Reducing Fear of Crime
Strategies for Police

Gary Cordner

COPS
COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Reducing Fear of Crime

Strategies for Police

Gary Cordner
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Dear Colleagues,

Fear of crime has an incredibly corrosive effect on individuals and entire communities. This issue is of great concern to all of us in law enforcement. Fear negatively shapes all aspects of the quality of life of America's communities.

The COPS Office recognizes that people not only need to be safe, but they also need to feel safe. Treating both of these issues as two parts of a greater whole is a critical aspect of community policing. That is why we produced this document, "Reducing Fear of Crime: Strategies for Police." This publication identifies promising practices that have the potential to directly address the fear of crime. It is written by Gary Cordner, one of the foremost experts on the issue of community fear in the policing field.

Community policing is one of the most effective tools for reducing the fear of crime. When law enforcement works directly with residents and businesses within a community, they are going a long way toward reducing crime, improving quality of life, and enhancing public safety.

I know that you will find our new publication, "Reducing Fear of Crime: Strategies for Police," extremely useful.

Sincerely,

Bernard K. Melekian
Director
COPS Office

Executive Summary

Fear of crime was at or near the top of the list of police priorities in the United States more than 2 decades ago, in the early 1980s. Many police executives had accepted the premise that reducing fear of crime was an important objective, and several promising practices had been identified. This situation helped spur the development of community policing in the 1980s and 1990s but, paradoxically, the importance of fear of crime within the explicit missions of most police departments seemed to recede even as community policing expanded. More recently, however, the gap between (1) falling crime rates and (2) stable or even increasing levels of fear (what some call the *reassurance gap*) has led to renewed interest among police in strategies for reducing fear of crime. Also, fear of terrorism arose in America post-9/11, making fear reduction even more salient for local, state, and national officials.

This Guide briefly reviews information about the phenomenon of fear of crime as well as historical and contemporary police efforts to reduce fear. The main focus, however, is on tools and techniques that police can use to target and reduce fear of crime, and institutionalize fear reduction within their agencies. Some promising practices and best practices have been identified—these are strategies and programs that have been implemented and that have been tested and shown to be effective.

Fear of crime is a different animal from crime, disorder, or traffic, but it is not really all that esoteric. This Guide will help police understand what fear of crime is, why it matters, and why it should be an important target of police attention. The Guide provides a number of tools and techniques that should enable any police department to successfully add fear reduction to its operational strategy and organizational bottom line.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Fear of crime has a huge impact on American society. Individuals often choose where to live, shop, and socialize based on their perceptions of the relative safety of different cities, towns, and neighborhoods. Parents allow their their kids to play in the park or walk to school if they think it would be safe. Neighborhoods and entire cities have gone into spirals of decline because fear of crime motivated those residents and businesses who could afford to move, to do so. Fear of crime routinely drives local politics, occasionally influences national elections, and has been the catalyst for vastly increased federal crime-control efforts since the 1960s. Concern about heightened fear of crime in the 1980s and 1990s helped spur the development of community policing. Since the 1990s, the actual level of crime has fallen dramatically, but fear of crime has not seemed to recede as quickly or as substantially.

This Guide argues in favor of including fear reduction (making people feel safer) among the explicit components of the modern police mission. It is based on the following interrelated assumptions:

- **Fear matters**—it negatively affects individuals and communities.

- **Fear is real**—while it is just a feeling, fear affects behavior, politics, economics, and social life.

- **Admittedly, fear is not as important as crime**—the harm caused by fear should not be equated with the tangible and often tragic harm caused by violent crime or significant property crime.

- **But fear is very important**—while making people safe is perhaps the most important purpose of government, making them *feel* safe is nearly as important because fear has such negative ramifications for politics, economics, and social life.

- **Reducing fear is and should be a police responsibility**—the important government purpose of making people feel safe falls to the police logically and of necessity.

- **Police can reduce fear**—promising fear-reduction strategies and practices have been developed and tested in the past 30 years.

- **Reducing fear should be an explicit police priority**—unless police specifically target fear of crime, their attention tends to get distracted toward other issues, and fear-reduction efforts are neglected.

- **Fear-reduction efforts should be targeted**—the preponderance of the evidence on police effectiveness in general is that more targeted strategies work best. This general principle applies to the specific challenge of reducing fear of crime.

This Guide briefly reviews information about the phenomenon of fear of crime as well as historical and contemporary police efforts to reduce fear. The main focus, however, is on tools and techniques that police can use to target and reduce fear of crime, and institutionalize fear reduction within their agencies. Some promising practices and best practices have been identified—these are strategies and programs that have been implemented and that have been tested and shown to be effective.

Targeting Fear. Police departments need to begin measuring and analyzing fear of crime more systematically. During the past few decades, police have learned that they need crime analysis to target crime—the same goes for fear of crime. This often requires both community-wide and neighborhood-level surveys, but those are not the only methods for learning about fear. Community meetings, key individuals, environmental audits, and routine public contacts can also serve as very useful sources to learn about the concerns and worries of community residents. Once police have some information about fear of crime in the community, they can use it to identify demographic groups that are most affected, neighborhoods where fear is the highest, and other trends and patterns. Police can also identify anomalies, such as neighborhoods where crime is low but fear is high. Armed with data and analysis about fear of crime, police can begin to focus and target their attention, just as they do with crime itself.

Reducing Fear. Once fear problems are identified and understood, the key is to apply responses tailored to those problems. If the source of a neighborhood's fear is poor street lighting, a community newsletter is not going to fix it. If the cause of fear is aggressive panhandlers in a shopping district, then showing homeowners how to put better locks on their doors will not work. This Guide strongly recommends tailored responses—specific to the nature and causes of fear of crime as revealed through information and analysis. In conjunction with this kind of problem solving, implementing more personalized policing and encouraging more community engagement are recommended, since both have generally been associated with making the public feel safer. Then there is one more crucial ingredient—feedback. People will not become less fearful unless they know that the sources of their fear have been addressed. Fear is based on perception, so police intent on reducing fear have to follow through and make sure that the public sees, hears about, or otherwise recognizes when problems have been fixed, conditions improved, etc. This is so important that police departments should also begin thinking more about the larger function of strategic communication. Police need to become more sophisticated purveyors of reassurance as an antidote to the inevitable messages of mayhem and fear that predominate in politics and the media.

Institutionalizing Fear Reduction. The final section of this Guide considers how fear reduction might be more firmly cemented into the ongoing operations of police agencies. One key step is to formally acknowledge that fear reduction is part of the mission and bottom line of policing. Another is to permanently implement systems for measuring and tracking fear of crime so that lack of data cannot be an excuse for lack of targeting. Besides, in policing "what you measure is what you get." Along this line, fear reduction should be built into CompStat-like systems of command accountability—area commanders should know that making their residents feel safer is one of their obligations, and one of the criteria upon which their performance will be judged. The same goes for beat-level sergeants and officers—if they know that they will be held accountable for addressing fear of crime in their neighborhoods, they will more likely take it seriously. Moreover, this is a very reasonable aspect of accountability since many fear problems are neighborhood-based, and we know from 25 years of broken windows and community policing that neighborhood residents really appreciate it when beat officers target disorder, incivilities, and other causes of neighborhood anxiety and fear.

Fear of crime is a different animal from crime, disorder, or traffic, but it is not really all that esoteric. This Guide will help police understand what fear of crime is, why it matters, and why it should be an important target of police attention. The Guide provides a number of tools and techniques that should enable any police department to successfully add fear reduction to its operational strategy and organizational bottom line.

1 Why Target Fear?

Because fear of crime is just a feeling, some might wonder why it is important, particularly as a target for police action. Certainly, crime itself must be more important than mere feelings about crime? And even if fear of crime is of some importance, what can police be expected to do about it?

The Case for Targeting Fear

One expert who has studied fear of crime for more than 2 decades is Wesley Skogan of Northwestern University. He has also studied and evaluated police strategies, including Chicago's experiment with community policing beginning in 1993. He makes the case for paying attention to fear of crime as follows (2006: 255):

> Fear of crime is a social and political fact with concrete consequences for big-city life. The costs of fear are both individual and collective. Fear can confine people to their homes, and it undermines their trust in their neighbors and, especially, in their neighbors' children. Fear is a key "quality of life" issue for many people. Research also indicates that concern about crime has bad consequences for the neighborhoods in which we live. Fear leads to withdrawal from public life, and it undermines informal and organized efforts by the community to control crime and delinquency. It is difficult to organize activities in neighborhoods where people fear their own neighbors. Fear undermines the value of residential property and thus the willingness of owners to maintain it properly. When customers—and even employees—fear entering a commercial area, the viability of businesses located there is threatened.

Most significant, in Chicago as elsewhere, fear of crime has been one of the most important factors driving residents to the suburbs, encouraging race and class segregation and undermining the political importance of American cities.

Officials in England who have studied fear of crime and how to reduce it have expressed similar concerns (Fear of Crime Team, 2005: 16):

> Fear of crime is something that may affect people from all walks of life at any stage of their lives. This makes it different from actual crime which tends to be concentrated on particular areas, victims and committed by a small number of offenders. Whether it is an older person who feels nervous about walking home, parents who feel anxious about sending their child up the road to buy sweets, or a shop keeper who tenses up every time a customer enters their shop, if we let it, fear of crime can have a devastating effect on our quality of life.

Local and national surveys in the United States verify the public's concern about crime and fear of crime. In a 2007 study in Charlotte, North Carolina, 46 percent of respondents said they were somewhat worried or very worried about becoming a crime victim (Manware, 2007). One year later in Charlotte, 42 percent of residents said they felt less safe than in 2007, while only 7 percent felt safer (Cherrie, 2008). Nationwide in 2006, 37 percent of Americans said there was an area within a mile of their home where they would be afraid to walk alone at night (Saad, 2006). This measure had peaked at 48 percent in 1982, then gradually fell to 30 percent in 2001 before beginning to go back up. Consistent with this trend in fear of crime, 71 percent of Americans in 2007 believed there was more crime in the United States than the year before, and 51 percent believed that crime in their local areas had increased in the past year (Saad, 2007). Both of these measures of the perceived level of crime have increased since 2001.

Figure 1. Crime Perceptions vs. Violent Crime.
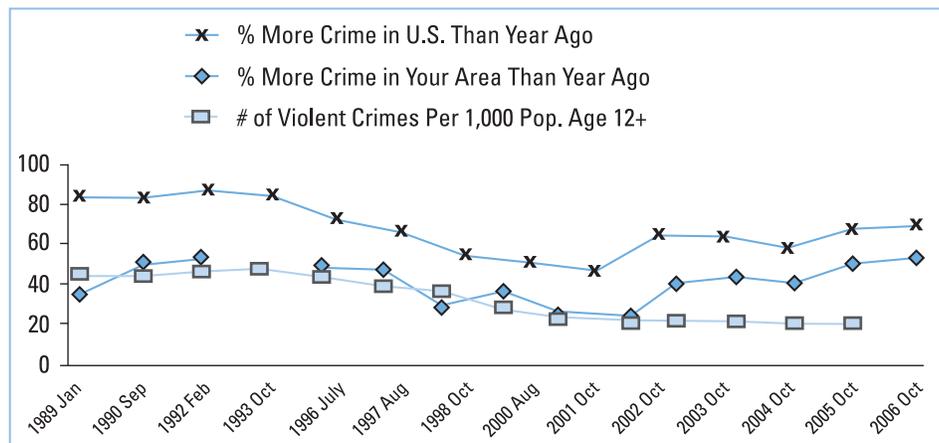
Source: Saad, Lydia. "Worry About Crime Remains at Last Year's Elevated Levels." Gallup News Service, 2006. www.gallup.com/poll/25078/Worry-About-Crime-Remains-Last-Years-Elevated-Levels.aspx#1.

Figure 2. Is There More Crime in the U.S. Than There Was a Year Ago, or Less?
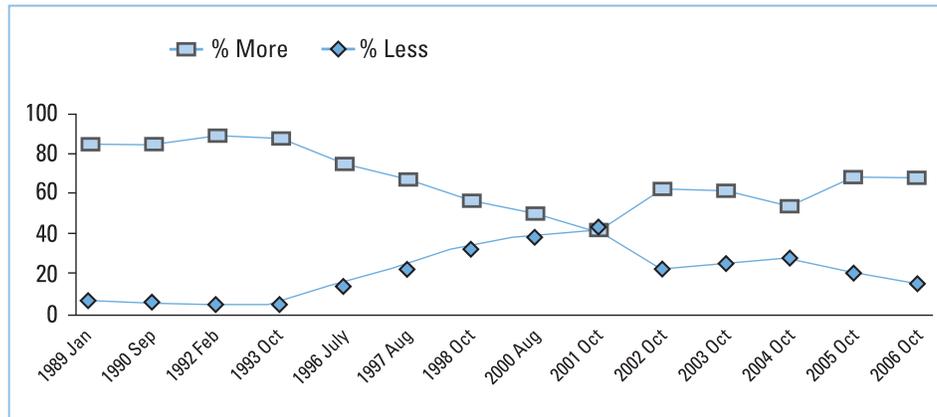
Source: Saad, Lydia. "Worry About Crime Remains at Last Year's Elevated Levels." Gallup News Service, 2006. www.gallup.com/poll/25078/Worry-About-Crime-Remains-Last-Years-Elevated-Levels.aspx#1.

Increases in fear of crime and perceived levels of crime in the United States as measured by Gallup Polls since 2001 are not consistent with the national trend in crime as measured by either personal victimization (Rennison, 2002; Catalano, 2006) or reported crime (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2002 and 2007):

Violent crime
- -18% change in the *victimization* rate (2001–2005)
- -6% change in the *reported* crime rate (2001–2006).

Property crime
- -8% change in the *victimization* rate (2001–2005)
- -9% change in the *reported* crime rate (2001–2006).

This kind of disconnect between the public's perceptions versus actual levels of crime is not new or even surprising, but it has certainly frustrated law enforcement officials during the past decade, when crime drops have not been matched by drops in fear of crime (Burke, Sandoval, and Lemire, 2009). The disconnect also frustrates incumbent political leaders, who want the votes of reassured residents, at the same time that it provides fodder for their opponents (Stiles and Glenn, 2007). This situation is not unique to the United States—England (Fear of Crime Team, 2005), the Netherlands (Lasthuizen, Van Eeuwijk, and Huberts, 2005), and other countries have had similar experiences during the same time period. Still, recognizing that fear of crime is a problem does not necessarily mean that it is a *police* problem or that reducing fear should be a high priority. Several good arguments have been advanced for and against the inclusion of fear reduction among the important missions of a police agency.

Figure 3. Victimization Rates for Violent Crime and Property Crime, 1993–2005.

Violent Victimizations per 1,000 Population Age 12 or Over

Property Victimizations per 1,000 Households

Each vertical bar shows the range within which the true victimization rate was likely to fall.
For discussion of displaying estimates, see www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv05.pdf.
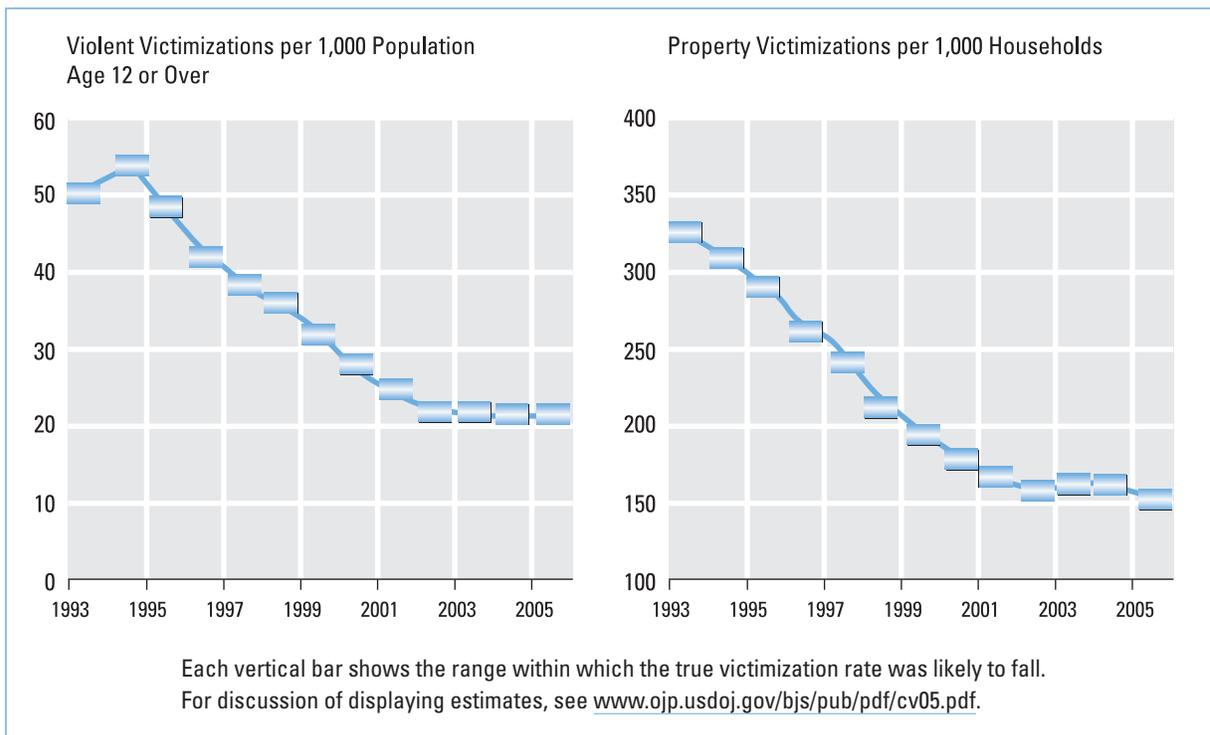
Source: Catalano, Shannan. *Criminal Victimization 2005.* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006. www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv05.pdf.

Arguments Against Targeting Fear of Crime

The case for targeting fear has been outlined above, albeit briefly—fear matters, it is real, and it deeply affects individuals and communities. Furthermore, police should accept responsibility for fear reduction because they are the experts on crime and disorder, they are already engaged with individuals and communities, and no one else has the expertise or authority to seriously tackle fear of crime.

Arguments have been raised, though, against the idea of fear reduction as a police priority. The most important of these arguments are noted below:

- **Fear of crime is too ephemeral**—it is too vague a concept and too intangible a problem to deserve targeted attention.
- **Fear of crime is a political tool**—politicians and police manipulate the public's anxiety about crime for their own purposes.
- **Fear reduction is risky**—people who are made to feel safer may "drop their guard" and engage in riskier behaviors, making them more susceptible to crime.

- **Fear reduction wastes resources**—police should use their limited resources to tackle actual crime, which is more important than fear of crime.

- **Fear reduction is a cop out**—police started targeting fear at a time when it was believed that there was nothing police could do to reduce actual crime. That time has passed, and evidence now shows that police *can* reduce actual crime.

- **The way to reduce fear is to reduce crime**—perhaps fear of crime is important, but it is simply a reflection of actual crime, so it does not require any special or targeted attention.

Counterarguments

Compared with the arguments in support of police adopting fear reduction as an important part of their mission, these criticisms are not persuasive. However, each one contains a few grains of insight that should be incorporated into any law enforcement agency's fear-reduction effort.

