

CHECKPOINTS

- ✓ There are a number of pathways to drug abuse.
- ✓ Some users distribute small amounts of drugs, others are frequent dealers, whereas another group supplements drug dealing with other crimes.
- ✓ Some users are always in trouble and are considered burnouts.

LO4 Recognize the relationship between drug use and delinquency.

at an early age, they receive little attention from the justice system until they have developed an extensive arrest record. By then they are approaching the end of their minority and will either desist or become so entrapped in the drug-crime subculture that little can be done to deter their illegal activities.

Persistent Offenders

About two-thirds of substance-abusing youths continue to use drugs in adulthood, but about half desist from other criminal activities. Those who persist in both substance abuse and crime maintain these characteristics:

- They come from poor families.
- Their family members include other criminals.
- They do poorly in school.
- They started using drugs and committing other delinquent acts at an early age.
- They use multiple types of drugs and commit crimes frequently.
- They have few opportunities in late adolescence to participate in legitimate and rewarding adult activities.¹⁰⁴

Some evidence exists that these drug-using persisters have low nonverbal IQs and poor physical coordination. Nonetheless, there is little evidence to explain why some drug-abusing youths drop out of crime, whereas others remain active. **CHECKPOINTS**

Drug Use and Delinquency

An association between drug use and delinquency has been established, and this connection can take a number of forms.¹⁰⁵ Crime may be an instrument of the drug trade; violence erupts when rival gangs use weapons to settle differences and establish territorial monopolies. In New York City, authorities report that crack gangs will burn down their rivals' headquarters. In the 1990s, it was estimated that between 35 and 40 percent of New York's homicides were drug-related.¹⁰⁶ This figure has come down somewhat since then.

Drug users may also commit crimes to pay for their habits.¹⁰⁷ One study conducted in Miami found that 573 narcotics users *annually* committed more than 200,000 crimes to obtain cash. Similar research with a sample of 356 addicts accounted for 118,000 crimes annually.¹⁰⁸ If such proportions hold true, then the nation's estimated 700,000 heroin addicts alone may be committing more than 100 million crimes each year.

Drug users may be more willing to take risks, because their inhibitions are lowered by substance abuse. Cities with high rates of cocaine abuse are also more likely to experience higher levels of armed robbery. It is possible that crack and cocaine users are more willing to engage in a risky armed robbery to get immediate cash than a burglary, which requires more planning and effort.¹⁰⁹

The relationship between alcohol and drug abuse and delinquency has been substantiated by a number of studies. Some have found that youths who abuse alcohol are most likely to engage in violence; as adults, those with long histories of drinking are more likely to report violent offending patterns.¹¹⁰

The National Institute of Justice's Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program tracked trends in drug use among arrestees in urban areas. Some, but not all, of its 36 sites collected data on juveniles. Due to lack of funding, the Department of Justice ended this program in 2004.¹¹¹ The most recent report (2002) found that, among juvenile detainees, almost 60 percent of juvenile males and 30 percent of juvenile females tested positive for marijuana, the most commonly used drug, and its prevalence was 10 and 6 times higher than cocaine use for juvenile males and females, respectively. With the exception of methamphetamines, male detainees were more likely to test positive for the use of any drug than were female detainees.¹¹²

Table 10.3 Drug Use, Problem Behaviors, and Delinquency

Behavior	Drank Alcohol (Past 30 Days)		Used Marijuana (Past 30 Days)		Sold Drugs (Ever)	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Youths ages 12-14						
Suspended from school	18%	31%	19%	46%	19%	55%
Vandalize property	13	37	14	50	14	56
Major theft	2	11	2	20	2	27
Attack/assault	8	28	9	36	9	53
Belong to a gang	1	7	1	16	1	18
Carry handgun	4	12	4	20	4	25
Arrested	2	8	3	15	2	22
Youths ages 15-17						
Suspended from school	27%	38%	27%	52%	27%	63%
Vandalize property	10	23	11	33	11	40
Major theft	3	10	4	17	3	23
Attack/assault	8	21	10	29	9	37
Belong to a gang	1	5	1	9	1	12
Carry handgun	4	10	5	15	5	18
Arrested	5	12	5	21	5	26

Note: The timeframe for "suspended from school" was ever; for the other items, it was the past 12 months. The value in the "yes" column differs significantly ($p < 0.05$) from the value in the "no" column for all column pairs within substance behavior and age groups.

