or community work that was tailored to the social structure of the community.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- Detached street gang workers create bridges for gang members to schools, youth clubs, and jobs. They were the pivotal element in the comprehensive integrated community approach that came to be called the 'Spergel Model' after its University of Chicago developer.
- Community change approach remains the most widely accepted program in the U.S.




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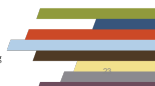
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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

- A major gang strategy is the "detached worker program" has been implemented in the following programs:
  - Boston Mid-City Project;
  - Chicago Youth Development Project; and
  - Los Angeles Ladino Hills Project (Esbensen, 2000).

More information is available electronically at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Web page, which can be accessed at <http://www.ojjdp.gov> and the National Youth Gang Center's (NYGC's) Web page, which can be accessed at [www.nygc.org](http://www.nygc.org).




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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

**Local Community Organizing and Mobilization:**  
 Based on the idea of countering social disorganization by mobilizing communities and coordinating available resources with an emphasis on using indigenous leaders (i.e. ex-delinquents). The focus was to restore a sense of local community through participation and support from individuals that will lead youth to conventional behaviors.

- The emphasis was on local communities taking on the responsibilities in organizing collaborative responses to the delinquent problem.




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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Local Community Organizing and Mobilization (cont.)

- The contemporary community mobilization approach now incorporates the development of a coalition of justice agencies with schools, community groups, and even gang members themselves.
- These include programs such as the weed and seed programs that deal with problems of drugs and gang violence with close cooperation with various youth agencies and grass-roots organization.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Local Community Organizing and Mobilization (cont.)

- This approach may be effective in Hispanic/Latino communities that have well developed community based organizations.



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Other Intervention Strategies

1. Detached Worker Programs
2. Crisis Intervention
3. Specific programing
4. Gang Summits and Truces
5. Emergency Room Intervention and Victim Programs



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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Detached Worker Programs

- Definition: Take the program to the gangs. Build rapport and trust between worker and gang member in his space.
- Earlier Examples:
  - New York City Youth Board, 1960
    - Relied on detached workers to transform youth gangs from fighting groups into pro-social ones
    - Carried out in the streets
    - Secured health care, employment counseling, advocacy work with police/courts
- Effective?
  - Researchers disagree about the effectiveness of detached worker programs

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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Crisis Intervention

- Definition--Detached workers put in vehicles and sent to "hotspots" of gang activity.
- Example: Crisis Intervention Services Project
  - Staff patrolled areas of high risk
  - Attempted to mediate conflicts
  - Intensive counseling provided to gang youth
  - Local neighborhood groups mobilized & involved
- Effective?
  - Crisis intervention programming as a singular approach using detached workers does not have a stellar performance record

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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Specific Gang Target Programing

- Boys & Girls Clubs
  - Example--Comin' Up
    - All youth in program are identified gang members
    - Provides:
      - Alternatives to gang life(education, employment)
      - Life-skills development
      - Truces among rival gangs
- Home Boy Industries
  - Alternatives to gang life using jobs as escape
  - Sells merchandise, baked bread
  - Successful enterprise
  - Employs rival gang members

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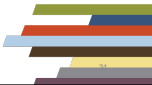
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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Gang Summits and Truces

- Definition—Preventing gang wars by means of truces.
- Example:
  - Truce negotiated by members of the Alliance for Concerned Men among warring gangs. Alliance carried out with strategic planning and in neutral meeting location. Before truce, 6 homicides. After truce, 0 homicides for 20 months.




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### Intervention/Treatment Strategies

#### Emergency Room Intervention and Victim Programs

- Definition—Using hospital emergency room as promising arena for intervening in gang violence.
- Examples:
  - Partnership for a Safer Cleveland, 1996
    - -Gang recognition seminar for hospital staff
  - Teens on Target, 1996
    - -Seeks to reduce gang injury/death through peer education, intervention, mentoring
    - -Many TNT leaders are violence victims




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### Community Based Gang Intervention Model

The "Community-Based Gang Intervention Model" is an integrated approach of service delivery that addresses the various systemic and institutional barriers that gang involved youth and their families encounter in their daily lives.




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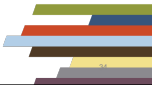
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### Community Based Gang Intervention Model

Community-based intervention is comprised of a variety of activities that focus on and **engage active and former gang members**, their **close associates**, and **gang members in and returning from confinement**. Gang involved youth and their families require specialized intensive and comprehensive services that address the unique issues encountered by youth when they become involved with gangs.



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### Gang Intervention Specialist

License To Operate

Referent Power

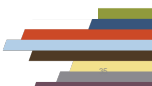
RELATIONSHIP ACCESS

- Credibility
- Interface with violence
- Engage with the community at multiple levels

- Power of identity
- Cultural competency
- Gender specific/role models

- Trust & rapport (faster & stronger)
- Liaison all levels of treatment
- Reduction in "us & them" stigma

Estrada, & Hernandez, 2011



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### 4 Tiers to the Comprehensive Community-Based Intervention Approach