1. Fear *is* vague, it *is* a feeling, and it *is* intangible, but it has behavioral and tangible consequences as previously noted. With careful effort, it can be defined and measured with reasonable accuracy. Once measured, it can be targeted and tracked so that fear-reduction efforts are logical, rational, and accountable.

2. National and local politicians *have* been known to promote law and order agendas in response to the public's fear of crime, and to stoke fears as a way of garnering more electoral support (Lee, 2007; Simon, 2007). Police agencies sometimes play to the public's fear of crime when making their case for more resources or increased authority. It should come as no surprise that an important and emotional public issue such as fear of crime has political ramifications. But so do crime, drugs, gangs, terrorism, police use of force, immigration, and a variety of other public safety matters. Just because fear of crime can be a hot political issue does not negate the fact that it has real consequences for people and communities.

3. A certain amount of fear *is* an important survival and defense mechanism (Warr, 2000). The key is to keep the level of fear in proper balance with the actual level of risk. Risk levels vary for different individuals depending on their age, sex, occupation, and other characteristics. Also, risk levels vary between different neighborhoods. Consequently, fear-reduction efforts should not be aimed naively at eliminating fear of crime, but rather at synchronizing fear with actual levels of crime.

4. Fear reduction *does* take resources (although it might also save resources if it leads to a reduction in calls for service). It is important to consider fear reduction among the priorities of the police, without any claim that it is the only important priority (Moore and Braga, 2003). Logically, fear of crime might be a more serious problem in some communities than in others, and therefore fear reduction might be a higher priority for some police agencies than for others.

5. It *is* true that police began paying explicit attention to fear of crime in the early 1980s when there was a sense that police could do nothing to reduce actual crime. Crime seemed to have increased throughout the 1970s, and the first wave of police evaluation research concluded that the traditional strategies of routine preventive patrol, rapid response, and reactive investigation had no impact on the level of crime or on much of anything else (Cordner and Scarborough, 2007: 383–397). Also, it *is* true that subsequent experience and research now provide evidence to support the view that more targeted, more community oriented, and more problem-oriented police strategies are more effective (Skogan and Frydl, 2004).

The flaw in this particular argument against police targeting fear of crime is that it presents a false dichotomy. In the current situation, which is different from the early 1980s, it is not necessary to argue for a focus on fear reduction *instead of* crime reduction. Rather, we can recognize that reducing crime and reducing fear are both worthy goals. Strategies can be employed to attempt to achieve each goal. The priority of each may vary, and in fact it is reasonable to assume that reducing crime will be the higher of these two priorities for the vast majority of law enforcement agencies. The most useful way to think about it, though, is in terms of relative priorities, not either/or.

6. Fear of crime *is* related to actual crime, but the connection is less clear-cut than might be assumed. The most fearful individuals are not necessarily those who have suffered the most crime or who are most at risk of victimization. The most fearful communities are not necessarily the ones with the most crime. Fear of crime does not necessarily go up or down in correlation with the amount of actual crime and so on. Because fear of crime is not highly correlated with actual crime, it cannot be assumed that reducing crime will reduce fear of crime—this has certainly been demonstrated by recent experience. It follows that, if police want to reduce fear of crime, they may need to do other things in addition to whatever they do to try to reduce actual crime.

When law enforcement agencies plan and implement fear-reduction strategies, they should keep these counterarguments in mind. Police need to work smart in fear reduction just as much as they need to work smart when tackling crime and disorder. Fear of crime is simply another problem on the list of problems that police should address. It may be less tangible than some others, and it may not have the same sort of vocal constituencies of victims and relatives that crime, drug offenses, or drunken driving have. But fear of crime has such negative consequences for individuals and communities that police must make sure that it gets targeted attention.

Fear Reduction in Perspective

We have argued that fear reduction should be one of the priorities of the police. This naturally brings up the larger question of overall police priorities, or in other words, what are the things that police agencies should try to achieve—what are their goals? This important question has been discussed and debated at least since 1829, when the London Metropolitan Police were

formed. At that time, Sir Robert Peel and the other architects of modern Anglo-American policing declared that prevention of crime was the primary objective of police, while making reference also to preventing disorder, securing public approval, and limiting the use of force and coercion (Lentz and Chaires, 2007).

These same themes certainly resonate today. They are included among a set of seven "dimensions of value" proposed by Mark Moore and his colleagues to collectively represent the "bottom line" of policing—the key components of what police agencies are established to achieve (Moore and Braga, 2003):

- Reduce crime and victimization

- Call offenders to account

- Reduce fear and enhance personal security

- Ensure civility in public spaces (ordered liberty)

- Use force and authority fairly, efficiently, and effectively

- Use financial resources fairly, efficiently, and effectively

- Quality services/customer satisfaction.

Reducing fear of crime is included among these seven dimensions of value. Its inclusion reinforces the significance of fear reduction within the police mission while at the same time emphasizing that police agencies also have several other important objectives. Moore and Braga have this to say about the significance of reducing fear of crime and making people feel safer (pages 19–20):

> Citizens react to *signs* of disorder—things that they associate with increased risk, such as public drunkenness, prostitutes openly soliciting, and rowdy groups—rather than to real objective risks of victimization. Furthermore … police can do things that are successful in reducing fear *even if they leave the objective risks untouched* (emphasis in original) … reducing crime turns out to be somewhat disconnected from enhancing the sense of security that citizens feel.

> …the subjective experience of security from criminal attack is one of the most important ultimate objectives of the police. We want the police to produce a sense of security as well as the reality of reduced risk of criminal victimization. If they produce real, objective security, but leave us feeling afraid, they have not accomplished what we really want them to do—allow us to go about our lives with a reasonable degree of security. Further, the relationship between reduced crime on one hand and increased security on the other is complex, not simple.

Interestingly, Skogan found in Chicago that 84 percent of police officers who participated directly in community policing activities agreed with the statement "lowering citizens' fear of crime should be just as high a priority for this department as cutting the crime rate" (p. 237). This suggests that many working police might readily accept the notion that reducing fear and making people feel safe should be part of the mission and bottom line of modern policing.

Throughout the rest of this Guide we promote the idea that police should focus on fear reduction as one important part of their mission. Rest assured, though, that it is just one part of a multifaceted mission, and overall police effectiveness can only be judged according to a multidimensional bottom line. We agree with Mark Moore that actual safety from crime victimization is insufficient if people nevertheless *feel* unsafe. Similarly, though, it is no good if people feel safe, but in actuality are at great risk. Nor is it adequate for people to be safe and feel safe, if the reason is that police use illegal or inequitable practices to achieve a high level of public order. All seven of the dimensions are important. Many are also interrelated and interdependent—such is the challenge of effective policing in a free society.

About Fear of Crime

Fear of crime is a very popular topic among criminologists and other social scientists, not to mention journalists, politicians, and the general public. A Google search on "fear of crime" in late 2008 produced more than 1 million hits, while a search within Google Scholar yielded almost 400,000 hits. No effort is made in this Guide to exhaustively or even systematically summarize thousands of studies. But it is important to lay a modest foundation of contemporary knowledge and thinking about the phenomenon of fear of crime.

Unfortunately, considering the number of studies that have been done and the popularity of the topic, the term "fear of crime" has been utilized rather loosely and inconsistently in research and public discourse (Warr, 2000). Most precisely, "fear is an emotion, a feeling of alarm or dread caused by an awareness or expectation of danger" (p. 453). Fear is not the same thing as a perception of a dangerous environment or a belief in the likelihood of becoming a crime victim—rather, these are possible causes of fear, not indications of fear per se. Whether a distinction should be made between fear of crime and somewhat more nebulous feelings such as anxiety, worry, or concern about crime is debated in the literature but not consistently resolved.

Unlike reported crime and even personal crime victimization, fear of crime has not been measured nationally on an annual and official basis during a period of many years. Consequently, it is not possible to say with confidence when fear of crime has been the highest or the lowest, or where in the nation it is increasing or decreasing. Most of the many studies of fear of crime have been small-scale studies in single sites. National polling organizations such as Gallup occasionally measure the level of fear of crime (Saad, 2006; 2007), but not year in and year out, and not in such a way that one could compare, say, California with Florida.

With those caveats in mind, what do we know about fear of crime? Here are a few conclusions drawn from the work of leading scholars (Ferraro, 1995; Warr, 2000; Weitzer and Kubrin, 2004):

- Common cues to crime danger include darkness, unfamiliar environments, lack of companions, suspicious bystanders, and signs of incivility/disorder.

- The most common behavioral reaction to fear of crime is to avoid unsafe areas at night.

- Older people often report high levels of generalized fear of crime, but when asked about specific sources of fear or behavioral reactions (e.g., afraid to go out at night), their responses are typically similar to those of middle-aged people.

- School-age youths and young adults usually report the highest levels of fear of crime, but are least likely to adopt constraining or precautionary behaviors.

- Women usually report higher levels of fear of crime than men. This seems to be driven by fear of sexual assault which influences fear of burglary, mugging, strangers, dark streets, and other conditions.

- Women and older people are most likely to take precautionary measures in response to their fear of crime.

- Fear of crime tends to be higher among minority residents and urban dwellers.

- Perceived risk of victimization has one of the strongest effects on fear of crime.

- Fear of property crimes is often higher than fear of personal crimes, reflecting a rational understanding that property crimes occur much more frequently than violent crimes.

- Many people get most of their crime information from the mass media. Where people get their information affects their fear of crime, with TV news and tabloids having the most impact. Interestingly, though, people often can distinguish local news stories from those that are more distant and less likely to be relevant to their lifestyle and surroundings.

Beyond these generalizations, it is apparent that fear of crime, causes of fear, and the consequences of fear vary—they fluctuate in time, they vary between different jurisdictions, and they vary among groups of people. This is not particularly surprising, but it means that police in any jurisdiction will want to analyze and assess their own fear-of-crime problems, much as they study their crime problems. It would clearly be a mistake to merely assume that fear of crime in a specific city or town fits the national profile, without looking into it more closely.

One example of variation in factors that might affect fear of crime was found while evaluating a community policing project in Lexington, Kentucky, in the 1990s (Cordner, 1993b). Residents in the city's three public housing sites rated several possible causes of the crime in their neighborhoods, and each site chose a different #1 cause: in Bluegrass-Aspendale it was drugs, in Charlotte Court it was unsupervised kids, and in Pimlico Park it was outsiders. In the same three sites, the proportion of residents who indicated that they had been the victim of a personal crime in the past year varied between 5 percent and 18 percent, while for property crime victimization the range was 10 percent to 21 percent. The proportion of residents indicating that they had experienced a negative contact with the police during the past year varied between 4 percent and 22 percent.

Ironically, despite these substantial differences in the experiences and perceptions of residents, the reported levels of fear of crime in the three Lexington public housing sites were fairly similar. Variations between neighborhoods in levels of fear of crime are often found, though. In Boston, the percentage of residents who reported feeling somewhat safe to very safe when out alone in their neighborhoods at night in 2003 varied between 85 percent in the Downtown/Beacon Hill/Chinatown police district to only 34 percent in Mattapan and East Boston (Gu, 2004). In Portland, Oregon, the same percentages varied between 38 percent and 77 percent across seven coalition areas (City Auditor, 2008). A similar spread was found in San Francisco, where the percentage of respondents who felt unsafe at night in their neighborhoods varied between 11 percent and 64 percent across eleven supervisorial districts (Harrington, 2003).

Just as fear levels might or might not vary between different neighborhoods within a jurisdiction, the level of fear of crime might or might not show a clear trend in time. In Prince William County, Virginia, the annual fluctuation in the percentage of citizens feeling safe in their neighborhood at night from 2001 to 2006 was only between 86–88 percent (Prince William County, 2007). Between 1997 and 2003, the percentage of residents who felt safe when out at night in their own neighborhoods in Boston and San Francisco shifted only from 76 percent to 74 percent and from 40 percent to 45 percent, respectively—not a very strong trend in either city (Gu, 2004; Harrington, 2003). In Portland, Oregon, though, the same percentage increased from 48 percent in 1999 to 59 percent in 2008 (City Auditor, 2008). And in Chicago, where a 10-year community policing initiative was carefully evaluated, the proportion of residents afraid to go out at night dropped from 40 percent to 25 percent between 1994 and 2003, a fairly dramatic change (Skogan, 2006). Also in Chicago during that period, fear-of-crime gaps between men and women and between older and younger residents were substantially reduced (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Trends in Fear of Crime in Chicago.

Afraid to Go Out by Home Ownership

Home owners
Renters

Afraid to Go Out by Gender

Males
Females

Afraid to Go Out by Income

More than $40,000
Less than $40,000

Afraid to Go Out by Age

Under age 35
Over age 60
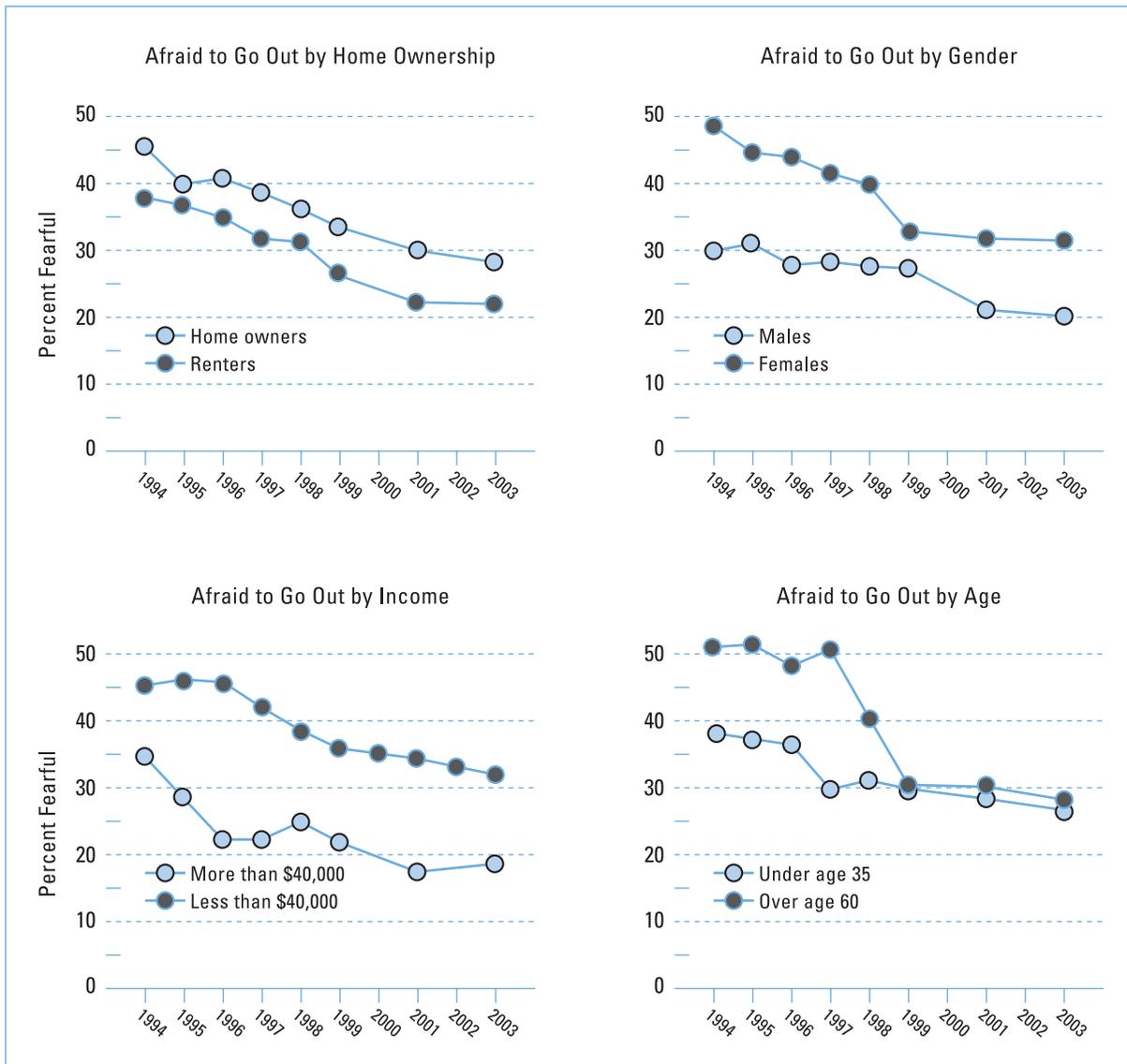
Source: Skogan, Wesley G. *Police and Community in Chicago: A Tale of Three Cities.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006: 259.

It should be pointed out that fear of crime is not solely a big-city issue. Among eight community surveys conducted in Kentucky neighborhoods and public housing sites in the 1990s, including urban locations in Lexington and in Jefferson County adjacent to Louisville, the residents of public housing in tiny Cumberland (population about 2,500) in the eastern part of the state registered highest on several items, including "I am more afraid of crime than I ever have been," "My fear of crime is very high," and "There is a good chance that I will be the victim of a personal crime this year" (Cordner, 2000). In a major statewide victimization study in Kentucky, city residents were most likely to express concerns about being out alone at night, but equal numbers of rural and city residents (23 percent) responded "yes" to the item "Are you ever afraid to be in your home alone at night?" (Kentucky Criminal Justice Council, 1999).

Suburban residents were least likely to agree with that item, but more likely than rural residents to respond affirmatively to the item "Is there any area within one mile of your home where you are ever afraid to walk alone at night?"

What these few examples demonstrate is that fear of crime is a variable, not a constant. The remainder of this Guide tries to assist police agencies in determining the state of fear of crime in their jurisdictions, in targeting specific fear-of-crime problems, and in working toward reducing fear of crime when conditions indicate that it is exaggerated and harmful to the well-being of the community and its residents.

About This Project

This project, funded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in the U.S. Department of Justice, began in 2004 and incorporated several data collection methods, including:

- A review of the literature on fear of crime and police strategies for reducing fear.

- A national survey sent to 500 law enforcement agencies. The survey was very brief and designed to identify specific agencies for follow-up contact.

- Follow-up telephone and e-mail contacts with agencies that reported having implemented fear-reduction strategies.

- Site visits to a handful of agencies in the United States and England that had implemented particularly interesting fear-reduction strategies.

- Presentation of preliminary findings at professional and academic conferences as a means of seeking feedback, input, and additional perspectives.

- Ongoing monitoring of the community policing and problem-oriented policing communities to identify new developments associated with fear reduction.

- Direct contact with a variety of community policing and problem-oriented policing experts in search of additional ideas, examples, and insights.

The national survey (see Appendix 1 on page 79) was sent to the 200 largest local law enforcement agencies in the United States, to 251 other randomly selected local law enforcement agencies, and to the 49 primary state law enforcement agencies. Survey responses were obtained from 160 agencies, for a 32 percent response rate. This response rate was somewhat disappointing, but not a matter for serious concern, because the objective of the survey was not primarily to measure any population parameter (such as the proportion of all agencies that have implemented X program), but rather to identify particular agencies for follow-up contact. That said, a summary of the survey findings provided an interesting snapshot:

1. 46 percent of the responding agencies replied "yes" to the question "During the past 5 years, has your agency implemented any strategies or programs specifically designed to reduce the public's fear of crime?"

2. 44 percent replied "yes" to a parallel question about efforts to reduce "fear of terrorism."

3. 10 percent replied "yes" to the question "Does your agency systematically measure fear of crime and/or fear of terrorism on an annual or other basis?"