Source: Carl McCurley and Howard Snyder. *Co-occurrence of Substance Use Behaviors in Youth* (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, 2008), p. 3.

Juvenile justice researchers Carl McCurley and Howard Snyder found that higher levels of youth problem behaviors and delinquency, ranging from school suspensions to major theft to gun carrying, are associated with drug use as well as selling drugs.¹¹³ This finding held up for younger and older teens (see Table 10.3). For example, among youths ages 12 to 14, 31 percent who reported drinking alcohol in the past month were suspended from school compared to 18 percent who did not drink alcohol. Similarly, for youths ages 15 to 17, school suspensions were significantly higher for those who drank alcohol compared to those who did not (38 percent versus 27 percent). These findings are based on data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, a self-report survey administered to a nationally representative sample of youths ages 12 to 17. The researchers found that the difference in the prevalence of problem behaviors is even greater among youths, both younger and older, who used marijuana in the past month compared to their counterparts who did not: a twofold increase in school suspensions, a threefold increase in vandalizing property, and a fivefold (for younger kids) and threefold (for older youths) increase in gun carrying.

Drugs and Delinquency

It is possible that most delinquents are not drug users, but that police are more likely to apprehend muddle-headed substance abusers than clear-thinking abstainers. A second, more plausible, interpretation of the existing data is that the drug abuse-crime connection is so powerful because many criminals are in fact substance abusers.¹¹⁴ Research by Bruce Johnson and his associates confirms this suspicion. Using data from a national self-report survey, these researchers found that less than 2 percent of the youths who responded to the survey (a) report using cocaine or heroin, and (b) commit two or more index crimes each year. However, these drug-abusing adolescents accounted for 40 to 60 percent of all the index crimes reported in the sample. Less than one-quarter of these delinquents committed crimes solely to support a drug habit. These data suggest that a small core of substance-abusing adolescents commit a significant proportion of all serious crimes. It is also evident that a behavior—drug abuse—that develops late in adolescence influences the extent of delinquent activity through the life course.¹¹⁵

Exploring the Link between Delinquency

The association between delinquency and drug use has been established in a variety of cultures.¹¹⁶ It is far from certain, however, whether (a) drug use *causes* delinquency, (b) delinquency *leads* youths to engage in substance abuse, or (c) both drug abuse and delinquency are *functions* of some other factor.¹¹⁷

Some of the most sophisticated research on this topic has been conducted by Delbert Elliott and his associates at the Institute of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado.¹¹⁸ Using data from the National Youth Survey, the longitudinal study of self-reported delinquency and drug use mentioned earlier in this chapter, Elliott and his colleagues David Huizinga and Scott Menard found a strong association between delinquency and drug use.¹¹⁹ However, the direction of the relationship is unclear. As a general rule, drug abuse appears to be a *type* of delinquent behavior and not a *cause* of delinquency.¹²⁰ Most youths become involved in delinquent acts *before* they are initiated into drugs; it is difficult therefore to conclude that drug use causes crime. In other research involving the National Youth Survey, Jason Ford found that there is a reciprocal and ongoing relationship between alcohol use and delinquency during adolescence, and that part of the reason for this reciprocal relationship is that both behaviors have the effect of weakening youths' bonds with society, thereby promoting continued alcohol use and delinquency.¹²¹

According to the Elliott research, both drug use and delinquency seem to reflect developmental problems; they are both part of a disturbed lifestyle. This research reveals some important associations between substance abuse and delinquency:

- Alcohol abuse seems to be a cause of marijuana and other drug abuse, because most drug users started with alcohol, and youths who abstain from alcohol almost never take drugs.
- Marijuana use is a cause of multiple drug use: about 95 percent of youths who use more serious drugs started on pot; only 5 percent of serious drug users never smoked pot.
- Youths who commit felonies started off with minor delinquent acts. Few delinquents (1 percent) report committing only felonies. **CHECKPOINTS**

CHECKPOINTS

- ✓ There is a strong association between drug use and delinquency.
- ✓ Juvenile arrestees often test positive for drugs.
- ✓ Chronic offenders are often drug abusers.
- ✓ Although drug use and delinquency are associated, it is difficult to show that abusing drugs leads kids into a delinquent way of life.

LO 1 Articulate the major drug control strategies.

Drug Control Strategies

Billions of dollars are spent each year to reduce the importation of drugs, deter drug dealers, and treat users. Yet although the overall incidence of drug use has declined, drug use has concentrated in the nation's poorest neighborhoods, with a consequent association between substance abuse and crime.

A number of drug control strategies have been tried. Some are designed to deter drug use by stopping the flow of drugs into the country, apprehending dealers, and



Arresting large-volume drug dealers is an important strategy in reducing the supply of drugs. Here, K9 officer Michael Whitney and his drug sniffing dog perform a lock down emergency drill at South Middle School in Ludlow, Massachusetts.

cracking down on street-level drug deals. Another approach is to prevent drug use by educating would-be users and convincing them to "say no" to drugs. A third approach is to treat users so that they can terminate their addictions. These and other drug control efforts are discussed in the following sections.

Law Enforcement Efforts

Law enforcement strategies are aimed at reducing the supply of drugs and, at the same time, deterring would-be users from drug abuse.

Source Control. One approach to drug control is to deter the sale of drugs through apprehension of large-volume drug dealers coupled with enforcement of drug laws that carry heavy penalties. This approach is designed to punish known dealers and users and to deter those who are considering entering the drug trade.

A great effort has been made to cut off supplies of drugs by destroying overseas crops and arresting members of drug cartels; this approach is known as *source control*. The federal government has been encouraging exporting nations to step up efforts to destroy drug crops and prosecute dealers. Other less aggressive source control approaches, such as crop substitution and alternative development programs for the largely poor farmers in other countries, have also been tried, and a review of international efforts suggests that "some success can be achieved in reduction of narcotic crop production."¹²² Three South American nations—Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia—have agreed to coordinate control efforts with the United States. However, translating words into deeds is a formidable task. Drug lords fight back through intimidation, violence, and corruption. The United States was forced to invade Panama with 20,000 troops in 1989 to stop its leader, General Manuel Noriega, from trafficking in cocaine.

Even when efforts are successful in one area, they may result in a shift in production to another area or in the targeted crop being replaced by another. For example, enforcement efforts in Peru and Bolivia were so successful that they altered cocaine cultivation patterns. As a consequence, Colombia became the premier coca-cultivating country when the local drug cartels encouraged growers to cultivate coca plants.

What Does This Mean to Me?

Reducing Drug Activity

There is no easy solution to reduce drug-related activities. Some experts argue that less serious drugs like marijuana should be decriminalized, others call for the continued use of police stings and long sentences for drug violations, and some advocate for more education and treatment. Suppose in your community you have witnessed the harms associated with teenage drug use and drug selling, but you also see the need for some users to get treatment rather than punishment.

1. What do you recommend be done to address the drug problem more effectively?
2. What are some things you could do in your community to help prevent children and youths from getting involved in drug-related activities?