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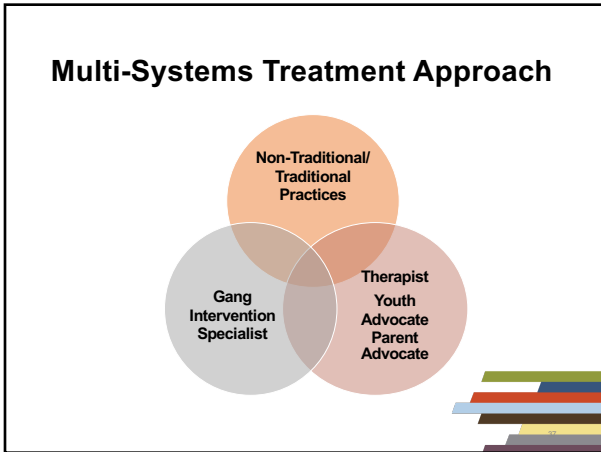
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### Gang Reduction & Youth Development (GRYD)

- Los Angeles neighborhood-based approach started in 2007.
- The goal is to reduce gang influence on the lives of youth.
- Uses prevention, intervention, re-entry, and suppression methods.

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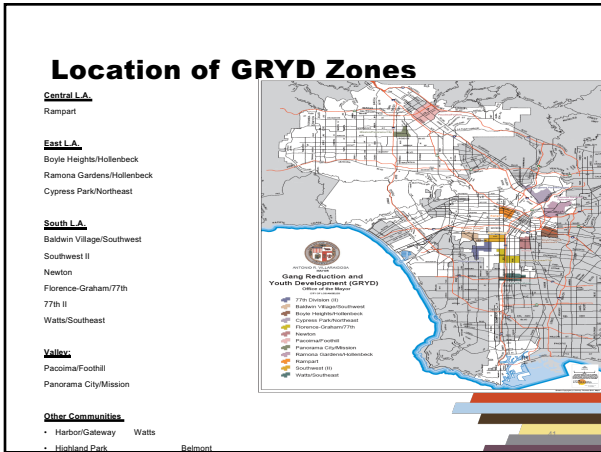
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## GRYD

### Evaluation:

- Overall, there has been a decline in gang-related crimes
- Participants showed a 49% decrease in gang involvement
- Showed improvement in youth attitudes and parent relationships



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## Systematic Breakdown

When families, schools, churches, and communities do not meet the needs of "OUR" Youth, street models can become more attractive leading itself to adolescent social issues of delinquency, gangs, drugs, teen pregnancy, prostitution, street life, homelessness and despair.



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## Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention

Gang suppression approaches make primary use of criminal justice system to reduce gang activity.

- Criminal justice agencies involved with gang suppression include local and federal law enforcement, DA's, and courts including pretrial services, and parole as well as corrections institutions.
- These strategies appear to be effective in the short term but not necessarily have long term lasting effects in controlling gang crime.
- Youth gang suppression strategies include community policing, as well as peacemaking negotiations and voluntary disarmament.



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**Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention**

**Gang Investigations Units**

- responsible for gathering intelligence and developing and implementing enforcement strategies that target gang activity
- serve as centralized intelligence resources for gang information and analytical support.
- gang investigation units exist at local, county and state law enforcement agencies.



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**Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention**

Gradually, the principles of community policing have been emerging to provide an alternative to the “lock them up” gang suppression strategy. Emerging approach tends to be:

- Multidimensional
- Citizen-involved
- Pragmatic
- Problem-solving in its orientation (Spergel, 1995).



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**Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention**

Gang units are compelled to work closely with community organizations and not only enforce the law and personal responsibility, but to help bring peace to troubled neighborhoods.

- Vertical prosecution strategy that allows a single prosecutor to focus on gang-related cases and include police, community-based agencies and schools.
- Alternative sentencing strategies involve placement in education or job training program.



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### Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention

- Aftercare interventions that provide job training and placement for incarcerated young offenders, many of whom are gang members; addressing the concern of re-entry to the community and the sustained influence of prison gangs on the youth gang problem.



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### Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention

The court system is another source of alternative or innovative gang suppression strategies, including:

- Vertical prosecution is where prosecutors with expertise in gangs take cases forward from start to finish allowing them to know the accused, the community context, and the witnesses in a much deeper way.



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### Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention

- Alternative sentencing allows district attorneys to recommend education, job training, or a specialized therapeutic clinic instead of a prison sentence
- The National Youth Offender Demonstration Project, provides job training and placement for incarcerated gang members who are not receiving alternative sentencing.



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### Law Enforcement Suppression Intervention

The positive outcomes of some suppression strategies that have integrated community-based participation have stimulated further interest in alternative techniques:

- community policing strategies that are multidimensional, pragmatic, and encourage citizen participation to develop innovative strategies
- gang suppression that involves criminal justice system and other governmental and non-governmental organizations and community residents.




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### Implications for practice

Street Youth intervention efforts need to:

- Be culturally competent and address the particular needs not being fulfilled by other social institutions.
- Help change the negative perceptions of adolescent social issues.
- Highlight the strengths already being practiced within street youth activity.
- Encourage acceptable pro-social behaviors.
- Address root causes that have failed these youth.
- Engage youth to become actively involved in their community!




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### Implications for practice

Street Youth intervention efforts need to:

- Framing of adolescent social issues as "wellness and healing" treatment approach not a criminal issue.
- Be genuine, respectful, and strength-based.
- Learn about the culture, accept it, let the youth be the expert and teach you about it.
- Refrain from telling youth to stop doing something because they will defy and continue to do it.
- Rather, create goals on what youth can do instead.




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