Follow-ups were attempted with all agencies that reported having implemented fear-reduction strategies or programs. Some of those follow-ups produced information on interesting and innovative practices that is used throughout the rest of this Guide. Many agencies, though, when asked to identify their specific fear-reduction strategies and programs, pointed to some combination of visibility, enforcement, crime prevention, and community relations efforts—i.e., fairly traditional methods not really targeted at reducing fear of crime per se, but rather aimed at some combination of crime reduction and improved public confidence in the police. Other agencies pointed to their community policing efforts, but without any overt focus on reducing fear of crime.

Perhaps most telling, as noted in the survey results, few agencies systematically measure fear of crime. Without any data or analysis about fear of crime in its jurisdiction, it is hard for a law enforcement agency to make a convincing argument that it is really focused on the problem of fear. By analogy, agencies probably would not claim to be engaged in hot spots policing in the absence of any crime analysis. The survey results seem to indicate that most law enforcement agencies either do not specifically address fear of crime, or at best they address it without any real focus or targeting.
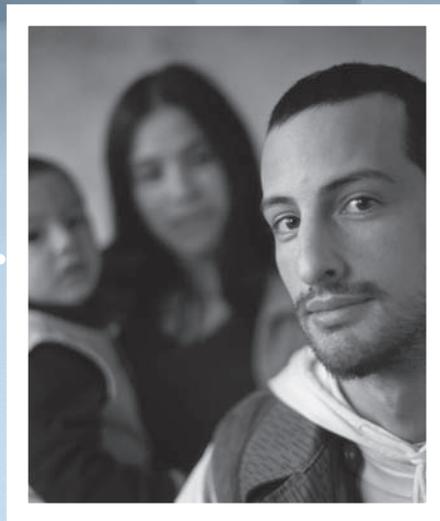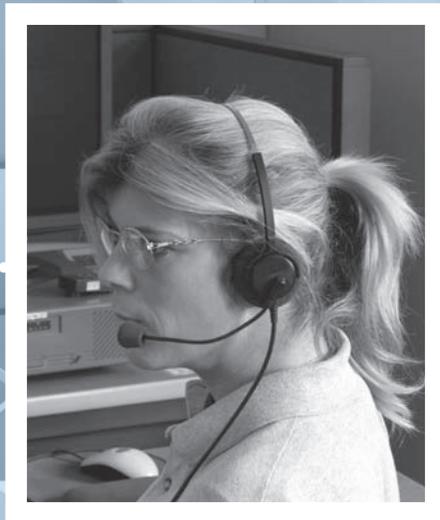
2 Police Strategies for Reducing Fear

How can police reduce fear of crime? This Guide ultimately recommends a targeted problem-oriented approach as the most effective strategy for fear reduction. Such a strategy, though, has to proceed hand-in-hand with a community oriented policing philosophy, which in turn has to rest on a solid foundation of professional policing principles and practices. These approaches to modern policing have been evolving during the past 50 years and are now seen as completely complementary.

How Policing Might Reduce Fear

Before reviewing policing research and the recent evolution of police strategies as they relate to fear reduction, we should identify the primary methods by which policing *might* affect fear of crime. Listed below are 12 fear-reduction hypotheses arranged in six clusters.

Traditional Approach

   1. Reducing crime → reduces fear.

Professional Policing

   2. Motorized patrol → reduces fear.
   3. Police visibility → reduces fear.
   4. Rapid response → reduces fear.
   5. Solving crimes → reduces fear.

Crime Prevention

   6. Target hardening → reduces fear.
   7. Street lighting → reduces fear.

Community Policing

   8. Police-citizen contact → reduces fear.
   9. Public confidence in police → reduces fear.
   10. Public information → reduces fear.

Broken Windows

   11. Reducing disorder → reduces fear.

Problem-Oriented Policing

   12. Targeted responses → reduces fear.

The traditional view that reducing crime leads to reduced fear of crime has already been discussed. There is certainly a baseline connection between the amount of crime and the level of fear of crime that should not be discounted. However, it has frequently been observed that rises and falls in crime from year to year are not closely matched by rises and falls in fear of crime—if crime is already falling yet fear of crime is not, something else is needed. Similarly, some individuals and groups with rather high levels of fear of crime already have low levels of crime victimization—if these people are already safe but still fearful, then something else is needed. In these and other scenarios, reducing crime does not seem like a sufficient approach to reducing fear. Something else is needed.

As of the 1970s, the dominant approach to policing was the professional model, with its emphasis on training, policies, supervision, and technology as means of establishing reliable, dependable, lawful, and efficient policing. Strategically, professional policing relied on motorized patrol, rapid response, and follow-up investigation of reported crimes. Much to everyone's surprise, key studies in the 1970s and 1980s determined that these strategies were not very productive. The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment found that varying the level of motorized patrol did not affect crime or public perceptions (Kelling, Pate, Dieckman, and Brown, 1974). The Police Executive Research Forum study of response times in three cities determined that quick response rarely made any difference in catching offenders or satisfying citizens (Spelman and Brown, 1982). The Rand Corporation study of criminal investigation found that 80 percent of reported crimes are never solved (this is still true more than 30 years later) and that detectives make only limited contributions to crime solving (Greenwood and Petersilia, 1975).

The only one of these studies that specifically addressed fear of crime was the preventive patrol experiment. Varying the levels of motorized patrol in Kansas City between zero patrol units per beat to 2–3 patrol units per beat for a year had no impact on the public's fear of crime. Why not? Most important, the public did not notice the varying levels of patrol (this includes the residents of five beats in which preventive patrol was eliminated for an entire year). Also, the level of crime was unaffected. Thus, the citizens of Kansas City were not aware of any changes in how they were policed and did not experience any differences in actual victimization—no surprise, then, that their fear of crime was unchanged.

In the aftermath of these key studies in the 1970s and 1980s a conventional wisdom developed that "nothing worked" in policing. This conventional wisdom, while exaggerated, spurred an era of experimentation and evaluation in policing that helps account for the subsequent development and spread of community policing and problem-oriented policing. With respect to fear reduction, it is important to note (and somewhat surprising) that no major studies have specifically tested whether rapid police response or solving crimes helps reduce fear. Absent much solid scientific evidence, one could conjecture as follows:

- Because most citizens already get a quick police response whenever a serious event occurs, small improvements in response time are unlikely to have much impact on fear of crime. Making police response more rapid is likely to reduce fear of crime only in those jurisdictions where response is currently perceived as slow.

- Because many citizens are (1) unaware of the low clearance rate for reported crimes and (2) often report crimes only for insurance purposes (not expecting a full-scale investigation), small improvements in crime solving are not likely to have much of an impact on fear of crime. Better crime solving is likely to reduce fear of crime only in those jurisdictions where there is currently a widespread perception that "crime pays" and that offenders are rarely held accountable for their misdeeds.

- Similarly, increased police patrol and/or police visibility is likely to reduce fear of crime only in those neighborhoods and jurisdictions where there is currently a widespread perception that police are never available and never around when something bad happens. Moreover, sudden increases in police visibility can actually increase fear of crime if citizens interpret the enhanced police presence as evidence that the area is more dangerous than they realized.

It seems most useful to regard professional policing as a necessary but not sufficient strategy for reducing fear of crime. If the police are not distributed and visible, if they do not respond quickly to serious incidents and investigate them thoroughly, then the public's fear of crime may grow. However, once these baseline professional conditions are established, merely ratcheting them up with more visibility, faster response, and more intensive investigations does not produce added dividends for fear reduction (Lasthuizen et al., 2005). Something else is needed.

Crime Prevention

Within the realm of police strategies, crime prevention tends to describe activities performed by specialists, as opposed to the more general strategy of preventive patrol discussed above. Some crime prevention techniques are aimed at engaging the community—these will be covered in the next section on community policing. Here the focus is on so-called target hardening measures that largely aim to change the physical environment to make it more difficult to commit crimes.

Logically, crime prevention measures are designed to prevent crime—whether they also reduce *fear* of crime is an important question without too many answers (Dalgleish and Myhill, 2004). It is fairly clear that fear of crime motivates citizens to employ such crime prevention measures as locks, alarms, CCTV, dogs, and guns, but whether these measures then make people feel safer is in doubt (Johnson and Merker, 1992; Scheider, Rowell, and Bezdikian, 2003). The limited available evidence is mixed, with some indication that an overzealous reliance on target hardening measures helps create a "fortress mentality" that actually increases one's fear of crime rather than decreasing it (Wunsch, 2006) and that crime prevention publicity campaigns can heighten anxiety (Barthe, 2006). These boomerang effects might be exacerbated by the security industry in its zeal to advertise and sell locks, alarms, and associated services.

One crime prevention measure that does seem to have the capacity to reduce crime (Welsh and Farrington, 2004) as well as fear of crime is improved street lighting. Studies suggest that street lighting can improve women's perceptions of safety at night (Atkins, Husain, and Storey, 1991), and generally that smart use of street lighting can reduce fear of crime and increase pedestrian use of public spaces after dark (Painter, 1996). Inasmuch as "fear of the dark" is probably a fundamental and even primal component of many people's fear of crime, it makes sense that effective lighting might have a reassuring effect. Within the context of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), significant expertise about lighting has been developed related to degree of illumination, pathways of light, and other technical details that can be used to maximize the effectiveness of lighting without going so far as turning nighttime into daytime (Zahm, 2004).

Community Policing

Another approach to crime prevention that became popular in the 1970s was community crime prevention. The underlying premise of community crime prevention is to strengthen communities, not just individual homes, primarily by encouraging neighbors to watch out for each other through Neighborhood Watch, Citizen Patrol, and related programs. There is plenty of evidence that communities that enjoy more neighborliness, social cohesion, social capital, and collective efficacy also experience less fear of crime (Taylor, 2002; Xu, Fiedler, and Flaming, 2005). Unfortunately, the limited evidence that is available suggests that participation in neighborhood watch programs often makes people more sensitive to the risks associated with crime in their communities, and thus more fearful (Mayhew, Elliott, and Dowds, 1989; Wunsch, 2006; Ferguson and Mindel, 2007).

Community crime prevention became more effective, though, when linked with community policing. The development of community policing is a complicated story and one that is still unfolding. For our purposes in this Guide, a few key ingredients are most important, and the first is police officers on foot patrol. This patrolling method had been greatly reduced in most police departments by the end of the 1970s, as the focus of policing had shifted to rapid response, motorized patrol coverage of large areas, and enforcement of traffic laws. However, as described above, research revealed that motorized patrol and rapid response were not really very effective.

In the early 1980s, two studies of foot patrol had a major impact on strategic police thinking. In Newark, New Jersey, an experiment was conducted that involved adding foot patrols in some neighborhoods and eliminating it in others (Police Foundation, 1981). Just as in Kansas City when variations in the level of motorized patrol were tested, there was no impact on crime. Unlike Kansas City, though, neighborhood residents in Newark noticed the fluctuations in levels of foot patrol, and when they had foot patrol, they felt safer. A study in Flint, Michigan, had similar results (Trojanowicz, 1982). This clear-cut positive effect of foot patrol on fear of crime grabbed the attention of police strategists, in part because the earlier studies of motorized patrol and rapid response had such discouraging results.

In the space of a few years, renewed interest in foot patrol expanded into the widespread adoption of community policing. Many police agencies saw that foot patrol would be of limited utility for them (because of low population density, for example) but sought other ways of capturing some of the value of foot patrol. This led to bicycle patrol, police storefronts and mini-stations, beat teams, specialized community policing officers, and a host of other alternatives to routine motorized patrol. Among the essential components of community policing, increased police-citizen contact, more personalized policing, more opportunities for community input, more information sharing between police and the public, police-community partnerships, and systematic multiagency collaboration in support of community safety can all be traced to notions about how foot patrol makes the residents of a neighborhood feel safer (Cordner, 2005).

The available evidence generally supports the view that community policing (not just foot patrol) makes people feel safer. One review found that while increased police presence reduced fear of crime in 62 percent of 50 studies, integrated proactive and community oriented strategies had an even higher likelihood of reducing fear (74 percent) (Zhao, Scheider, and Thurman, 2002). Increased police-public contact, whether through foot patrol, police visits to homes and stores, or more formal meetings and other organizing efforts, seems to reduce fear of crime directly, or else indirectly through the mechanism of enhancing public opinion toward the police (Dalgleish and Myhill, 2004; Pate, Wycoff, Skogan, and Sherman, 1986; Roh and Oliver, 2005; Scheider, Rowell, and Bezdikian, 2003; Williams and Pate, 1987). When community policing efforts become too diffuse and unfocused, however, their effects on fear of crime and other outcomes tend to diminish (Skogan and Frydl, 2004; Wunsch, 2006).

Broken Windows

A very important catalyst for the conceptual leap from foot patrol to community policing was the "Broken Windows" thesis articulated by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling (1982). The question they addressed in an influential *Atlantic Monthly* article was how foot patrol made people feel safer, when the actual amount of crime seemed unaffected. Their conclusion was that it was more than just increased police visibility, "felt presence," and a recognizable beat officer. In addition to those benefits, they observed that foot patrol officers were more likely to address minor crimes, disorder, incivilities, and signs of crime than officers patrolling in cars. Why is that important? Because citizens often identify those very same types of low-level incidents and conditions as signs that their neighborhoods are not safe (Renauer, 2007).

The Broken Windows thesis goes on to postulate a domino effect—that if minor crime and disorder are tolerated, then more serious crime creeps in, residents who can afford to do so will move out, property owners will fail to maintain their homes and businesses as well as they should, and a downward spiral grips the neighborhood. This extended theory, tying together passive policing, disorder, and serious crime in a pattern of urban decay, has not been successfully verified through in-depth empirical studies (Harcourt and Ludwig, 2006). The front end of the thesis, though, is well supported—when disorder and minor crime are left unchecked, neighborhood residents feel unsafe, but when police address these types of low-level conditions, residents feel safer. As Skogan (2006: 258) noted in his extensive evaluation of community policing in Chicago:

> Not surprisingly, Chicagoans are more fearful when they think burglary or assault is a big problem in their neighborhoods. They are also more fearful when they can see around them visible signs that the social order is breaking down: they report more fear in places where public drinking, loitering, and graffiti are common, and they are distressed by the appearance of street drug markets in their communities.

A crucial consideration in regard to the Broken Windows thesis is that it does not have to lead inexorably to strict enforcement, crackdowns, or zero-tolerance policing. Recall that Broken Windows arose from studies of foot patrol beat officers who noticed minor crime and disorder; they engaged in informal as well as formal social control, and by so doing reassured residents that incivility would not go unchecked. None of this necessarily requires extensive reliance on citations or arrests. Rather, it needs an observant and authoritative representative of the community (the foot patrol officer) who recognizes what residents are worried about and cares enough to do something about it, within the bounds of the law and professional standards. Personalized policing on behalf of the community and its norms goes above and beyond mere

professional policing based on bureaucratic and occupational norms. In this sense, Broken Windows is very complementary to community policing, and represents a powerful approach to reassuring the public and making people feel safer.

Problem-Oriented Policing

To this point in our review of police strategies and their impact on fear of crime, we have seen that there is modest to strong evidence in support of several of the hypotheses offered earlier:

- Reducing crime → reduces fear (sometimes).
- Police visibility → reduces fear (sometimes).
- Street lighting → reduces fear.
- Police-citizen contact → reduces fear.
- Public confidence in police → reduces fear.
- Reducing disorder → reduces fear.

What has been largely missing in the preceding discussion, however, was any sense of targeting. This is important because the strongest evidence about police effectiveness in general favors targeting more than anything else, that is, policing focused on specific places, behaviors, and people (Weisburd and Eck, 2004; Skogan and Frydl, 2004; Braga, 2008). Following this logic as it applies to reducing crime and disorder, we might hypothesize that police efforts aimed at reducing fear of crime would be most successful when they are targeted.

In this respect, a problem-oriented approach to fear reduction might have even greater potential than broad-based community policing or Broken Windows. Community policing tends to be expansive and diffuse rather than focused, and it is aimed principally (although not exclusively) at enhancing police-community relations and the public's trust and confidence in the police. Broken Windows is directed toward minor crime, disorder, incivilities, and similar kinds of incidents and conditions. It is quite a testament to both of these strategies that they have been relatively successful at reducing fear of crime, inasmuch as neither is specifically or primarily targeted at fear reduction.

A problem-oriented approach begins with a simple premise—fear of crime is a problem worth addressing. Then, in line with the well-known SARA process (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment), a problem-oriented approach within a jurisdiction would have several basic features (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2007; Goldstein, 1990):

- **Scanning** to determine if fear of crime is a problem, whether it is increasing or decreasing, where it is most acute, and which groups or types of people suffer the most from it.

- **Analysis** to determine more specifically the causes of identified fear-of-crime problems within the jurisdiction, recognizing that these causes might differ between neighborhoods, change in time, and vary among categories of residents.

- **Responses** that are tailored and targeted to the jurisdiction's specific fear-of-crime problems and their causes.

- **Assessment** of responses once they are implemented, to determine if they are working to reduce fear of crime, and if not, why.

Addressing fear of crime in this way is not a theoretical proposition. When the Baltimore County Police Department took a problem-oriented approach to fear reduction in the 1980s, it was measurably more successful than previous efforts using saturation patrol and traditional crime prevention techniques (Cordner, 1986; Taft, 1986). A problem-oriented approach to school crime and disorder in Charlotte, North Carolina, led to decreased fear of crime among students and teachers (Kenney and Watson, 1998). The national evaluation of Reassurance Policing in the United Kingdom, focusing on the particular problem of juvenile nuisances for comparison purposes between sample agencies, concluded that "across the trial sites there appeared to be a consistent pattern. Those sites that showed a significant positive change in public perceptions of juvenile nuisance were the same sites that appeared to have implemented problem solving well" (Tuffin, Morris, and Poole, 2006: 82). Several systematic evaluations of problem-oriented policing targeted at street-level drug markets have documented reductions in fear of crime (Mazerolle, Soole, and Rombouts, 2007).

The remainder of this Guide will outline how a police agency might develop and implement a targeted, problem-oriented approach toward reducing fear of crime. As this introductory section concludes, though, we offer a glimpse ahead along with some assurance that nothing too radical is about to be proposed:

a. It is vitally important to carefully identify and analyze your jurisdiction's fear-of-crime problems before trying to solve them—solving a nonexistent problem or the wrong problem is rarely effective.

b. It is equally important to employ responses that are tailored to your actual fear-of-crime problems, as revealed through scanning and analysis—don't use a hammer when pliers are needed.

c. It is necessary to keep in mind that fear of crime can be rational and it serves the important purpose of encouraging people to take precautions—the objective is not to eliminate fear, but to keep it in reasonable balance with actual risk.

d. Fear might be caused by a high crime rate—in that case, focus on reducing crime.

e. Fear might be caused by failure to hold offenders accountable—in that case, concentrate on investigations and prosecutions.

f. Fear might be caused by slow police response times—in that case, improve response times, especially for emergencies.

g. Fear might be caused by low police visibility—in that case, increase visibility.

Targeting Fear

Baltimore County COPE (Citizen Oriented Police Enforcement)

COPE is community policing to the core. COPE officers survey the community, and work with neighborhood organizations, local businesses, and local government agencies, to understand and solve each community's problem, on the community's own terms. COPE officers recognize that every neighborhood has different problems that stem from different causes—and they tailor their responses accordingly.