When the Colombian government mounted an effective eradication campaign in the traditional growing areas, the cartel linked up with rebel groups in remote parts of the country for their drug supply.¹²³ Leaders in neighboring countries expressed fear when the United States announced it would give \$1.3 billion in military aid—under the program known as Plan Colombia—to fight Colombia's rural drug dealers/rebels, assuming that success would drive traffickers over the border.¹²⁴ Another unintended effect of this campaign has been a recent shift by drug cartels to exploit new crops, from a traditional emphasis on coca to opium poppy, the plant used to make heroin. It is estimated that Latin American countries, including Mexico, supply upward of 80 percent of the heroin consumed in the United States.¹²⁵

On the other side of the world, Afghanistan has since reclaimed its position as the world leader in opium production, accounting for upward of nine-tenths of the global market.¹²⁶ This has come about after the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, which had banned poppy growing. Now, almost all of the heroin sold in Russia and three-quarters of that sold in Europe comes from Afghanistan. This has occurred despite new laws against poppy growing, law enforcement efforts, and crop substitution efforts on the part of agricultural aid organizations. Breaking with religious beliefs, Taliban forces are now promoting the growing of poppy—in some areas distributing leaflets that order farmers to grow the crop—and providing protection to drug smugglers, all in an effort to finance their operations against the U.S. military and coalition forces in the country.¹²⁷ The United Nations estimates that in 2010 almost 250,000 households in Afghanistan were involved in opium production, which equates to 6 percent of the country's population.¹²⁸

Border Control. Law enforcement efforts have also been directed at interdicting drug supplies as they enter the country. Border patrols and military personnel have been involved in massive interdiction efforts, and many billion-dollar seizures have been made. It is estimated that between one-quarter and one-third of the annual cocaine supply shipped to the United States is seized by drug enforcement agencies. Yet U.S. borders are so vast and unprotected that meaningful interdiction is impossible. In 2010 (most recent data available), U.S. federal law enforcement agencies seized more than 8,500 pounds of cocaine and 335 pounds of heroin along the southwest border alone.¹²⁹ Global rates of interception of heroin and cocaine indicate that only a small percentage of all imports are being seized by law enforcement.¹³⁰

In recent years, another form of border control to interdict drugs entering the country has emerged: targeting Internet drug traffickers in foreign countries. With the widespread use of the Internet, some offenders are now turning to this source to obtain designer-type drugs. In Buffalo, New York, U.S. Customs discovered that a steady flow of packages containing the drug gamma-butyrolactone (GBL), an ingredient of GBH (gamma hydroxybutyrate), also known as the date-rape drug, was entering the country from Canada; the drug was disguised as a cleaning product. Operation Webslinger, a joint investigation of federal law enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada, was put in place to track down the suppliers. Within a year, Operation Webslinger had shut down four Internet drug rings operating in the United States and Canada, made 115 arrests in 84 cities, and seized the equivalent of 25 million doses of GBH and other related drugs.¹³¹ Shortly following this, another federal task force, known as Operation Gray Lord and involving the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), was set up to combat illegal sales of narcotics on the Internet.¹³²

If all importation were ended, homegrown marijuana and lab-made drugs such as Ecstasy could become the drugs of choice. Even now, their easy availability and relatively low cost are increasing their popularity; they are a \$10 billion business in the United States today. But there have been some signs of success. In 2010 (most recent data available), 6,768 illegal methamphetamine laboratories were seized by authorities across the United States. This is down considerably from the peak in 2003 when more than 10,000 labs were seized nationwide, but represents a 12 percent increase from 2009. The DEA attributes this success to state restrictions on retail sales of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine products.¹³³ Many of these labs were operated out of homes, putting children at grave risk of being burned or injured (3,300 children were found in 8,000 of these labs), not to mention exposing them to illegal drugs.¹³⁴

Targeting Dealers. Law enforcement agencies have also made a concerted effort to focus on drug trafficking. Efforts have been made to bust large-scale drug rings. The long-term consequence has been to decentralize drug dealing and to encourage teenage gangs to become major suppliers. Ironically, it has proven easier for federal agents to infiltrate traditional organized crime groups than to take on drug-dealing gangs.