The results have been exceptional. COPE teams have substantially reduced fear of crime among residents of the communities they served. Residents are more satisfied with their communities, with the police, and with their local government in general. And, perhaps best of all, the three COPE units' activities have driven serious crime and calls for police service down by 10 percent or more in the neighborhoods they have served.

Source: Behan, Cornelius J. Foreword, in Philip B. Taft, Jr., Fighting Fear: The Baltimore County COPE Project. Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986: 4–5.

h. Fear might be caused by lack of trust and confidence in the police—in that case, improve relations with the community.

i. Fear might be caused by disorder and incivilities—in that case, focus on addressing those kinds of relatively minor incidents and conditions.

j. Most important, fear might be caused by 101 (or more) other things, from one rowdy neighbor to the patrons of an adult bookstore to new immigrants moving into the neighborhood—in every case, it is essential to identify and analyze the problem and then implement a tailor-made solution that is based on the actual problem as revealed through scanning and analysis.

k. Always remember that fear is based on perception, so in some cases it might be enough to improve the public's perception of the crime rate, or their perception of whether criminals get away with their crimes, or their perception of whether the police response is as quick as it should be.

l. Because perception is so important, few police efforts at fear reduction can work unless they are noticed—there is an important marketing and public relations component to reducing fear of crime that needs much more attention than most police agencies have been prepared to give to it.
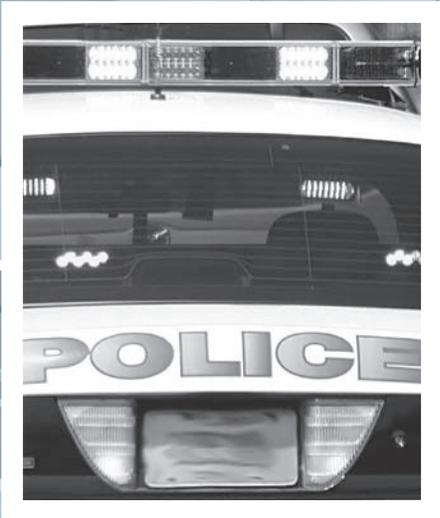
3   Tools for Targeting Fear

Targeting fear of crime has lagged behind targeting of crime itself. In the past 30 years, police agencies have dramatically enhanced their capacity to do crime analysis, crime mapping, and repeat complaint analysis. Today, these kinds of analyses support directed patrol, targeted patrol, hot spots policing, and intelligence-led policing. Instead of spreading officers and other resources uniformly or randomly across the entire jurisdiction, police agencies now target their resources in a much more strategic way to deal with crime and disorder. The evidence is strong that this targeted approach is much more effective at reducing crime and disorder than traditional practices (Skogan and Frydl, 2004; Weisburd and Eck, 2004; Mazerolle, Soole, and Rombouts, 2007).

Unfortunately, police agencies have not developed the same kind of targeted approach to fear reduction. Why not? There may be three principal reasons:

1. Many police agencies have not been focused explicitly on fear reduction at all, for reasons outlined earlier.

2. Most police agencies that have taken an overt interest in fear reduction have assumed that jurisdiction-wide community policing and broken windows policing were the best methods for reducing fear.

3. Nearly all police agencies lack data on fear of crime. This is a big challenge. Police agencies more or less automatically produce data on crime and calls for service, as part of their normal operations. These data are then analyzed to help target crime and disorder. Police agencies do not normally or routinely produce data on fear of crime—it requires extra effort.

These are very important limitations. If a police agency wants to take a targeted approach to fear reduction, it will naturally ask "Where in our town/city/county is fear of crime the highest?" Without data, answering the question will be guesswork. The same would be true for the question "What is the main cause of fear of crime in neighborhood A (and B and C)?" Imagine trying to implement hot spots policing without any crime or calls for service data. That is the typical situation facing departments that want to target fear of crime.

So far in this Guide we have argued that police *should* focus explicitly on fear reduction, and, despite the benefits of jurisdiction-wide community policing and broken windows policing, they *should* take a more targeted approach to be most effective in reducing fear of crime. In this section we will describe some of the techniques that can be used to solve the data problem to make it possible to target fear in a logical and strategic manner.

Community Surveys

When the Baltimore County Police Department began its COPE strategy in the early 1980s, their initial challenge was to identify neighborhoods in which to implement fear-reduction efforts (Cordner, 1988; Higdon and Huber, 1987). At first, they relied heavily on crime statistics, news items, suggestions from political leaders, and their own personal experiences and observations. What they discovered was that these information sources could be useful for scanning to identify neighborhoods where fear of crime *might* be high, but further investigation was required. For example, the rate of burglaries in a neighborhood might be higher than normal, but it had not caused an increase in fear of crime. Or a referral from an elected county official might actually represent the concerns of just one vocal neighborhood resident, not a widespread concern.

The police department eventually settled on a strategy that involved both interviews and community surveys. The first step was to verify that there really was a fear-of-crime problem in the neighborhood. This typically involved speaking to at least a handful of neighborhood leaders and residents. If the preliminary evidence seemed to indicate that there was a problem worth tackling, then a more systematic door-to-door canvass was undertaken. During this canvass, residents were asked to complete a short questionnaire (see Appendix 2), and then they were interviewed about problems in the neighborhood that concerned them (see Appendix 3).

The purpose of the interviews was to *diagnose* the problem(s) in the neighborhood. Officers used a few standardized questions to begin the interviews, but were encouraged to follow up on items that residents mentioned and probe for underlying issues and specific information. Most interviews lasted only a few minutes. Officers had the opportunity to introduce themselves, explain what they were doing in the neighborhood, and secure commitments for ongoing assistance.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to *measure* the fear-of-crime problem. These questionnaires were not employed in every neighborhood in which the COPE officers worked, but they were used quite often. Generally, the questionnaires were administered when the officers first did their neighborhood canvass, and then again a few months later. This before-and-after measurement made it possible to determine whether the level of fear had gone up or down (or stayed the same) once the COPE officers had implemented their fear-reduction measures in the neighborhood. The cumulative results of these surveys administered in multiple neighborhoods were instrumental in showing that the police department's fear-reduction efforts were making an impact (Cordner, 1986).

Today, it is not uncommon for police agencies to conduct periodic community surveys. CALEA, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, has encouraged agencies to conduct surveys once every 1 or 2 years, although it is not a mandatory standard for every accredited agency (CALEA, 2006). Some police agencies conduct their own surveys, while others rely on a local university or private vendor. These surveys tend to focus more on customer satisfaction and public opinion toward the police rather than fear of crime, but quite a few do incorporate some questions about fear. Periodic surveying like this can help an

agency identify trends in time—whether fear of crime is rising or falling in the jurisdiction as a whole (see "Targeting Fear: Perceptions of Safety" on page 28).

However, these types of community surveys are usually of limited value when it comes to diagnosing fear-of-crime problems and targeting fear-reduction efforts. If demographic questions are included (e.g., age, sex, race, employment status), then a community-wide survey can support the scanning function by identifying subsets of the population with the highest levels of fear. In Boston, for example, Hispanic residents were much less likely than White residents to report feeling safe out alone at night in their own neighborhood (Gu, 2004). Further investigation of demographic groups would then be needed to determine why their fear of crime is elevated—interviews, focus groups, or more targeted surveys might be needed to pin down the causes of their fear, which should then provide some good input to fear-reduction efforts.

Targeting Fear
Neighborhood Surveying

Chris Williams, an analyst with the London Metropolitan Police, analyzed 309 household surveys that police distributed in the Abbey Ward section of the city. He was able to analyze and map levels of fear of crime on a street-by-street basis. Not only did overall levels of fear vary considerably between streets and neighborhoods, but so did specific fears of youth antisocial behavior, burglary, and drugs. This information was provided to neighborhood-level officers to use in their community policing activities.
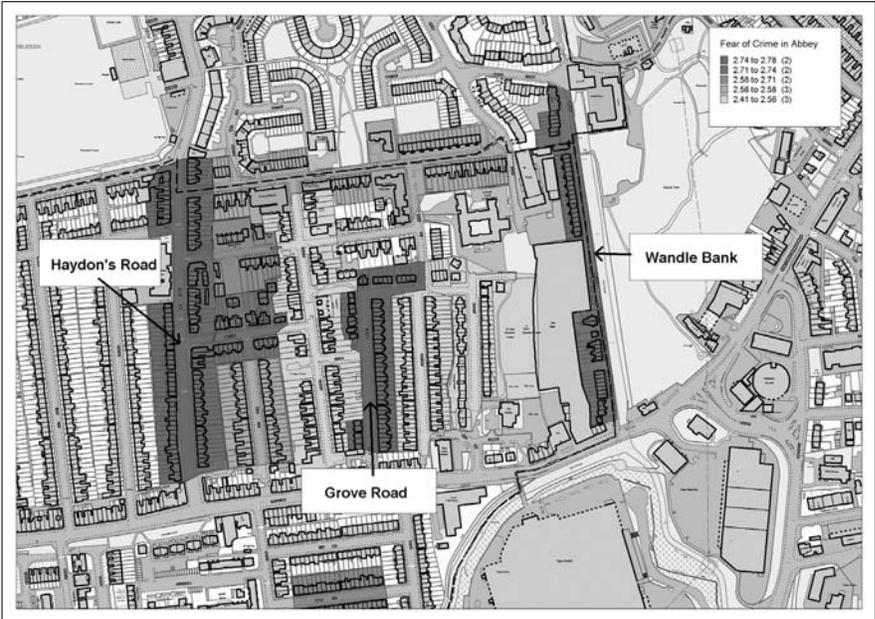
Used with permission of: Williams, C. "Mapping the fear of crime—a micro-approach in Merton, London," in Chainey, S.P., and L. Tompson, (eds.) *Crime Mapping Case Studies: Practice and Research.* London: Wiley, (2008): 106.

Targeting Fear

Perceptions of Safety in Lincoln, Nebraska

In 1994, the Lincoln Police Department launched the Quality Service Audit, a survey of people who have recently interacted with the department. Three categories of people are surveyed by phone: people who have received citations (anything from speeding to felony crimes), victims of crime, and drivers in traffic crashes. Since 1994, the department has completed surveys with 51,241 people.

Interns and police trainees conduct the survey. Aside from the value of the data, the process of listening to citizens describe their experience with the department is very informative and valuable to recruits. It is also good practice for a critical police skill: talking to strangers.

Among the core questions is: *Now I would like to ask how safe and secure you feel in the neighborhood where you live. Do you feel:*

(1) Always unsafe and insecure.

(2) Usually unsafe and insecure.

(3) Safe and secure sometimes.

(4) Safe and secure most of time.

(5) Always safe and secure.

To examine perceptions of safety and security in Lincoln over time, the department chose to focus on drivers in traffic crashes, since being in an auto accident might "bias" responses less than being a recent crime victim or arrestee. Also, drivers involved in traffic crashes are probably a fairly representative cross-section of adults in the city. The department had 14,760 completed QSA surveys with drivers in traffic collisions.

Perception of Neighborhood Safety
(How safe & secure do you feel in the neighborhood where you live?)

Data from Lincoln Police Department QSA surveys of drivers in motor vehicle collisions. n = 14,760

Source: Casady, Tom. *The Chief's Corner: Perceptions of Safety*, 2008. http://lpd304.blogspot.com/2008/03/perceptions-of-safety.html.
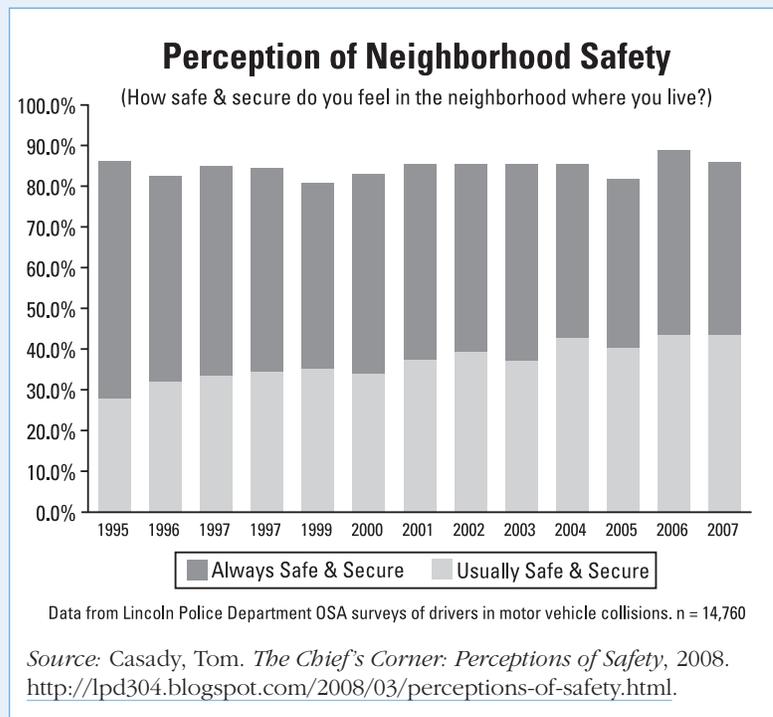
The chief suspected that people were increasingly concerned about safety and security in their own neighborhoods, in part due to the huge growth of 24 hour news that is often dominated by crime. However, the overall perception of safety and security as gauged by the two positive responses, (5) always safe and secure, or (4) safe and secure most of the time, has remained remarkably stable in the 80–90 percent range. There has actually been a slight but steady increase in the percentage of respondents who *always* feel safe and secure in the neighborhood where they live.

Source: Casady, Tom. The Chief's Corner: Perceptions of Safety, 2008. http://lpd304.blogspot.com/2008/03/perceptions-of-safety.html.

Community-wide surveys are rarely able to identify *where* fear of crime is the highest, though. This is because sample sizes need to be very large to obtain a sufficient number of responses from every neighborhood in the city or county to permit neighborhood-level estimates of fear of crime. The expense and trouble of community surveying of this magnitude year-in and year-out is probably beyond the means of most jurisdictions. Some method is needed to get at the neighborhood level, though, because the causes of "feelings of insecurity are often founded in the neighborhood and can be highly specific for each neighborhood…(and) the causes change through time" (Lasthuizen et al., 2005: 386).

To reiterate a point made earlier, it is fairly easy for police agencies to identify the neighborhoods with the most burglaries or drug arrests, because those data are collected routinely in the course of police business. But police agencies do not collect fear-of-crime data routinely, and therefore these data represent extra cost and effort. So what should police agencies do? Most important, they should recognize that they need information on which to base their fear-reduction targeting efforts. Information can come from multiple sources, and surveys are one of the best. Two types of surveys should be utilized.

Jurisdiction-Wide Surveys. A periodic jurisdiction-wide community survey should be administered in such a way that responses can be regarded as representative of the jurisdiction as a whole (see Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1993 and Bynum, 2006 for more detailed advice on how to conduct community surveys). This survey should include several fear-of-crime items related to perceptions, feelings, and behaviors.

- This jurisdiction-wide survey can be used to identify which population groups (elderly people, people living alone, parents of young children, recent immigrants, etc.) are most affected by fear of crime and therefore might need to be targeted.

- This survey can also be used to track overall levels of fear of crime from year to year. This can help determine the priority of fear reduction for the agency as a whole.

- This survey probably will not help to identify neighborhoods with elevated fear of crime, unless very large samples are possible.

Neighborhood-Level Surveys. Agencies should also implement a very short survey form that beat officers and their helpers (community service officers, volunteers, college students) can use when they are canvassing neighborhoods. Beat officers should conduct this kind of canvassing periodically in every neighborhood in the jurisdiction. This survey form should include just a few measures of fear of crime plus some items that ask about the seriousness of particular types of problems in the neighborhood.

- The administration of this neighborhood-level survey need not be as rigorous or scientific as the jurisdiction-wide survey. The number of respondents is likely to be fairly small, the use of officers to administer the surveys may bias the measurement of fear anyway, and the purpose is more pragmatic than scientific.

Targeting Fear

Survey Measures

These sample items can all be used with Likert-style responses, such as 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=unsure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree, or with yes/no responses.

Personal Feelings

- I worry a lot about crime.
- My fear of crime is very high.
- I am more afraid of crime than I ever have been.

Feelings for Others

- I worry a lot about my family's safety.
- My neighbors' fear of crime is high.
- If I had children (or if I do), I would be afraid to let them play alone outside.

Safety in Places

- I am afraid to walk alone at night in my neighborhood.
- There are places within one mile of my home where I would be afraid to walk alone at night.

Behavioral Effects

- I am thinking about moving to another neighborhood because of all the crime around here.
- There are places that I don't go for shopping or entertainment because of my fear of crime.

Overall Crime Levels

- There is more crime in this country than a year ago.
- There is more crime in my neighborhood than a year ago.

Risk of Victimization

- There is a good chance that I will be the victim of a violent crime (for example, rape, assault) this year.
- There is a good chance that I will be the victim of a property crime (for example, theft, break-in) this year.

- Beat officers and supervisors can tell from these smaller-scale surveys which neighborhoods seem to have elevated levels of fear of crime and therefore need to be targeted.

- These surveys can also help diagnose the causes of fear of crime in neighborhoods (based on the items asking about the seriousness of various problems). Beat officers should use the surveys as a starting point for interviewing neighborhood residents more closely about their fears and concerns, as well as the causes of neighborhood problems, as described earlier in the Baltimore County COPE example.

Survey Measures. It is important to word survey items carefully so that respondents understand them. Any leading questions, ambiguous items, or double-barreled questions are useless because one does not know for sure what each response really means. In addition, (1) survey items should be used consistently in time, so that trends can be identified. (2) The same items should be utilized in all neighborhoods, so that comparisons can be made and high-fear neighborhoods identified. Also, (3) it is beneficial to use standard items so that results can be compared to national averages and/or results from other jurisdictions. Another advantage of standard items is that they have been tested and refined, so there is more confidence about what they measure.

While jurisdiction-wide surveys and neighborhood-specific surveys should be as brief as possible, it is important to keep in mind that fear is a multidimensional issue. These dimensions include personal feelings, feelings about others (e.g., children), feelings about safety in different places (e.g., in one's home), behavioral effects (e.g., not going out at night), perceptions of overall crime levels, and perceptions of the likelihood of being a crime victim. Surveys should include items that measure several of these separate dimensions of fear—it may not be possible to measure them all, but it is usually a mistake to take too narrow an approach, and it is especially shortsighted to rely on only one or two items.

Some examples of fear-of-crime survey measures are presented in the accompanying insert "Survey Measures" as well as in Appendix 2. None of these can really claim to be validated in the sense that researchers know exactly what they measure or know for certain that they truly measure fear of crime. This is because fear is so subjective and multidimensional. The best advice is to use several survey items that tap into multiple dimensions. If, for example, one could only ask five fear-related survey questions, these items might provide a satisfactory mix for the purpose of measuring the level of fear of crime (with responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree):

1. Fear of crime is high in my neighborhood.

2. I feel safe outside at night in my neighborhood.

3. I have thought about moving because this neighborhood isn't safe.

4. There is a good chance that I will be the victim of a serious crime this year.

5. It is safe for children to play outside in this neighborhood.

There is considerable debate in the research world about how best to measure fear of crime. Some studies have indicated that standard survey methods might tend to exaggerate fear levels, compared to what people say in meetings, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews (Farrall, Bannister, Ditton, and Gilchrist, 1997). The best advice for police agencies is two-fold. First, when looking at survey results, pay less attention to the absolute responses than to comparisons in time and between different neighborhoods, which reveal whether fear is increasing or decreasing, and where fear is the highest and lowest. Second, always supplement surveys with other methods, such as meetings, interviews, observations, and routine conversations. These other techniques are very helpful for interpreting survey results and developing a more in-depth understanding of the real issues and concerns that people are most worried about.

Community Meetings

Another useful method for identifying and diagnosing fear problems is the community meeting. Residents who attend community meetings are often quite willing to talk about their concerns and fears. They can usually be counted on to identify what they regard as the most serious crime and disorder problems in their neighborhoods, including specific locations and individuals who make them afraid for their own, or their families', safety.

Community meetings have several particular advantages over other methods of obtaining data about fear of crime. One advantage results directly from group discussion—sometimes one resident's observations will spark additional comments and/or consensus about a neighborhood problem, providing a kind of synergy that does not necessarily occur when individual interviews or surveys are used. Alternatively, in group discussion a resident may learn that their observation or perception of a particular problem is inaccurate, causing them to adjust their feelings. This kind of information sharing among neighborhood residents can actually help alleviate fear of crime, if one resident is able to inform another that a particular situation is less threatening than they had perceived.

A related advantage is that open discussion often leads to the identification of problems that might not have been listed on a survey form, or the survey will not have communicated it clearly enough. This is particularly important because community residents typically identify concerns that surprise police, such as graffiti, inadequate lighting, or a poorly placed bus stop. The chances are good that whatever list of problems is included on a survey does not quite fit a community's circumstances, possibly resulting in the survey missing some key situational causes of fear of crime. During an open community meeting it is more likely that these specific and sometimes idiosyncratic types of problems will surface and be given priority.

Targeting Fear

Components of a Model Beat Meeting

Clear Agenda	Was there a printed or verbal agenda for the meeting?	**Resident Feedback**	Did residents report back on previous problem-solving efforts?
Information Shared	Were crime maps or crime reports handed out?	**Officer Feedback**	Did police officers report back on previous problem-solving efforts?
Civilian Leadership	Was there a civilian facilitator for the meeting?	**Problems Identified**	Were problems or issues identified at the meeting?
Volunteers Encouraged	Were volunteers called for or sign-up sheets passed around?	**Solutions Identified**	Were solutions proposed for the problems that were identified?
Action Component	Did residents leave the meeting with a commitment to future action?	**Meeting Effectiveness**	Rating of the overall effectiveness with which the meeting was run.

Source: Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium. *The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS): Year Ten.* Chicago: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2004. www.icjia.state.il.us/public/pdf/ProgEvalSummary/CAPS10.pdf.

Other advantages of community meetings are mainly corollary benefits to the principal objective of identifying fear-of-crime problems. For example, police participation in community meetings helps police show that they want public input and demonstrates their commitment and responsiveness to the community, which contributes to public satisfaction, trust, and ultimately to police legitimacy. To put it another way, community meetings are almost always good for police-community relations, even if they do not produce much useful information about community problems such as fear of crime. Also, community meetings may help residents realize that they are not alone in their concerns, reducing feelings of isolation and even encouraging joint collaboration with the police in subsequent problem-solving activities.

Community meetings have disadvantages too. Frequently, only a few vocal participants actually speak, in which case the perceptions and feelings of the majority of attendees remain unknown. It can be a mistake to assume that a few speakers accurately represent the entire group. Others may be uncertain or impressionable, or they may disagree but be unwilling to speak up in public. For this reason, it is sometimes a good idea to have all the attendees at a community meeting complete a fear-of-crime survey form, preferably toward the end of the meeting after they have had the opportunity to hear the views of others.

Another disadvantage of community meetings is that the people who attend may not be representative of the entire community. Frequently attendance is small, but even with a large turnout those in attendance may be biased toward community activists, older residents, homeowners, or some other subsets of the community. For police who want to target fear of crime, the dilemma that this creates is uncertainty about whether the information gleaned from the meeting really represents the whole community. Just to cite one simple example, attendees at a community meeting might reach consensus that their biggest fear is youth in the park. Most likely, no youth will have attended the meeting. Their input about fear of crime would probably be quite different.

This example brings up an important point. Whether police use surveys or community meetings, they are likely to discover that different segments of the community not only have different levels of fear of crime, but also different sources of fear. Some of the sources of fear may be quite mundane and/or based on inaccurate perceptions. These should not be dismissed, though. These may represent some of the easiest "wins" for a police agency as it begins to tackle fear of crime, requiring little more than some targeted public education to significantly reduce fear of crime experienced by specific segments of the community.

All in all, community meetings are a beneficial component of fear targeting, with more advantages than disadvantages. They are best used in conjunction with other methods, such as surveys. A good combination is to (1) begin with a community meeting to explore the community's concerns, then (2) conduct neighborhood surveys (as well as other methods described below), and then (3) follow up with another community meeting. At the second community meeting, the results of the neighborhood surveys can be presented and interpreted, with the help of those attending the community meeting. This kind of iterative process helps build consensus around the most important causes of fear of crime in the community, and also builds confidence that the police department is proceeding in a logical, professional, and community-based manner.

Key Individuals

If police were studying a particular crime or series of crimes, they would not even think about surveying the entire community and probably would not call a community meeting. They would naturally focus their attention on particular individuals who would most likely have useful information—these people might be called informants, without necessarily implying that they themselves were directly associated with the crimes. They would simply be people in the community with knowledge and information that could help the police understand and/or solve the particular crimes of interest.

Similarly, we might think of "key individuals" (Innes, 2005) who could give the police useful information about problems that cause fear of crime. These key individuals might or might not be particularly fearful themselves, but for some reason they are knowledgeable about

community conditions associated with fear and concern. Examples could be postal workers who regularly traverse the neighborhood, residents who walk their dogs, the local beauty shop operator, a street vendor, the head of a community group, or anyone else who is in possession of substantial "community intelligence" (Innes and Roberts, 2007).

The main significance of these key individuals is that they may provide the most efficient means of identifying sources of fear and concern in the community. If these individuals are particularly observant and/or widely networked, they may be able to identify problematic conditions, saving the police department from the much greater effort involved in holding community meetings and administering community surveys. Of course, the crucial factor is whether these key individuals in effect speak for others as well. If not, the risk for the police is that they might end up targeting nonproblems or minor problems instead of the more serious problems that concern the rest of the community, or worse, they get caught up in the pet peeves of a narrow self-interested complainant.

Pilot tests using key individuals to identify community concerns and sources of fear in England have been promising. Innes (2005: 1207) found clear differences between residents in their level of community knowledge:

> …it became apparent that some respondents provided highly detailed and useful descriptions of local issues, whereas others did not. There was a difference between those who had genuine local knowledge and those who could provide only general attitudinal data. Some people, because of their routine activities, are more frequently present in local public spaces and are more embedded in local social networks where knowledge and gossip is exchanged regularly. These types of individuals are likely to have detailed knowledge about local events. In contrast, those people who do not spend as much time in the neighborhood and who are less well socially connected are less likely to possess detailed local knowledge and thus when questioned will only describe their more generalized attitudes.

In one test (Innes, 2005), interviews with just 10 knowledgeable residents of the Colville Ward in London, England, were used to identify the most serious community problems in various subsections of the Ward (see Figure 5 on page 36). In the figure, darker circles indicate greater agreement about the problems in each subsection of the Ward, and problems in bold print are perceived to be the key problems to which lesser problems are connected. In this test, independent cross-checking with police who worked in the area confirmed the apparent validity of the findings. Further field tests of this methodology are being undertaken, also in England (see Innes and Roberts, 2007 for one example).

Figure 5. Signal Problems in Sections of Colville Ward, London, England.

B3
Graffiti
Youths
Dark Areas
CCTV not working
Dim street lighting
Vandalised signs

A1
Robbery/S
Youths
Drug dealing/P
Drug house
Abuse
Assault

B1
Youths
Drug dealing/P
Auto crime
Grafiti
Public Drinking

C1
Youths
Abuse
Auto crime
Passive begging
Drug House
Intimidation

B2
Prostitution
Pubic drinking
Noise
Speeding
Parking

C2
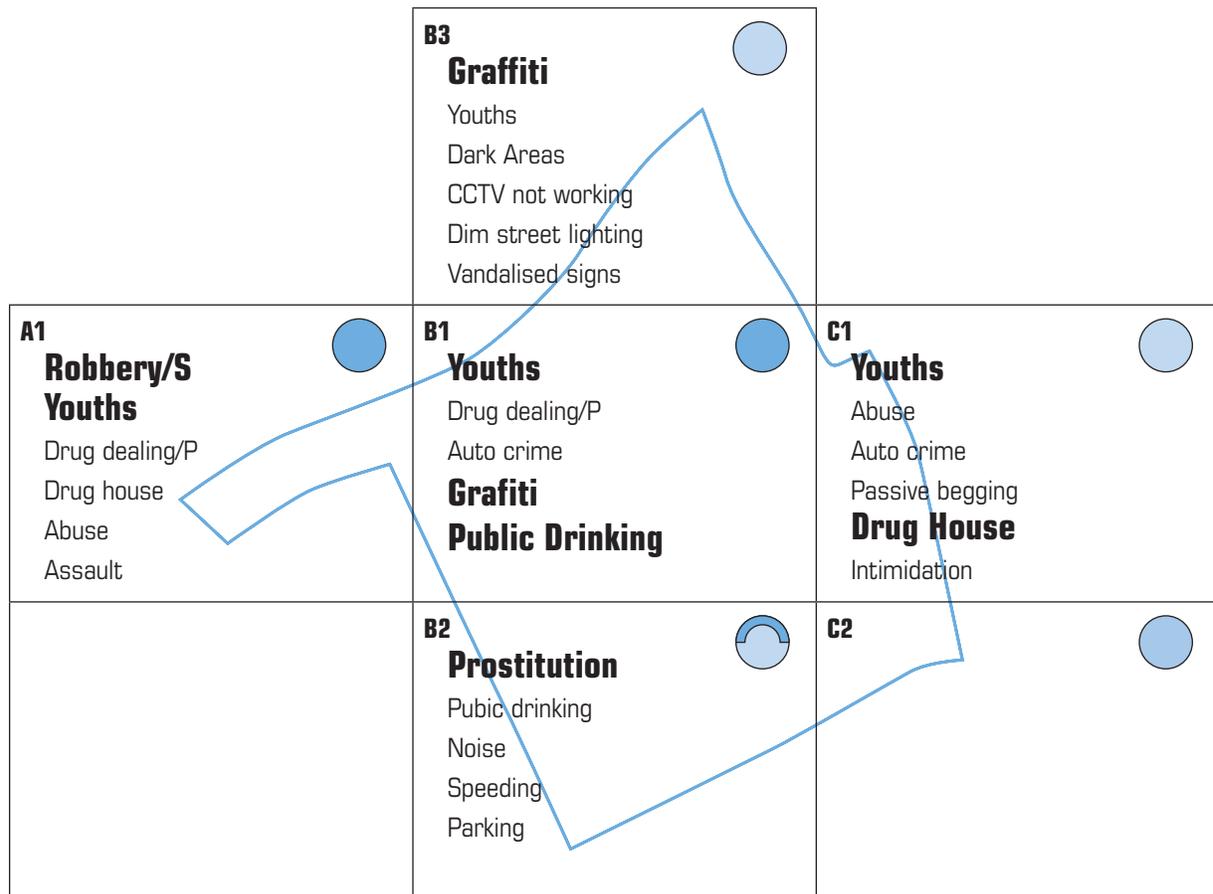
Source: Innes, Martin. "What's Your Problem? Signal Crimes and Citizen-Focused Problem Solving," *Criminology & Public Policy* (4) (2) 2005: 1210.

Confidence in the key individuals method was also established during the initial implementation of the National Reassurance Policing Program in England. Comparison of information obtained from qualitative interviews of a limited number of residents in 16 pilot sites with information obtained from telephone surveys of larger samples of residents in the same sites showed substantial correspondence (Innes, Hayden, Lowe, MacKenzie, Roberts, and Twyman, 2004). Also of importance, "the analysis of the data confirm that around certain issues and problems perceptions of risk are not highly individuated but are collective in nature … there is often widespread agreement between people in an area regarding what the key problems are" (p. 275).

The focus of this "key individuals" approach seems to be more on problems and conditions than on fear of crime per se. The assumption seems to be that if key individuals can identify the most serious "concerns" of community residents, these will coincide with causes of fear. This assumption may hold true, but it does not quite represent the direct focus on fear of

Targeting Fear

Walking Around with Kids

In an attempt to provide safer routes to and from school, the Hackney community in England commissioned research to understand the hazards children faced, as perceived by the children themselves. The research centered around two exercises: (1) a walkabout around the area with children and supervisors, during which the children were asked to note down positive and negative features about their area; and (2) a structured classroom-based discussion in small groups focusing on maps of the area.

The advantage of the exercise is that despite not imposing a 'crime' agenda on the children, locally specific information about their crime concerns was obtained. Starting from a 'quality of life' perspective the children were able to define likes and dislikes, 'scary' and 'dangerous' places. Specific streets and areas were identified as places where crime, bullying, and intimidation were concerns influencing their behavior and impacting their quality of life, but in other parts of the community factors such as traffic safety, unsafe pavements, litter, and lack of play facilities clearly outweighed crime concerns.

Source: Christmann, Kris, Michelle Rogerson, and Derek Walters. Fear of Crime and Insecurity in New Deal for Communities Partnerships, Research Report 14. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Hallam University, 2003: 17

crime that this Guide advocates. If none of the key individuals are youth, for example, or older people, or immigrants, then it is possible that too much reliance on the perceptions of key individuals would deflect police attention from the causes of fear of crime that most seriously affect these subgroups of the community, or other ones. Thus, our recommendation is that key individuals be utilized, but that police officers not rely exclusively on them when attempting to identify and target fear of crime in the community.

Environmental Audits

Environmental audits, sometimes also called environmental visual audits (EVA), are another method that can be used to identify the sources of fear of crime in a community (Home Office, 2003). The basic method, similar to a CPTED audit, is simply to walk around or drive around an area, making observations of conditions that are indicative of crime, disorder, and other threats to safety (real or perceived). In some circumstances police can do this by themselves, for example, if the objective is to identify locations affected by graffiti, open drug sales and usage, or dim lighting. Police can identify these locations by their own observations and then take a problem-solving approach toward improving conditions in the locations.

A more powerful approach, however, is to conduct EVAs with members of the community. Walking around a neighborhood with elderly residents, for example, gives them the opportunity to point out specific locations or conditions that make them afraid for their safety. The same is true for youth, women, and other segments of the community, especially those that tend to be more vulnerable and that report higher levels of fear of crime. Residents are able to point out conditions that they interpret as signs of crime, disorder, and threat—these are not always easily identified by police officers, whose age, training, and role tends to make them feel somewhat invulnerable.

Police should use EVAs in conjunction with other methods for targeting fear of crime. For example, a community survey or community meeting might have identified graffiti and trash as sources of concern and fear in a neighborhood. A logical next step would be to walk the neighborhood with some residents, asking them to point out the locations and conditions that make them feel unsafe, and also asking them to explain why—perhaps they interpret some graffiti as an indication of gang activity, or possibly it is actually the combination of graffiti and loitering youth that makes them worried. The point of the EVA is to get a more precise and detailed identification of those specific locations and conditions that cause fear of crime in the neighborhood.

It is particularly beneficial to use before and after EVAs. If police walked around a neighborhood with residents to identify some causes of fear, then they should re-walk the area with those residents after addressing the problem, to determine whether their actions were successful in improving the conditions that caused the residents to be fearful in the first place. Hopefully this repeat EVA will provide validation that the problem-solving effort succeeded. If not, they will help the officer identify further problems in need of attention. Residents can also help officers detect whether the conditions were displaced to a different location, or if another problem cropped up in place of the original one. Besides these advantages associated with scanning and assessment, the repeat EVA serves another important purpose—it can be a means of demonstrating to neighborhood residents that a problem was fixed, thus reassuring them and hopefully dropping their fear of crime down a notch or two.

Beyond before-and-after EVAs to identify and address specific neighborhood conditions that cause fear of crime, a good practice in community policing is for beat officers to do periodic EVAs with neighborhood residents. This provides an ideal method of ongoing scanning. An officer might do a neighborhood walk with residents every month, taking different routes and/or alternating among particular groups of residents (elderly, youth, women, etc.). This practice would provide the officer with an ongoing range of information about which locations and conditions within the beat cause residents to be worried or fearful.

Templates and checklists can be utilized to assist officers in making and recording systematic observations when conducting environmental audits (see GOEM, 2005: 59–67). For example, officers can look for evidence of social disorder, physical disorder, drug and substance abuse,

and traffic and parking problems. However, these forms should not be used in a way that constrains officers when conducting EVAs with community residents. It is most important that officers carefully determine the locations and conditions that residents identify as the causes of their fear, whether or not those resident perceptions fit into the predetermined categories on a checklist or similar form.

Routine Contacts

A simple but potentially very useful method for gathering more information about fear of crime in a neighborhood or jurisdiction is for officers to inquire about fear during routine public contacts. When officers are speaking to citizens on the street, in shops, on the telephone, or in response to crimes and calls for service, it is not uncommon for them to ask about crime problems or suspicious activity. They could just as easily ask about fear of crime and perceived threats to safety. Responses could then be added to the storehouse of community intelligence that neighborhood officers and others use when scanning for and analyzing community problems.

In a later section on "tools for reducing fear" we will also note that routine contacts can be used as opportunities to provide reassurance. Routine contacts can give officers the chance to provide more accurate information to the public, one citizen at a time. They can also be opportunities for the police to point out safety factors that a citizen may not be aware of, such as a neighbor who is active in Neighborhood Watch or the presence of recreation supervisors in a local park. Since public information and public education are so difficult to accomplish in modern times, with so many competing media and messages, one-on-one opportunities should not be overlooked. Additionally, the recipients of this information may sometimes share it with family members and friends, expanding its impact.

Reassurance Matrix

The reassurance/fear-of-crime matrix, developed in the United Kingdom, is a useful tool for analyzing and categorizing fear of crime, and it helps in the transition from the targeting stage to the stage of working to reduce fear. The matrix (see Figure 6) is a simple 2 X 2 chart based on whether fear of crime is high or low, and whether the actual amount of crime is high or low. The matrix identifies four quadrants, in only one of which would fear reduction normally be considered a high priority.

The lower right-hand quadrant of the matrix is the one most applicable to fear-reduction efforts. This quadrant represents situations in which crime is low, but fear of crime is high. For some reason, fear is out of proportion to the actual amount of crime, and thus, efforts aimed at reducing fear would seem to be warranted.

In two quadrants, labeled "ideal" and "learning zone," fear is low. In the first case, both crime and fear of crime are low. In this ideal situation, special efforts to reduce fear are probably not needed, and in fact could boomerang if handled clumsily. In the "learning zone" crime is high, but fear is low for some reason. Obviously, fear-reduction efforts would not make sense—rather, public education to inform people about the risks they face might be

Figure 6. The Reassurance/Fear-of-Crime Matrix.

Source: Fear of Crime Team. "Fear of Crime Team." London: Home Office, no date. www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/toolkits/foc_presentation.ppt.

suggested, along with efforts to reduce the level of actual crime. It is true that public education efforts could have the effect of raising fear of crime, but since crime is high, it is important that people be aware of the situation.