Police can also intimidate and arrest street-level dealers and users in an effort to make drug use so much of a hassle that consumption is cut back. Some street-level enforcement efforts have had success, but others are considered failures. A review of more than 300 international studies on police crackdowns on drug users and dealers found that this approach more often than not leads to increased violence; 87 percent of the studies reported an increase in violence due to these law enforcement practices.¹³⁵

"Drug sweeps" have clogged correctional facilities with petty offenders while draining police resources. These sweeps are also suspected of creating a displacement effect: stepped-up efforts to curb drug dealing in one area or city may encourage dealers to seek out friendlier territory.¹³⁶

Education Strategies

Another approach to reducing teenage substance abuse relies on educational programs. Drug education now begins in kindergarten and extends through the 12th grade. An overwhelming majority of public school districts across the United States have implemented drug education programs with various components, including teaching students about the causes and effects of alcohol, drug, and tobacco use; teaching students to resist peer pressure; and referring students for counseling and treatment.¹³⁷ In a Texas survey of drug use among secondary school students that found drug use in rural school districts to be fast approaching usage rates in urban schools, the researchers speculate that funding cutbacks for drug education programs in the rural schools may be partly to blame.¹³⁸ Education programs—such as Project ALERT, which now operates in all 50 states—have been shown to be successful in training middle school youths to avoid recreational drugs and to resist peer pressure to use cigarettes and alcohol.¹³⁹ The latest survey of evidence-based drug use prevention programs in general shows that they are increasingly being implemented in middle schools across the country.¹⁴⁰ While not considered to be evidence-based, D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) continues to be widely used across the country and has recently undergone a large-scale evaluation of its new curriculum, "Take Charge of Your Life." Because of its continued widespread use and influence, D.A.R.E. is the subject of the accompanying Focus on Delinquency feature.

Countering the media's influence on adolescents' intentions to use drugs has also been a focus of education strategies.¹⁴¹ Two large-scale studies demonstrate the effectiveness of anti-drug messages targeted at youth. An evaluation of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, which features ads showing the dangers of marijuana use, reported that 41 percent of students in grades 7 to 12 "agree a lot" that the ads made them less likely to try or use drugs. Importantly, the study also reported that past-year marijuana use among the students was down 6 percent.¹⁴² The second study,

WWW

Learn more about Drug Abuse Resistance and Education (D.A.R.E.). www.dare.org

D.A.R.E.: ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY?

A landmark study of "Take Charge of Your Life," touted as the new D.A.R.E., found that the new curriculum reduced the use of marijuana among teens who reported using it at the start of the study, but increased the initiation of smoking and drinking among teens. The end result: D.A.R.E. America, the organization that oversees the program, will no longer use the new curriculum.

Over the last 15 years, national evaluations and independent reviews, including a study by the General Accountability Office (GAO), have repeatedly questioned the effectiveness of D.A.R.E., the most popular and widespread school-based substance abuse prevention program, leading many communities to discontinue its use. This was also due to the program not meeting U.S. Department

of Education effectiveness standards. To meet these criticisms head-on, D.A.R.E. began testing a new curriculum for middle and high school programs called "Take Charge of Your Life" (TCYL). The program focuses on older students and relies more on having them question their assumptions about drug use than on listening to lectures on the subject. The program works largely on changing social norms, teaching students to question whether they really have to use drugs to fit in with their peers. Emphasis shifted from fifth-grade students to those in the seventh grade and a booster program was added in ninth grade, when kids are more likely to experiment with drugs. Police officers serve more as coaches than as lecturers, encouraging students to challenge the social norm of drug use in discussion groups. Students do

more role-playing in an effort to learn decision-making skills. There is also an emphasis on the role of media and advertising in shaping behavior.