In the fourth quadrant, both crime and fear of crime are high. In these kinds of situations, high levels of fear of crime are rational, and police should be cautious about trying to reduce them. Instead, police might be well advised to concentrate on trying to reduce the level of crime, to reduce the tangible risks and harms that are endangering people. If crime reduction is successful, then fear reduction might become a logical follow-up strategy.

One way to apply the matrix is to place neighborhoods in the quadrants that best describe their situations. This can be done if data on fear of crime (and crime) have been collected at the neighborhood level. An example from San Francisco (Harrington, 2003) is presented in Figure 7. The unit of analysis in this case is police districts, which are substantially larger than neighborhoods. Using this matrix, police executives at the headquarters level could consider how best to target fear reduction, crime reduction, and public education initiatives around the city. The matrix would provide a logical and empirical basis for planning, decision-making, and resource allocation that executives could easily explain to political leaders, the media, and the community.

Similar data are collected periodically using community surveys in Boston (Gu, 2004). The 2003 survey found that fear levels substantially exceeded crime levels in two districts, East Boston and Dorchester. The opposite situation was found in the Downtown/Chinatown District, where fear of crime was lower than expected based on reported crime data. Again, these anomalies could be used by department commanders to target fear reduction, crime reduction, and public education strategies on a district by district basis.

Figure 7. Crime and Fear of Crime in San Francisco Districts.

	Low Fear	**High Fear**
Low Crime	Learning Zone District 2	Crime Reduction Districts 6 and 9
High Crime	Ideal Districts 1, 3, 4	Fear Reduction Districts 10 and 11

Source: Harrington, Ed. *Results of the 2003 City Survey.* San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco, Controller's Office, Mimeo, 2003.

District commanders in San Francisco and Boston could also use the survey data and reassurance matrix, but it is likely that *within* districts, different neighborhoods might really belong in different quadrants. Even if community surveys were not available at the neighborhood level to clarify this situation, district commanders might want to have beat officers hold community meetings, talk to key individuals, and/or conduct environmental audits to produce more localized fear-of-crime information that could be combined with neighborhood-level crime data. Then, individual neighborhoods could be placed within the matrix to guide activities undertaken at both the district and neighborhood level.

Geographic areas such as districts and neighborhoods are not the only entities that could be categorized using the reassurance/fear-of-crime matrix. Another possibility is demographic groups. Typically, for example, young adults would fall in the learning zone—more likely than most to be crime victims, but not as fearful as they probably should be, or at least rather unwilling to adopt more cautious behaviors. Older residents often fit into the reassurance quadrant, as their rate of victimization is typically low, but they experience more fear of crime than many other groups. Using the matrix with these kinds of demographic groups may help focus different types of crime reduction, fear reduction, and public education strategies on subsets of the population that would most benefit from them. Also, if this approach is used in a particular jurisdiction, it might help reveal any local anomalies, such as high victimization rates among the elderly or high fear of crime among adult males. Such anomalies would then merit closer analysis and targeted responses, since they run counter to typical patterns.

This discussion about how to use the reassurance matrix brings up the question of how to decide when to employ fear-reduction efforts—that is, by what yardstick does one determine that fear as measured is too high, or too far out of alignment with real risks, thus necessitating a concerted response? Unfortunately, no established metrics or benchmarks are currently available. If we were discussing crime, a police chief could reliably determine that robberies in her city were 15 percent higher than the national average, probably justifying a targeted effort to bring the numbers down. National averages for fear of crime are not routinely calculated, though. Within a city, a precinct captain might determine that his district's fear of crime is 10 percent higher than the citywide average—but whether that is enough of a difference to be substantively important would be a judgment call. Until police agencies have a lot more experience with measuring and analyzing fear of crime, decisions about what the numbers mean, and when an agency should initiate a targeted response versus do nothing, will require judgment and balancing of multiple objectives and priorities. Of course, this is not limited to fear of crime, but rather is a familiar situation for police executives, since policing does not yet enjoy clear-cut and reliable metrics or benchmarks related to many aspects of its bottom line.

A related question is, who decides? This would seem to be an ideal community policing opportunity. If police meet with the community and are able to show them that their fear of crime is out of proportion to their real risks, then the next step is for the police and the community to work together to figure out why fear is high, and then address it. Needless to

say, police have to be very articulate when they are explaining to community members that they should not be so fearful—that is easy for the police to say, with their badges and guns, especially if they live somewhere else. If it is the starting point for discussion and problem solving, though, it might be the basis for fear reduction through community action and public education. Also, in any particular community, it makes sense that residents would help police in deciding how much priority to place on fear reduction in relation to other community needs, such as crime reduction or improving public trust and confidence in the police.

In this chapter we have described several techniques that can be used to identify and analyze fear-of-crime problems. In the next chapter, our attention turns to the response stage—the most promising methods and approaches for reducing the fear of crime.
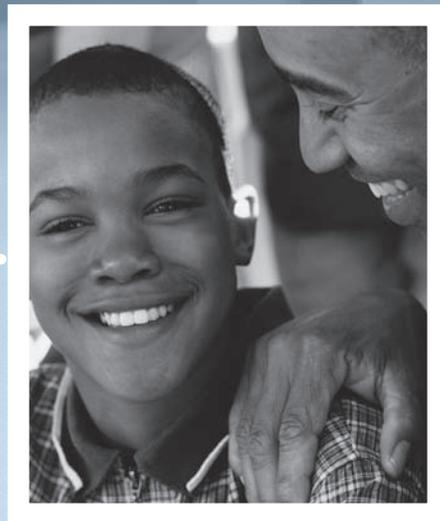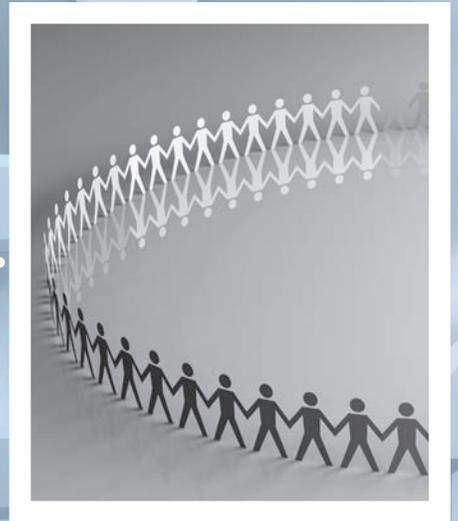
4 Tools for Reducing Fear

As a reminder, several important lessons have been learned during the past 30–40 years about what does <u>not</u> work very effectively in policing:

- Unfocused routine motorized patrol does not prevent crime or make the public feel much safer.

- Rapid response to reported crimes rarely results in response-related arrests and does not assure public satisfaction.

- Follow-up investigations of most reported crimes are cursory and unsuccessful.

- Traditional public education about crime prevention does not necessarily make people feel safer.

- One-size-fits-all solutions are rarely effective.

By contrast, there is substantial evidence that targeted, community oriented, and problem-oriented policing methods are more effective in reducing crime, controlling disorder, and making people feel safer. In this section of the Guide, we describe those particular techniques and strategies that seem most promising for reducing fear of crime and making people feel safer.

Personalized Policing

One of the basic elements of community policing is decentralization, especially geographic decentralization. Police agencies try to assign officers more permanently to neighborhoods and beats, establish geographic accountability for supervisors and commanders, and generally increase the degree of familiarity between residents and their police. One desired outcome of these measures is more personalized policing—officers who know the people who live in their beats and feel a degree of responsibility for protecting them, residents who recognize their regular beat officers, and residents who can identify the sergeant, lieutenant, or captain who oversees policing in their neighborhood. Ideally, police-citizen interactions become more personal and less bureaucratic, increasing the public's sense that the police care about them and can be counted on to protect the community.

Reducing Fear

Citizen Contact

A major program in the mid-1980s tested several fear-reduction programs in Houston and Newark. One of the program elements that was most successful was Citizen Contact Patrol in Houston. Officers assigned to the target neighborhood, in addition to handling calls, were instructed to make proactive contacts at residences and businesses, leave business cards, record problems mentioned by citizens, and follow up on those problems. During a 9-month period, the officers made approximately 500 contacts.

Cross-sectional survey results indicated that Citizen Contact Patrol reduced fear of personal victimization and perceived levels of social disorder, personal crime, and property crime in the area.

Source: Pate, Antony M., Mary Ann Wycoff, Wesley G. Skogan, and Lawrence W. Sherman. *Reducing Fear of Crime in Houston and Newark: A Summary Report.* Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, 1986.

Personalized policing is believed to be part of the reason why foot patrol makes people feel safer. Officers on foot seem more approachable, are more likely to have casual interactions with citizens, and are more individually identifiable than police officers in cars. As one citizen explains in the National Institute of Justice (1984) "Foot Patrol" video in the Crime File series, foot patrol officers create a "felt presence." Another observation on the same video is that, from the public's perspective, when they see foot patrol officers, they assume that the officers are there for them (for the neighborhood), not just on their way somewhere else, which is what they often assume when they see a passing patrol car.

To be effective in reducing fear of crime, personalized policing still requires policing. That is, if neighborhood residents get to know their beat officer, but that officer does not make any effort to address crime and disorder in the neighborhood, does not follow up on citizen complaints, does not engage in any reassurance efforts, and does not solve neighborhood problems, it is unlikely that the residents will feel safer. It seems most likely that personalized policing has a small measure of reassurance value in its own right, but most of its success is secondary, that is, officers come to understand the concerns of citizens, and then if they address those concerns, the public feels safer. In other words, personalized policing is an important ingredient in the recipe for fear reduction, but it is not the whole recipe.

Community Engagement

Most studies of community policing have found that residents like community policing and they feel safer when it is implemented where they live and work (Skogan, 1994; Kerley and Benson, 2000). While these impacts of community policing are typically found, it is more difficult to tease out which particular elements of community policing deserve the credit—is it foot patrol, personalized policing, problem solving, community engagement, or something else (Cordner, 2005)?

There is some evidence to support the view that community engagement contributes to reductions in fear of crime, possibly by decreasing social distance between neighborhood residents, increasing social cohesion, increasing perceived informal social control, and increasing public confidence in the police (Kerley and Benson, 2000). Certainly it is part of the underlying philosophy of community policing that the public should play a bigger role in creating and sustaining community safety, and that the police should encourage and support such public participation. It is hoped that the mere act of "doing something" will empower people and make them feel less vulnerable. Beyond that, if neighbors get to know one another they are less likely to fear each other as strangers, and more likely to develop a sense of community support and mutual cooperation.

Myhill (2006: 8) defined community engagement broadly as "the process of enabling the participation of citizens and communities in policing at their chosen level, ranging from providing information and reassurance, to empowering them to identify and implement solutions to local problems and influence strategic priorities and decisions." He also developed a typology of community engagement that is presented in Figure 8. Implicit in the philosophy and theory of community policing is that the highest levels of community engagement (i.e., empowerment/coproduction and partnership/cooperation) are most desirable, and would have the greatest impact on public confidence and feelings of safety. Based on the studies currently available, though, it is not possible to say with confidence whether such a linear relationship really holds.

Clearly, community engagement can take many forms. In one small project in Jefferson County, Kentucky, two officers discovered a resident who had set up an after-school tutoring program in a storefront office using her own personal funds (Cordner, 1993a). Until the officers were assigned to work full-time in the neighborhood, neither they nor other members of the police department even knew of her program. The two officers joined forces with her, serving as tutors and also helping her raise funds to stay in operation. This was only one small part of the officers' community policing activities in the neighborhood, but the overall evaluation showed statistically significant reductions in fear of crime on five of seven measures. Also, the proportion of residents agreeing that "I have seriously thought about moving away from this neighborhood because of its crime and drug problems" dropped from 38 percent to 28 percent in one year.

Figure 8. A Typology of Community Engagement for Policing.

	Promise to citizens	Possible participation
Empowerment/ Coproduction	You can take the final decision unless there is a clear justification preventing this.	Public-initiated, police-supported, problem-solving initiatives.
Partnership/ Cooperation	We will use your help, advice, and expertise to the maximum possible extent.	Local action meetings, crime audits, Special Constabulary, volunteering.
Strategic Consultation	We will keep you informed, adopt your priorities if possible, and provide feedback.	A range of consultation methods tailored to needs of citizens and communities.
Monitoring/ Accountability	We will be transparent and accountable for the service we provide.	Independent Advisory Groups; citizen monitoring of police complaints process.
Information/ Reassurance	We will make readily available balanced, objective information at a local level.	A range of information channels tailored to needs of citizens and communities.

Source: Myhill, Andy. Community Engagement in Policing: Lessons From the Literature. London: Home Office, 2006: 7. www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/policing18.htm.

When several neighborhood residents decide to work together to reduce crime and disorder problems, they often organize a Neighborhood Watch program, frequently with police support. The most recent evidence suggests that Neighborhood Watch is associated with modest reductions in crime (Holloway, Bennett, and Farrington, 2008), but there is also some evidence that it can increase fear of crime by making residents more sensitive to risks and threats in the neighborhood (Wunsch, 2006). This is an important lesson, as it points out that well-meaning efforts can sometimes have unintended consequences.

The explanation for this reaction to Neighborhood Watch might be found in the Reassurance Matrix. Police may want to avoid encouraging Neighborhood Watch for communities in the Ideal and Fear Reduction quadrants where crime is low—Neighborhood Watch could cause fear to increase, which would tend to be counterproductive, since crime risks are low. For communities in the Learning Zone, though (high crime, low fear), Neighborhood Watch would be a particularly good response, since it might simultaneously help reduce crime and make residents more cautious. It also makes sense in the Crime Reduction quadrant, where its crime-reduction potential would be beneficial.

This discussion reinforces the principle mentioned earlier that "one size does not fit all." Neighborhood Watch makes sense in some situations, but not all. The same can be said for other forms of community engagement. Volunteering in youth programs, mentoring, forming community groups, conducting neighborhood clean-ups, holding marches, scheduling regular beat meetings, establishing citizen patrols—any of these engagement measures might help citizens feel safer under the right circumstances, but none of them is likely to have a reassurance effect in every situation. Logically, measures that are employed in situations where fear of crime is elevated, and that are tailored to the particular needs of each neighborhood, are most likely to help reduce fear of crime. Measures employed in low-fear neighborhoods are likely to boomerang, and measures that do not fit the dynamics and context of a particular situation are unlikely to be very successful.

One important aspect of community engagement is victim assistance and advocacy. Crime victims are members of the community prone to elevated levels of fear; this may be especially true for repeat victims. When police give crime victims sincere and thorough attention, it can have a reassuring effect for the victim as well as a preventive effect on their future victimization (Weisel, 2005). Since police cannot provide a protective blanket for every potential crime victim, one approach advocated by problem-oriented policing is to seek the cooperation and assistance of "guardians" who have some degree of responsibility for those who are repeat victims. Guardians can include parents of children, adult children of elderly parents, spouses, teachers, coaches, supervisors, employers, and others with official or unofficial roles to play in protecting vulnerable individuals.

Working with victims can also have a broader impact. When police pay attention to victims, they demonstrate their care and concern for the community, and when they take extra steps to assist and protect victims, they demonstrate that justice is served (see "Working with a Victim" on page 50). This can have a reassuring effect on others who might fear becoming a victim in the future, or have such fear for their families and friends. It should be noted, though, that this wider effect depends on communication. If all that residents of a neighborhood know is that one of their neighbors was a victim, but they are unaware of the services subsequently provided to that person, then they are most likely to experience increased fear, without any concomitant dose of reassurance. Effective communication of fear-reduction measures is extremely important, as discussed in later sections of this Guide.

Reducing Fear

Working with a Victim

In one Baltimore County case, a 69-year-old woman was seriously beaten during a burglary of her home. When the COPE unit was alerted that the neighborhood was concerned, they learned that the woman had previously been victimized by the same teenager. Although she could identify the suspect, she was refusing to press charges, and she had moved to a different community 40 miles away.

> COPE officers organized a community meeting and quickly discovered the attack was only the tip of the iceberg. Residents had been suffering a rash of burglaries and acts of vandalism, and they blamed teenagers from a nearby apartment complex who had found their way... through a hole in the fence that separated the two communities. Residents claimed they reported these facts to the local precinct but had received no help (p.16).

Officers worked on the obvious environmental issues as well as conflict resolution between the two communities. But they also worked directly with the elderly victim, visiting her in her new home and promising to aid her if she chose to prosecute her attacker. The officers arranged for neighborhood supporters to accompany her to court, even providing vans for transportation.

In the end, there was no prosecution. But fear of crime decreased in the neighborhood, residents reported feeling safer, and residents' satisfaction with the police improved.

Source: Taft, Philip B., Jr. *Fighting Fear: The Baltimore County COPE Project.* Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986.

Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is now a well established strategy for reducing crime. It makes sense that environmental factors might also help reduce fear of crime. As noted earlier, for example, research has shown that improved lighting can make people feel safer in some situations. Effective placement of walkways, parking lots, bus stops, public restrooms, and ATM machines might cause people to perceive them as less dangerous to use.

There are several mechanisms by which environmental changes might encourage reduced fear of crime. Enhanced lighting directly addresses darkness, which is often associated with danger and fear. Environmental design that increases natural or official surveillance (by putting ATMs along busy sidewalks or inside stores, for example) makes people feel less vulnerable to attack. In a more indirect way, providing sufficient trash bins in public spaces might reduce fear— less trash is thrown on the ground, therefore people perceive the area as cleaner and are less likely to assume that crime and disorder are common. Similarly, if graffiti-resistant surfaces are successfully employed, the absence of graffiti may cause people to regard the area as safer.

Reducing Fear

Moving a Bus Stop

The physical environment can be changed in many ways. In one instance in Baltimore County, tensions flared between two groups of students, one white and one black, with threats that violence would follow. Students and their parents in both groups expressed fear that serious harm would result.

COPE officers discovered that the conflict was centered around the school bus stops used by the two groups of students. The bus stops were close together. The officers were able to persuade the county's Board of Education to move one of the bus stops to a different location, and the trouble was defused.

Source: Taft, Philip B., Jr. *Fighting Fear: The Baltimore County COPE Project.* Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986.

An increasingly popular modern technique that fits in the category of environmental design is electronic surveillance, particularly CCTV and other types of surveillance cameras. These camera systems are generally promoted for their value in preventing crime and/or capturing pictures to aid in solving crimes. However, there is some evidence that cameras can also reduce fear of crime, at least among those residents or visitors who recognize that CCTV is in operation in the area (Ratcliffe, 2006). It has further been suggested that awareness about the use of CCTV might encourage more people to frequent an area, providing an additional measure of reassurance (strength in numbers) and even an increase in collective efficacy (Welsh and Farrington, 2004).

A key consideration when employing environmental design to reduce fear of crime is to pay close attention to the actual causes of fear in particular places. These can be determined from surveys, community meetings, key individuals, environmental audits, and routine contacts, as described earlier in this Guide. Enhanced lighting could be an excellent response if darkness happens to be associated with fear of crime in a particular spot, but it is not a silver bullet. Installing CCTV in an area might reduce fear if the prevailing view is that the area is unsupervised, but it is no panacea for fear reduction, especially if offenders are not deterred by the cameras and that fact becomes widely known. Putting an ATM inside a convenience store may not reduce fear of crime if potential ATM customers know (or believe) that the store is regularly robbed and store employees are unable to manage their clientele. In each and every case, it makes sense to carefully identify the signs and signals of crime as perceived by the public, and then look for targeted environmental changes that directly address the public's perceptions. This kind of approach to fear reduction through environmental design is much more likely to be effective than any one-size-fits-all approach.

Problem Solving

Problem solving, or problem-oriented policing (POP), is not really a specific method for reducing fear of crime, but rather an overall strategy based on a set of principles. POP relies on careful problem identification and analysis as precursors to actual problem solving (Goldstein, 1990). Solutions (responses) should be tailored to the nature and causes of the problem, as revealed through analysis. The search for responses should be wide-ranging and not limited to traditional past practices. Analysis and response should pay close attention to any locations where the problem is concentrated, and to any people who disproportionately cause the problem or suffer from it. After responses are implemented, careful assessment should be undertaken to determine whether the problem has been reduced or merely displaced.

The POP approach is ideal for addressing fear of crime. It is well known that fear is more pronounced in some geographic areas, and among some groups of people, than others. Methods are available to measure fear of crime to uncover trends and pinpoint locations and groups most affected. It has been demonstrated that personalized policing, community policing, community engagement, environmental design, and other techniques can be effective in making the public feel safer. Combined in one package, these are the ingredients for a problem-solving approach to the problem of fear of crime.

Perhaps the greatest challenge associated with POP is avoiding slipping into routine. It is easier to implement a comfortable tried-and-true solution than to design a brand-new tailor-made one. Similarly, it is tempting to skip the analysis stage of the POP process and just assume that one knows what is causing a particular problem. However, as noted in the accompanying "Problem Solving" vignette from Baltimore County (and in other vignettes throughout this guide), the causes of fear in any situation can be very specific and idiosyncratic. Moreover, once a fear-of-crime problem is carefully identified and analyzed, customized responses often become fairly obvious. In the Baltimore County case, instead of focusing on cleaning up a drug problem in a park (the apparent nature of the problem when it first came to attention), analysis led officers to focus on panhandlers and traffic safety at a crosswalk. In doing so, they addressed the real causes of concern for a large group of elderly residents, resulting in increased feelings of safety, reduced fear of crime, and behavioral changes that benefitted the elderly residents as well as nearby businesses.

This Baltimore County vignette illustrates several other important points about using POP to reduce fear of crime:

- The focus was on fear of crime in a particular location, not everywhere in the jurisdiction or even throughout an entire police district. This fear problem was quite localized.

- The focus was also on a subset of residents. In this case, elderly residents were most affected by the problem and had some specific concerns that may not have been shared by other groups of residents.

Reducing Fear

Problem Solving

COPE officers in Baltimore County became aware that the residents of a senior citizen high rise had largely stopped shopping in a nearby commercial strip, instead taking buses to shop at a more distant mall. The officers' first assumption was that the cause was a group of "paint huffers" who were using an adjacent park to abuse inhalants, mainly spray paint in aerosol cans. The officers were already familiar with this developing problem and had begun targeting it in various ways.

When officers surveyed and interviewed the elderly residents of the high rise, however, it turned out that they were largely unaware of the problem in the park. Their real concerns were mainly two-fold: (1) they feared crossing the busy street to get to the close-by shopping area; and (2) they feared the aggressive panhandlers who had become common on the sidewalks in the shopping area (some of whom were also paint huffers, but not most).

Officers were able to address these two problems once they had been identified. They worked with traffic engineers to lengthen the time provided by walk lights and improve the visibility of cross walks. To address the panhandling problem, they took several steps, including getting a more workable county ordinance passed so that aggressive panhandlers could be arrested, implementing a publicity campaign aimed at discouraging shoppers from giving money to the panhandlers, and convincing local merchants not to sell alcoholic beverages (or spray paint) to anyone already intoxicated.

These measures were largely successful at reducing the causes of fear in the shopping area, and many of the senior high rise residents resumed shopping there.

Sources: Cordner, Gary. "A Problem-Oriented Approach to Community-Oriented Policing" in *Community Policing: Rhetoric or Reality*. New York: Praeger, 1988: 135–152. Jack Greene and Stephen Mastrofski, eds.; and Taft, Philip B., Jr. *Fighting Fear: The Baltimore County COPE Project*. Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986.

- The police eventually focused on a target group of individuals (aggressive panhandlers) who were causing part of the problem. To get these people to change their behavior, officers used enforcement (after getting the county ordinance revised), but also engaged place managers (businesses) and shoppers in a campaign designed to make the area less profitable for the panhandlers.

- As in so many other cases, the causes of fear turned out to be relatively mundane conditions and minor disorder, not serious crimes.

- Officers addressed the traffic safety issue by working with transportation officials to lengthen the "walk light" time period in a crosswalk. This is an example of using environmental design to address a fear problem, albeit fear of injury more than fear of crime.

- After implementing their responses, officers checked back with their target group (the elderly residents) to determine whether fears had been reduced.

Web Resources

Center for Problem-Oriented Policing

www.popcenter.org

Fear of Crime Toolkit, Home Office, UK

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/toolkits/fc00.htm

Neighborhood Policing, National Policing Improvement Agency, UK

www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, USDOJ

www.cops.usdoj.gov

Safer Hastings Partnership, UK

www.saferhastings.co.uk

Nearly all of the POP tools and concepts developed in the past 20–30 years can be adapted to the problem of fear of crime. Advice is available from the COPS Office and the Center for Problem Oriented Policing (see www.popcenter.org) on researching problems (Clarke and Schultze, 2005), analyzing problems (Clarke and Eck, 2005), implementing responses (Brown and Scott, 2007), assessing responses (Eck, 2002), and a host of other POP-related topics.

One common scenario that might be encountered when taking a POP approach to fear of crime is that fear seems to be caused by, or is connected to, another problem. For example, residents of a neighborhood might identify rowdy kids as their biggest concern and the reason why they choose not to utilize a nearby park or shopping area. Analysis of that particular problem might reveal that it is largely based on misperceptions, suggesting one avenue for response, or analysis might confirm a real problem of disorderly youth. In the latter case, the POP Guide on "Disorderly Youth in Public Places" (Scott, 2001) might be very helpful in analyzing the youth problem and developing responses to address it. The hope and expectation would be that reducing the disorderly youth problem would in turn lead to reductions in fear of crime in the neighborhood. In similar manner, other POP Guides focused on street prostitution, bullying in schools, domestic violence, and related problems might prove very useful whenever those kinds of problems are found to be causing fear of crime in a community.

Taking a POP approach to reducing fear of crime in any jurisdiction should start by asking, and then trying to answer, some basic questions:

- Overall, is fear of crime increasing or decreasing?
- In which locations and neighborhoods is fear of crime the highest?

- Among which groups of people is fear of crime the highest?

- In which places, and among which groups, is fear of crime most out of alignment with actual crime risk and victimization?

- Place by place, and group by group, what are the leading causes of fear?

Any police agency that can answer these questions with a reasonable degree of confidence is well on its way to taking a smart, scientific, and problem-oriented approach to reducing fear of crime in its jurisdiction. Following through on this kind of information with tailor-made responses, especially ones that incorporate the reassurance matrix, personalized policing, community policing, community engagement, and environmental design, is likely to be successful in reducing unnecessary and exaggerated fears in the community.

Direct Feedback

Because of the particular nature of fear of crime, the recipe for success requires one or two additional ingredients beyond those discussed above. A person's fear of crime is based on his or her perceptions. If the police address the causes of fear of crime and are able to curtail them, but nobody notices, fear of crime is not likely to be reduced. If the police solve the problem of rowdy kids in the park, for example, but residents do not know it, the residents will likely remain fearful and continue to avoid the park. Alternatively, if the police determine that the kids represent no threat, but do not convey that knowledge to the fearful residents, the fear-of-crime problem will most likely continue unabated. If the police in the Baltimore County case had eliminated aggressive panhandling and made the crosswalk safer, but elderly residents were not aware of the changes, those residents would probably have continued taking the bus to the distant mall instead of frequenting the nearby shopping district.

This aspect of fear of crime makes it qualitatively different from many other police problems. If a neighborhood has a burglary problem, and the police either catch the burglar or implement some targeted crime prevention measures, the neighborhood becomes safer from burglary whether residents know it or not. When police address the problem of assaults in and around bars, perhaps by getting liquor establishments to eliminate glass bottles, prohibiting drinking contests, and improving outside lighting, bar patrons likely become safer, regardless of whether they are aware of the actions taken. But, if the problem is *fear* of burglary, or *fear* of assault, the problem is not going to be reduced unless the people who experience those fears are aware that their risks have been reduced. Of course, exaggerated fears may persist even after one's risks have been reduced—awareness is best regarded as a necessary, but not always sufficient, precondition for fear reduction.

Reducing Fear

Providing Accurate Information

The Houston/Newark study in the 1980s found that neighborhood newsletters produced by the police did not have the desired effect of reducing fear of crime, in part because most residents either never received the newsletters or did not read them carefully. This provides an important lesson—to have an impact, communication needs to be targeted and strategic.

A more promising example comes from the Baltimore County COPE program. A dead body was discovered in one neighborhood and residents quickly became very concerned. However, the police investigation revealed that the person had actually been murdered somewhere else. The deceased person had no connection to the neighborhood, and apparently the body had been dumped there randomly.

COPE officers immediately went door-to-door in the neighborhood to convey this information, and it seemed to allay most fears. This quick, in-person approach was probably much more effective than if the police had just issued a press release, or put the information in the following month's newsletter.

Sources: Pate, Antony M., Mary Ann Wycoff, Wesley G. Skogan, and Lawrence W. Sherman. *Reducing Fear of Crime in Houston and Newark: A Summary Report.* Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, 1986; Taft, Philip B., Jr. *Fighting Fear: The Baltimore County COPE Project.* Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986.

Direct feedback and targeted communication in support of fear reduction can be accomplished in several different ways. If information about fear-inducing conditions was originally provided by key individuals or a small group of citizens, then they should be directly notified once the conditions have been addressed. If they represent others, as a community leader or block watch captain might, then they should also be asked to forward the information through their networks. If an environmental visual audit was used to identify locations and conditions that make people feel unsafe, then a follow-up audit should be conducted so that the same citizens can observe the improved conditions. On the other hand, if fear-related problems were identified through a broad-scale neighborhood survey, it might be necessary to employ a less personal feedback method, such as distributing a newsletter. As noted in "Providing Accurate Information," though, newsletters only work if people read and understand them.

Direct feedback and targeted communication are crucial for successful fear reduction, especially in conjunction with a problem-oriented approach. Part of the success of POP comes from breaking big problems down into smaller, more manageable ones. A consequence of that approach, sometimes, is that small problem solving achievements fly under the radar and are not widely recognized. Since communication is so essential to affect peoples' perceptions and thus their fear, it might be smart to emphasize it within the SARA process when fear of crime is the target:

S – Scanning
A – Analysis
R – Response (with feedback)
A – Assessment

It is important to implement this feedback step prior to assessment, since it is awareness of the responses and their impact on fear-inducing conditions that is most likely to affect, and hopefully reduce, the target population's fear of crime. The purpose of the final assessment stage in the SARA process is to determine whether fear was reduced—as noted above, awareness of the responses that were implemented, and their impact on observable conditions, is presumably a precondition of fear reduction.

Another role for targeted communication is simply to convey reassuring messages to specific individuals and groups who may be experiencing heightened fear of crime. For example, in the aftermath of a synagogue desecration, cross burning, or other hate crime, the police should visibly demonstrate their determination to protect all citizens and all victims. By their actions as well as their words, the police should reassure everyone who belongs to the group victimized by the hate crime that the police do not sympathize with the offenders or any hate groups. This kind of real and symbolic action is essential, of course, because minority groups in the past have not always been able to count on the police for protection, and may even have had good reason to fear the police. And just to reinforce an earlier point, fair and equitable policing would not succeed in reassuring vulnerable minority groups unless it was also recognized—for the purposes of reducing fear and making people feel safer, feedback and communication are often essential complements to appropriate and effective action.

Another example of targeted communication is presented in "Publicizing the Facts." In that situation, similar to one noted earlier in "Providing Accurate Information," police were able to reassure local residents in the aftermath of a serious crime by informing them that the crime in question posed no threat to them. This is a common situation—a serious crime may have occurred, with the potential of heightening fear of crime, but due to its nature the crime never posed much threat to ordinary citizens. This is often true of drug crimes, gang crimes, organized crimes, and violent crimes arising between family members or close associates. When police quickly and clearly inform local residents of the facts surrounding such crimes, they may be able to head off rumors, misinformation, and subsequent exaggerated fears in the community.

Reducing Fear

Publicizing the Facts

An example of reducing fear by publicizing the facts surrounding a sensational crime was documented in the National Reassurance Policing Programme in England:

> After a vicious nationally profiled drive-by shooting in West Midlands, local residents, benefiting from adequate police briefings, evinced little negative reaction. They were well aware that the incident was confined to a very small drug-dealing clique that was unlikely to involve outsiders. It was adjacent communities who were unaware of the true nature of the events that reacted to press coverage in a predictable way.

Source: Irving, Barrie. *Reassurance Policing- Making It Happen: A Summary End-Of-Programme Report on Implementation Management.* Cambridge, UK: Police Foundation and Pembroke College, Mimeo, 2005: 14.

Strategic Communication

Over and above direct feedback and targeted communication, a police agency should develop a communications strategy aimed at managing fear of crime. The aim of this communications strategy should be to inform and persuade the public about crime and safety in such a way that the public's fear of crime stays in reasonable alignment with real risks and vulnerabilities. Needless to say, this is a tricky balance to maintain. The police department should not misinform people or give them a false sense of security. By the same token, if people experience fear of crime that is far out of proportion to real risks, then their quality of life is substantially degraded, and the community's well-being is harmed as well.

One technique that has been used for many years by the law enforcement field to communicate information about crime and crime risk is the FBI's Crime Clock. For the most recent year, 2007, the Crime Clock informs us that a property crime occurred every 3.2 seconds, a violent crime occurred every 22.4 seconds, and a murder occurred every 31 minutes (FBI, 2008). That information is valid, but it undoubtedly inflates fear of crime. It suggests that Americans are constantly at high risk of serious crime victimization, which is not true for most of us, thankfully. The FBI Crime Clock is based on national data, whereas individual citizens are mainly threatened by local crime. Also, crime risks vary by income level, age, race, sex, and other personal characteristics.

It would be more meaningful for a local agency to convey such information to its own residents. Philadelphia, for example, could have told its residents in 2007 that a murder occurred every 22 hours and that the chance of being murdered was 1 in 3,662. In Los Angeles, a murder also occurred every 22 hours, but the individual risks were lower—1 in 9,799. In Seattle, a murder

occurred every 365 hours and the individual risk was 1 in 24,380. These are still sobering numbers, but they seem much less frightening than the national numbers, which really have no relevance to the risks facing the individual citizen. Moreover, in these three cities and many other jurisdictions, the risks of crime victimization vary substantially between neighborhoods. As a result, the real risk of being the victim of a murder or other violent crime is dramatically lower than the citywide average for many of the people reading the crime numbers in the newspaper or on the police department's web site.

The discipline of risk communication specializes in developing and conveying effective messages about such risks as smoking, drunken driving, and natural disasters. Some lessons learned about risk communication in these fields might have utility for police agencies trying to influence the public's perceptions of crime and fear of crime (Warr, 2000; Covello, von Winterfeldt, and Slovik, 1987):

- Use simple, nontechnical concepts and language.

- Present risks within a context that is relevant to the audience.

- Explain risks on a personal level whenever practical.

- Present alternative measures of risk and explain their strengths and limitations.

- Identify and explain uncertainties associated with risks and risk measures.

- Provide opportunities for people to learn how best to interpret risk measures.

- Exercise responsibility in how risk information is presented.

- Recognize that risks typically exist within a political and social context.

Once a police agency commits to using strategic communication to manage fear of crime, and once good risk communication messages are developed, the great challenge is reaching the general public. On one hand, the mass news media are driven to publicize crime, not reassurance, because crime attracts readers and viewers, who in turn attract advertising revenue. On the other hand, the public is bombarded by such an avalanche of media and messages that it is very difficult to get and keep peoples' attention.

One possibility is to work with the news media to help shape the messages that are disseminated about crime and safety. In practice, however, this is not always feasible because news media jealously guard their independence, plus they compete with each other for readers and viewers—consequently, "if it bleeds it leads" and crime reporting tends to be sensational. Even so, police should work to educate reporters and editors, develop professional rather than adversarial relations with the media, and consistently produce and deliver carefully crafted messages to the media in hopes that they will publicize them adequately.

While the mass news media are an important pipeline to the public, police have many other ways of reaching the community with reassurance messages and risk communication. For example, weekly neighborhood newspapers are often much more willing than daily newspapers or TV stations to carry press releases, success stories, and columns that police produce. The same is frequently true of radio stations, especially those with news and talk formats. Weekly newspapers and local radio stations tend to reach a small audience, but in the aggregate they serve a large audience. Since they are usually more cooperative with the police than daily newspapers and TV news, they can provide a very useful alternative pipeline to the public.

Police agencies also have many opportunities to meet with community groups and political leaders, convene jurisdiction-wide meetings, and call press conferences. All of these venues provide occasions for communicating clear messages about crime, safety, risk, and reassurance. One common opportunity occurs when the police department is releasing its quarterly, midyear, or annual crime statistics. But even a press conference in the aftermath of a serious crime can be used to inform and educate the public about the meaning of the crime for them— who is at risk of such a crime, and just as important, who is not. As noted in the previous section, it is often possible (and valid) to convince local residents that a particular serious crime, although it happened nearby, was of such a nature that it never posed any threat to anyone other than the individuals directly involved.

Modern technology can be a very useful tool for a police agency seeking to reach the public with risk and reassurance messages. Police department web sites are increasingly used to provide information directly to the public. Automated telephone systems, such as reverse 9-1-1, can be used to defuse rumors, correct misinformation, and deliver risk communication quickly after an incident or crisis occurs. These systems also make it possible to target communications to those geographic areas most affected by an incident or crisis, thus avoiding swamping (and possibly alarming) other residents with irrelevant information. Similarly, many police agencies now encourage the public to sign up for e-mail or text message notifications about crimes that occur near their places of residence and work. Instead of merely sending crime alerts or lists of crimes through these e-mail systems, police should consider sending information that is more nuanced and less alarming. For example, imagine the impact of an e-mail from the police saying "Three homes in your neighborhood were burglarized last night" versus the message "Three of your neighbors had items stolen from their garages last night, and in all three cases, the garage doors had been left open."

A particularly comprehensive effort at reassurance through communication has been undertaken by the Safer Hastings Partnership in England (www.saferhastings.co.uk), as described in the accompanying insert "Strategic Communication." One of the most creative techniques used in that jurisdiction is the placement of plasma TV screens in high-traffic public places. These TV screens get a lot of attention as they scroll a combination of news, sports, weather, and professionally produced reassurance spots. Using this method and

Reducing Fear

Strategic Communication

The Safer Hastings Partnership (SHP) in England provides an example of the use of strategic communication to promote reassurance and reduce fear of crime. The SHP produces print and electronic media to convey carefully crafted reassurance messages. Four-page bi-monthly spreads are placed in the local newspaper. The SHP has erected 11 plasma screens in selected public locations that run continuously, featuring 30-second locally filmed messages as well as news, sports, and weather (annual footfall at these locations exceeds 12 million people). The SHP also provides video messages on its web site, engages in advertising exchanges with commercial radio, and takes advantage of other public relations opportunities.

The SHP media campaign has won national awards, recognition, and endorsements in the UK. According to evaluation results, it has been quite successful:

- 77% of the local newspaper's readers have seen the SHP 4-page spreads.