A large-scale experimental study was launched to test the effectiveness of the new program. The study was led by researchers at the University of Akron with \$14 million in funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Eighty-three school districts in six metropolitan areas from across the country—Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, New Orleans, and St. Louis—involving nearly 20,000 seventh-grade students, were randomly assigned to the program (41 school districts) or to a control group that used the schools' existing substance abuse prevention education program (42 school districts). Five years later and two years after the program

the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, which asked young people ages 12 to 17 about anti-drug messages they had heard or seen outside of school hours, reported that past-month drug use by those exposed to the messages was 18 percent lower than those who had not been exposed to the messages (8.4 percent compared to 10.2 percent).¹⁴³ Parental involvement by way of support and monitoring has also been shown to play a role in reducing adolescent drug use.¹⁴⁴ For instance, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that the rate of past month use of any illicit drug was significantly lower for youths who reported that their parents always or sometimes helped them with their homework compared with youths who reported that their parents seldom or never helped (7.3 percent compared to 14.7 percent).¹⁴⁵

Community Strategies

Community-based programs reach out to some of the highest-risk youths, who are often missed by the well-known education programs that take place in schools.¹⁴⁶ Community programs try to get youths involved in after-school programs, offer counseling, encourage school achievement, and deliver clothing, food, and medical care when needed. Community programs also sponsor drug-free activities involving the arts, clubs, and athletics. In many respects, evaluations of community programs have shown that they may encourage anti-drug attitudes and help insulate participating youths from an environment that supports drug use.¹⁴⁷

One of the most successful community-based programs to prevent substance abuse and delinquency is provided by the Boys and Girls Clubs (BGCs) of America.

ended—when students were in 11th grade—researchers once again interviewed the students about their past-month and past-year use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. Study results showed that there was a significant decrease in marijuana use among teens enrolled in the TCYL program compared to those who were not, but this only applied to those who were already using marijuana at the start of the study. The program had no effect on the initiation or onset of marijuana use. More problematic was the finding that 3 to 4 percent more students who took part in the TCYL program, compared to those in the control group, used alcohol and tobacco by the 11th grade.

The main conclusion of the researchers was that the TCYL program should not be implemented in schools as a universal prevention intervention. This was the original designation of the program, and it was to be achieved by altering students' intentions to use drugs—preventing

them from trying drugs in the first place. Further analyses suggested that “both the content and intensity of the specific lessons around the targeted messages may not have been powerful enough to affect student substance using behaviors.”

CRITICAL THINKING

1. What do these study results mean for the future of D.A.R.E.? Should schools continue to use it? What are the implications of its continued use in schools?
2. Are the reasons for teenage drug use so complex that any single school-based program is doomed to fail?

Writing Assignment Put yourself in the place of a school principal faced with having to make a decision about the continued use or replacement of D.A.R.E. in your school. In an essay, write about what steps you would

take to improve the effectiveness of D.A.R.E. or what type of program you would use in its place.

Sources: Zili Sloboda, Richard C. Stephens, Peggy C. Stephens, Scott F. Grey, Brent Teasdale, Richard D. Hawthorne, Joseph Williams, and Jesse F. Marquette. “The Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Study: A Randomized Field Trial of a Universal Substance Abuse Prevention Program.” *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 102:1–10 (2009); Peggy C. Stephens, Zili Sloboda, Richard C. Stephens, Brent Teasdale, Scott F. Grey, Richard D. Hawthorne, and Joseph Williams. “Universal School-Based Substance Abuse Prevention Programs: Modeling Targeted Mediators and Outcomes for Adolescent Cigarette, Alcohol and Marijuana Use.” *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 102:19–29 (2009); Brent Teasdale, Peggy C. Stephens, Zili Sloboda, Scott F. Grey, and Richard C. Stephens. “The Influence of Program Mediators on Eleventh Grade Outcomes for Seventh Grade Substance Users and Nonusers.” *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 102:11–18 (2009); University of Akron, “Landmark Substance-Abuse Study Completed,” press release, March 31, 2009; Dennis P. Rosenbaum, “Just Say No to D.A.R.E.,” *Criminology and Public Policy* 6:815–824 (2007); Carol H. Weiss, Erin Murphy-Graham, and Sarah Birkeland, “An Alternative Route to Policy Influence: How Evaluations Affect D.A.R.E.,” *American Journal of Evaluation* 26:12–30 (2005); General Accountability Office, *Youth Illicit Drug Use Prevention: D.A.R.E. Long-Term Evaluations and Federal Efforts to Identify Effective Programs* (Washington, DC: Author, 2003).

One study examined the effectiveness of BGCs for high-risk youths in public housing developments at five sites across the country. The usual services of BGCs, which include reading classes, sports, and homework assistance, were offered, as well as a program to prevent substance abuse, known as SMART Moves (Skills Mastery and Resistance Training). This program targets the specific pressures that young people face to try drugs and alcohol and provides education to parents and the community at large to assist youths in learning about the dangers of substance abuse and strategies for resisting these pressures.¹⁴⁸ Evaluation results showed that housing developments with BGCs, with and without SMART Moves, produced a reduction in substance abuse, drug trafficking, and other drug-related delinquency activity.¹⁴⁹

Treatment Strategies

In 2013 (most recent data available), 122,000 youths ages 12 to 17 were admitted to drug treatment facilities in the United States.¹⁵⁰ Several approaches are available to treat these users. Some efforts stem from the perspective that users have low self-esteem and employ various techniques to build up their sense of self. Some use psychological counseling, and others, such as the **multisystemic therapy (MST)** technique developed by Scott Henggeler, direct attention to family, peer, and psychological problems by focusing on problem solving and communication skills.¹⁵¹ Because of its importance and effectiveness as a drug and delinquency treatment strategy, MST is the subject of the accompanying Prevention/Intervention/Treatment feature.

MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY (MST)

Addresses a variety of family, peer, and psychological problems by focusing on problem-solving and communication skills training.

Concept Summary 10.2 Key Drug Control Strategies

Law enforcement	Preventing drugs from entering the country; destroying crops used to make drugs; arresting members of drug cartels and street-level dealers
Education	Informing children about the dangers of drug use; teaching children to resist peer pressure
Community-based	Community organizations and residents taking action to deter drug dealing; engaging youth in prosocial activities
Treatment	Intervening with drug users, including counseling and experiential activities
Harm reduction	Minimizing the harmful effects caused by drug use and some of the more punitive responses to drug use

CHECKPOINTS

- ✓ There are a number of drug control strategies, some relying on law enforcement efforts and others on treatment.
- ✓ There are a number of drug education initiatives.
- ✓ Multisystemic therapy is an effective treatment approach to reducing juvenile drug use and delinquency.

Critics of the harm reduction approach warn that it condones or promotes drug use, "encouraging people either to continue using drugs or to start using drugs, without recognizing the dangers of their addiction."¹⁵⁹ Advocates, on the other hand, refer to harm reduction as a valuable interim measure in dealing with drug use: "There are safer ways of using drugs, and harm reduction for patients is a valuable interim measure to help them make informed choices and improve their overall health."¹⁶⁰ Advocates also call for this approach to replace the "War on Drugs," and claim that this change in drug policy will go a long way toward solving two key problems caused by punitive responses. First, it will reduce the number of offenders, both juvenile and adult, being sent to already overcrowded institutionalized settings for what amounts to less serious offenses. Second, it will discourage police crackdowns in minority neighborhoods that result in racial minorities being arrested and formally processed at much higher rates for drug offenses.¹⁶¹ The War on Drugs has been a major source of the racial discrimination that occurs in both the adult and juvenile justice systems.¹⁶² (For more on racial discrimination in the juvenile justice system, see Chapters 12, 13, and 14.) Concept Summary 10.2 reviews the key drug control strategies. **CHECKPOINTS**

What Does the Future Hold?

The United States appears willing to go to great lengths to fight the drug war.¹⁶³ The financial cost alone of the 40-year War on Drugs has been considerable. A detailed study by the Associated Press puts the government price tag at \$1 trillion.¹⁶⁴ Innovative prevention and treatment programs have been stepped up. Indeed, the National Research Council's scientific panel on the demand for illegal drugs concluded that the short-term effectiveness of many treatment modalities have been "repeatedly and convincingly demonstrated," and called for greater research to investigate the long-term benefits.¹⁶⁵ Yet all drug control strategies are doomed to fail as long as youths want to take drugs and drugs remain widely available and accessible. Prevention, deterrence, and treatment strategies ignore the core reasons for the drug problem: poverty, alienation, and family disruption. As the gap between rich and poor widens and the opportunities for legitimate advancement decrease, it should come as no surprise that adolescent drug use continues.

Some commentators have called for an expansion of the legalization of drugs. This approach can have the short-term effect of reducing the association between

Another approach is to involve users in outdoor activities, wilderness training, and after-school community programs.¹⁵² More intensive efforts use group therapy, in which leaders try to give users the skills and support to help them reject social pressure to use drugs. These programs are based on the Alcoholics Anonymous (and Narcotics Anonymous) philosophy that users must find the strength to stay clean and that support from those who understand their experiences can be a successful way to achieve a drug-free life. One effective approach is brief alcohol intervention, which incorporates therapeutic components and consists of a small number of sessions (as few as one and as many as five) delivered by medical professionals or psychologists. A recent review found that brief interventions for adolescents and young adults targeted at both alcohol and other illicit drugs were effective in reducing both substances, but brief interventions targeted only at alcohol had no effect on other drugs.¹⁵³

Residential programs are used with more heavily involved drug abusers. Some are detoxification units that use medical procedures to wean patients from the more addicting drugs. Others are therapeutic communities that attempt to deal with the psychological causes of drug use. Hypnosis, aversion therapy (getting users to associate drugs with unpleasant sensations, such as nausea), counseling, biofeedback, and other techniques are often used.

There is little evidence that these residential programs can effectively terminate teenage substance abuse.¹⁵⁴ Many are restricted to families whose health insurance will pay for short-term residential care; when the coverage ends, the children are released. Adolescents do not often enter these programs voluntarily, and most have little motivation to change.¹⁵⁵ A stay can stigmatize residents as "addicts" even though they never used hard drugs; while in treatment, they may be introduced to hard-core users with whom they will associate upon release. One residential program that holds promise for reducing teenage substance abuse is UCLA's Comprehensive Residential Education, Arts, and Substance Abuse Treatment (CREASAT) program, which integrates "enhanced substance abuse services" (group therapy, education, vocational skills) and visual and performing arts programming.¹⁵⁶

Harm Reduction

A **harm reduction** approach involves lessening the harms caused to youths by drug use and by some of the more punitive responses to drug use. Harm reduction encapsulates some of the efforts advanced under the community and treatment strategies noted above, but maintains as its primary focus efforts to minimize the harmful effects of drug use. This approach includes the following components:

- The availability of drug treatment facilities so that all addicts who wish to do so can overcome their habits and lead drug-free lives.
- The use of health professionals to administer drugs to addicts as part of a treatment and detoxification program.
- Needle exchange programs that will slow the transmission of HIV and educate drug users about how HIV is contracted and spread.
- Special drug courts or pretrial diversion programs that compel drug treatment.¹⁵⁷ (Juvenile drug courts are discussed in Chapter 11.)

Needle exchange programs—providing drug users with clean needles in exchange for used ones—have been shown to maintain the low prevalence of HIV transmission among drug users and lower rates of hepatitis C. Methadone maintenance clinics in which heroin users receive doctor-prescribed methadone (a nonaddictive substance that satisfies the cravings caused by heroin) have been shown to reduce illegal heroin use and criminal activity.¹⁵⁸

Looking Back to Fernando's Story

Multisystemic therapy has proven effective in treating juvenile substance abuse, serious and violent offending, and other problem behaviors.

CRITICAL THINKING If you were going to use a multisystemic treatment approach with Fernando, identify whom you would involve and what issues you would address. Do you think this approach could be successful in the case? Discuss why or why not.

WWW

The **Harm Reduction Coalition** is a national advocacy and capacity-building organization that promotes the health and dignity of individuals and communities impacted by drug use. To learn more about the harm reduction approach to teenage drug use, go to harmreduction.org.

HARM REDUCTION Efforts to minimize the harmful effects caused by drug use.