- 74% of residents have seen the community TV screens.

- 90% of residents say the community TV system is a good idea.

- 20% increase in the proportion of residents who realize that the crime rate is falling.

- 55% of residents feel safe walking alone at night in their neighborhood, compared to 35% five years earlier.

- 15% increase in people feeling safe at night in the town center.

Source: Safer Hastings Partnership. *Tackling the Fear of Crime*. East Sussex, UK: author, 2007. Booklet. See www.saferhastings.co.uk; Williams, 2008.

others, the Partnership has been able to reach a wide audience and achieve high levels of viewer recognition and recall, leading to substantial reductions in fear of crime (Safer Hastings Partnership, 2007).

Another interesting feature of the Safer Hastings Partnership is a focus on reducing crime and fear of crime associated with youth (Williams, 2008). After several years of operation, the partnership recognized that its reassurance and community safety activities had not included many younger residents. The partnership settled on a schools-based competition, in which groups of students develop crime- and disorder-related storyboards. Winning entries are then produced as video spots that run on the partnership's plasma screen community TV network. About 1,800 youths have participated in the competitions during the first 2–3 years and the partnership has increased the frequency of the events to match their popularity. From 2004 to 2007, the percentage of area residents who indicated that youth crime was a concern to them decreased from 91 percent to 29 percent.

Police agencies should aim to communicate risk and reassurance information through all the channels that are available to them. This includes their agency web site, their brochures and other printed materials, their public information and public education initiatives, the speeches they give to the Rotary Club, the meetings they have with all manner of community members, and the routine contacts that individual officers have with individual complainants, victims, and ordinary citizens. If police commit themselves to educating the entire community about crime, safety, and risk, using all the avenues available to them and showing discipline by staying on message, they can expect that the public's fear of crime will not get too far out of alignment with actual risk. That should be their objective, and implementing strategic communication should be one of the tools they rely on the most.
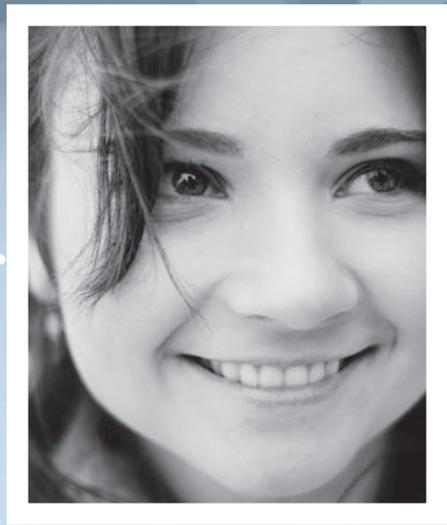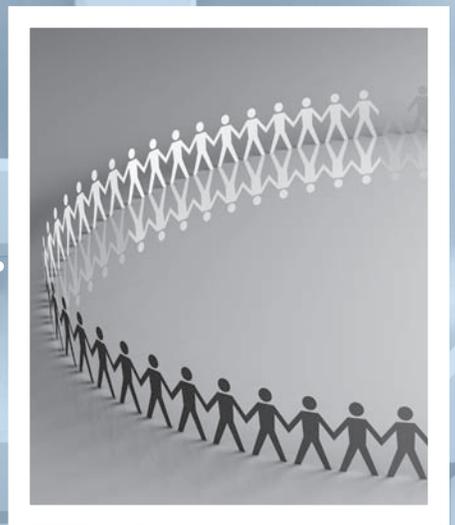
5   Tools for Sustaining Fear Reduction

This chapter provides a few suggestions for those agencies that are serious about wanting to sustain a focus on fear reduction in time. The previous chapters have tried to make the case that police agencies should make fear reduction a standard part of their operations, and have presented a variety of techniques that can be used to (1) target fear of crime and (2) reduce it. Implementing these techniques is challenging, but enough real-life examples are available to show that it can be done. One final step that police agencies need to consider is how to institutionalize fear-reduction efforts, so that reassurance becomes an ongoing activity, not just a one-time project.

Including Fear Reduction in the Police Mission

Many police agencies today have official statements of their mission and goals, as well as strategic plans for carrying out their mission and achieving their goals. A recent study of the 50 largest police departments in the United States found that 98 percent of mission statements made some reference to citizens and 85 percent referred to community policing, but only 38 percent mentioned fear of crime (DeLone, 2007). This illustrates the continuing tendency of police agencies to regard fear of crime simply as a byproduct of crime, and thus, agencies operate on the assumption that crime-reduction efforts will automatically result in fear reduction. This is a risky assumption, though, as explained in this Guide and as demonstrated by many years of experience. Police agencies can start to overcome this assumption by explicitly identifying fear reduction as an important part of their mission.

Police agencies should adopt mission statements that reflect the full range of their responsibilities. The seven dimensions of police performance identified in "The Bottom Line of Policing" (Moore and Braga, 2003) provide a useful guideline. One of their dimensions is "reduce fear and enhance personal security." Incorporating language such as this into a police agency's mission statement helps emphasize the importance of fear reduction and gives it a permanent place at the table. Once fear reduction is included in an agency's mission statement, it is more likely to be reflected in annual goals and objectives and in strategic plans. These, in turn, help keep agency executives, commanders, and planners conscious of the need to develop and implement initiatives and programs designed to reduce fear of crime.

Measuring and Tracking Fear

In order for fear reduction to be more than a mere rhetorical flourish in a high-sounding mission statement or goal, it has to be subject to measurement and tracking. Otherwise, it is very difficult to know how big a problem fear of crime is, whether it is increasing or decreasing, what priority it deserves, where in the jurisdiction it is concentrated, who is most affected, and, after some fear-reduction efforts are implemented, whether they had any impact. The section in this Guide on "Tools for Targeting Fear" presented a variety of methods that can be used to measure levels of fear of crime and track them over time. Police agencies should implement such methods and make them part of routine data collection.

Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago were cited earlier in this Guide as examples of jurisdictions that had measured and tracked fear of crime over many years. Prince William County, Virginia, provides a particularly good example, as "percent of citizens feeling safe in their neighborhood" is one of eight police results measured and tracked annually as part of the county's *Service Efforts & Accomplishments Report* (Prince William County, 2007). Taking this approach one step farther, Chief Tom Casady confirms that Lincoln, Nebraska, is using the indicator "Maintain a positive response rate of 75 percent on the Quality Service Audit question 'How safe and secure do you feel in the neighborhood where you live?'" as part of its outcome-based budgeting process in fiscal year 2009.

The use of quality of life indicators, benchmarks, scorecards, and other methods for measuring the performance and outcomes of government in general and specific public agencies is a growing phenomenon. Fear of crime fits well in these kinds of systems because it is an obvious component of quality of life that makes sense to political leaders and residents. One interesting extension of this trend is Truckee Meadows Tomorrow (TMT), a regional community-based nonprofit planning organization in Nevada that identifies and tracks quality of life indicators in its region. As the organization explains on its web site (www.truckeemeadowstomorrow.org):

> Quality of life indicators are simply the answers to the question, "What matters most to the people who live in the Truckee Meadows?" They were selected with extensive input from citizens throughout our community in 2006, and they serve as reminders and rallying points around which community-minded individuals and groups can focus their efforts to make a measurable difference.

One of the categories of indicators that TMT tracks is "public well-being," and within that, one of the three sets of indicators is "perception of safety." The organization explains why it regards these indicators as so important:

. . . .

While the Uniform Crime Index and crime rates track reported crime over time, the "feeling of safety" has more of an impact on an individual's daily life; seniors can be more self-sufficient in safe neighborhoods, students can focus on learning in safe schools, employees can be productive traveling safely to work, and families can feel safe at home from forest fires.

. . . .

Besides illustrating the significance that the public places on perceptions of safety, this example provides another reason why police agencies should measure and track fear of crime—if they do not, someone else will do it for them.

Including Fear in Crime Analysis and Problem Analysis

Over and above measuring and tracking fear of crime, fear also needs to be analyzed. To provide an analogy, police agencies measured and tracked reported crime for 60–80 years before they got serious about analyzing it to identify trends, patterns, and hot spots. Once crime analysis was invented, and later augmented by crime mapping and other enhancements, police agencies had much more useful information for tactical and strategic purposes. The same should be true for fear of crime. Once data collection on fear of crime becomes routine, those data should be regularly analyzed to identify fear-of-crime trends, patterns, and hot spots.

In fact, crime analysis is too narrow a framework and not quite the right analogy. Police agencies today are encouraged to expand their crime analysis functions into the broader arena of problem analysis (Boba, 2003; Clarke and Eck, 2005; White, 2008). Besides reported Part I crime, analysts should look at disorder, drugs, gangs, traffic accidents, calls for service, and other threats to community safety and security. As police departments move in this direction, which is strongly recommended, they should simply include fear of crime on their list of problems deserving of ongoing analysis.

Command Accountability for Fear Reduction

Police executives are taught that "what gets measured, gets done." In modern policing, CompStat is the best known manifestation of this principle. Many police agencies all around the country, small and large, now use some version of CompStat as a data-driven method to focus attention on the most serious public safety problems in the jurisdiction (Henry, 2002; Shane, 2007). Typically, the CompStat process pays particular attention to command accountability—top executives using up-to-date crime information to hold operational commanders (e.g., district commanders) accountable for being on top of current crime patterns and for using their resources effectively to address those patterns.

One flaw that sometimes arises in the CompStat process is tunnel vision. Because crime data is readily available, it tends to dominate the process, and "what gets measured, gets done." An alternative approach, still data-driven and emphasizing command accountability, is to focus on multiple indicators of police performance and community safety. Following the "bottom line" framework, for example (Moore and Braga, 2003), CompStat might be used to focus operational commanders' attention on seven indicators:

1. Reported crime.

2. Fear of crime.

3. Public order and disorder.

4. Crime clearances.

5. Customer satisfaction.

6. Use of force.

7. Use of financial resources.

The importance of taking a more sophisticated and nuanced approach is that it helps the police department achieve all of its major goals, not just one, and it gets the CompStat process beyond simplistic and reactive "cops on dots" thinking. It does increase complexity, but only because police agencies actually are expected to effectively pursue a multifaceted mission, not just reduction of serious crime. To put it another way, the public wants the police to reduce crime—but they also want to feel safe, use public places freely, see offenders prosecuted, and get good service from police who use force with restraint and spend tax dollars carefully. There is no reason why police commanders should not be held accountable for properly pursuing each of these important ends.

In terms of this guide, CompStat could be used to encourage police commanders to address fear-of-crime problems in their districts or other areas of responsibility. If commanders know that they are expected to work on fear of crime, that data are collected, and that they will be held accountable, then they will have plenty of incentive to look at the data themselves, use the reassurance matrix, and target fear-of-crime problems when and where they arise.

Beat-Level Accountability

Ultimately, police activity aimed at fear reduction is most likely to be institutionalized and sustained when it comes to be recognized as an important element of the police role, that is, each individual officer's responsibility. In this respect, making people feel safer is not likely to be taken seriously by officers who see their role primarily as crime fighters, emergency responders, or report takers. However, for officers who see their role in terms of beat management, problem solving, and community policing, it is a relatively short step to recognizing fear of crime as one of the problems that might plague a neighborhood, and therefore one of the problems that ordinary police officers should address.

Getting to the point where officers understand their role within a community policing framework is a subject for other volumes to discuss. Specifically in regard to establishing individual officer accountability for fear of crime, some suggestions can be made:

- **Training—**basic and in-service police training should address fear of crime, emphasizing its damaging effects on individuals and communities, its semi-independence from crime itself, and techniques that can be used to target and reduce fear.

- **Information—**information should be fed to officers to help them diagnose fear problems on their beats, and fear analysis should be available to them when they are trying to take a problem-oriented approach to fear reduction.

- **Reporting—**a simple and streamlined system should be implemented by which officers report their fear-reduction activities and fear-related problem-solving projects. These reports can then be reviewed by supervisors and analysts. They can also be compiled so that the fear-reduction activities of sub-units and the entire police agency can easily be documented (Henson and Colgan, 2005; also see Sixth Sense, 2008).

- **Supervision—**sergeants need to monitor, mentor, and lead the fear-reduction efforts of their subordinates. They should be held accountable for providing this kind of supervision. They should also be held accountable for overall implementation of fear-reduction efforts in their areas of responsibility. Of course, they should get training and direction on these duties, which may be new to them.

- **Performance Evaluation—**fear-reduction efforts and outcomes should be added to the regular performance evaluations of officers and sergeants. This keeps everyone's attention on fear reduction as an important element of policing at the street level.

One of the aims of community policing is to establish a greater degree of familiarity and trust between police officers and the people they serve. It is a natural fit within that philosophy and strategy to encourage officers to begin feeling responsible for the well-being of their beats and residents, including working to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods. If officers are reminded, periodically, that feeling safe and not being overcome with fear are important components of peoples' well-being and quality of life, most will understand that fighting crime is not enough and that fear reduction is important in its own right.

When the 32nd U.S. president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, famously said in 1933 that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" he was not referring to fear of crime, but rather to the economic crisis brought on by the Great Depression (White House, 2008). With respect to crime, the quotation is not a perfect fit—crime itself (not just fear of crime) does harm many people every year. But it is also true that fear of crime harms many people, many communities, and ultimately our political and social fabric. So, fear of crime is not the only thing we have to fear, but it is a big thing. Following FDR's logic, our society would be in a stronger and healthier position if we could do a better job of taming our fear of crime. To help communities accomplish that, law enforcement agencies should recognize fear reduction as one of their core responsibilities, and should adopt the kinds of measures described in this Guide. When they do so, they will be even more deserving than they may already be of recognition as effective, professional, full-service community oriented policing agencies.

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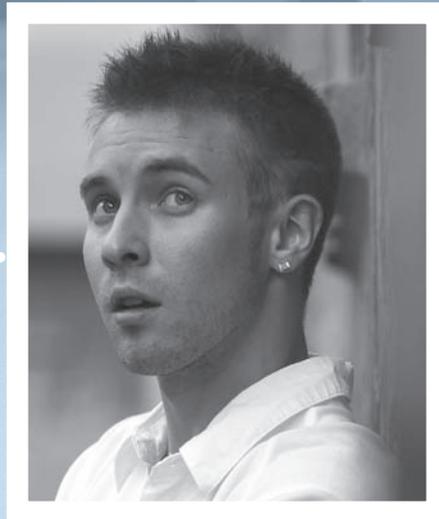
Appendixes

Appendix 1: National Survey Instrument
Policing to Reduce Fear

Note: The purpose of this communication is to identify law enforcement agencies that have implemented specific strategies or programs designed to reduce the public's fear of crime and/or fear of terrorism. We realize that all agencies attempt to reduce fear through patrol, rapid response, and criminal investigation. We are looking for those agencies that have gone beyond these basic police strategies in their efforts to reduce fear of crime and terrorism.

1. During the past 5 years, has your agency implemented any strategies or programs specifically designed to reduce the public's fear of <u>crime</u>?

    [   ]   no
    [   ]   yes → if yes, please indicate whom we could contact for further information
        Name _____   Phone _____
        E-mail _____

2. During the past 5 years, has your agency implemented any strategies or programs specifically designed to reduce the public's fear of <u>terrorism</u>?

    [   ]   no
    [   ]   yes → if yes, please indicate whom we could contact for further information
        Name _____   Phone _____
        E-mail _____

3. Does your agency systematically <u>measure</u> fear of crime and/or fear of terrorism on an annual or other basis?

    [   ]   no
    [   ]   yes → if yes, please indicate whom we could contact for further information
        Name _____   Phone _____
        E-mail _____

4. If your agency had adequate resources, what specific strategies or programs would you implement (if any) to reduce fear of crime and/or terrorism? (Write on back if needed.)

    Thank you very much. Please return by mail or fax to:

    Fear of Crime Project
    Justice & Safety Center
    245 Stratton
    Eastern Kentucky University
    Richmond, KY 40475
    859-622-8038 (fax)

    Your name _____

    Your phone _____

    Your e-mail _____

Appendix 2: COPE Community Survey

(Used primarily to measure the level of fear in a neighborhood)

For items 1–15, please circle a number that indicates your reaction to each item, ranging from 1=not very true to 10=very true.

	Not very true Very true
1. I often avoid going out during the daytime because I am afraid of crime.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. Fear of crime is very high in my neighborhood.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. What makes me afraid are groups of unruly kids and strangers who you see on the streets, sidewalks, and parking lots.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. There is a good chance that I will be the victim of a property crime (theft, burglary, etc.) in this neighborhood this year.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. The police department does the best job it can against crime in this neighborhood.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. What makes me afraid is that I don't see the police very often around here.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. What makes me afraid of crime are the chances of having my house or apartment broken into.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. There is a good chance that I will be the victim of a crime against my person (rape, mugging, assault, etc.) in this neighborhood this year.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. My fear of crime is very high.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. I do not feel safe inside my own house or apartment.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11. What makes me afraid of crime are the chances of being assaulted, mugged, or raped.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12. I am more afraid of crime than I ever have been.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. I often avoid going out after dark because I am afraid of crime.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14. The police department does the best job it can to make me feel safe in this neighborhood.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
15. During the last few weeks, I have frequently seen police officers in this neighborhood.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Age: Sex: Race: Yrs in County:	Yrs in Neighborhood:
Property Type: # of Residents In Household:	Previously Filled Out?

Property Type: A-Apartment   C-Condominium   R-Row Home/Town House
                 B-Business   D-Detached Home

Source: Adapted from Higdon, Richard Kirk and Phillip G. Huber. How to Fight Fear: The COPE Program Package. Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, Appendix F, 1987.

Appendix 3: COPE Interview Guide

(Used to identify the cause of fear in a neighborhood)

Address/Location of Person Interviewed:
1. When you think of <u>neighborhood</u> problems or crime, what are your greatest concerns? Which one is your greatest concern?
2. How often does the most serious of these problems occur? (constantly, frequently, periodically, isolated incident)
3. Does this problem cause you to feel fear, worry, or feel unsafe? (yes or no) If yes, how often? (constantly, frequently, sometimes)
4. Has this problem inconvenienced or caused a change in the daily life/routine of you or your family? (yes or no) If yes, how?
5. What do you feel is the cause of the problem?
6. What do you feel should or could be done to correct this problem? What do you feel the police should do?
Officer's comments/observations concerning this interview:
Officer's conclusion—should this problem be addressed by COPE?

Age:	Sex:	Race:	Yrs in County:
Property Type:		# of Residents In Household:	Yrs in Neighborhood:

Source: Adapted from Higdon, Richard Kirk and Phillip G. Huber. How to Fight Fear: The COPE Program Package. Washington, D.C.: Police Executive Research Forum, Appendix F, 1987.

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime-fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- **Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than $12 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.**

- **By the end of FY 2008, the COPS Office had funded approximately 117,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.**

- Nearly 500,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.

- **As of 2009, the COPS Office has distributed more than 2 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.**

THIS GUIDE PROVIDES A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ABOUT the phenomenon of fear of crime as well as historical and contemporary police efforts at fear reduction. The main focus is on tools and techniques that police can use to target fear of crime, reduce fear, and institutionalize fear reduction within their agencies. Promising practices are identified—these are strategies and programs that make sense, that have been implemented, and that have been tested and shown to be effective—to illustrate possible ways to address fear of crime.

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
1100 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call the COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770.

Visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov