

## Setting Goals and Objectives

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

- ◆ **Write goal statements**, specifying the general outcome to be obtained. Goals are abstract statements of purpose.
- ◆ **Write specific outcome objectives for each goal**. Unlike goals, objectives are specific and measurable statements of intended outcomes. Each objective should include a time frame for measuring impact, a target population, a key result intended, and a specific criterion or measure of impact.
- ◆ **Seek participation** from different individuals and agencies in goal setting. Goal setting that includes a broad range of stakeholders helps to ensure that interventions receive broad support and that potential resistance to the selected goal is minimized.
- ◆ **Identify compatible and incompatible goals in the larger system**. Where do goals of different stakeholders overlap or conflict?
- ◆ **Identify needs and opportunities for interagency collaboration**. Whose cooperation and participation is needed to achieve the goals of this program or policy?
- ◆ **Specify an impact model**. Successful interventions target causes of problems, not problems themselves. An impact model is an explanation of how the intervention will affect the causes and, consequentially, how changes in causes of the problem will affect the problem.

Many interventions fail not because they lack good ideas, but because of vague goals or disagreement about goals. It is amazing how many expensive and otherwise well-designed interventions fail to define the desired outcomes of the intervention adequately. Without specific, agreed-upon criteria for success, it is impossible to measure whether any intervention works. Without agreed-upon goals, program

staff, directors, and various stakeholders will frequently disagree on the mission of the program and the type of intervention approach to use even after the program is well underway or the policy is in use.

### *Goals*

Broad, abstract purposes of an intervention.

Every intervention attempts to achieve some kind of outcome—some desired change in a problem. Both goals and objectives refer to desired outcomes, but objectives are much more specific. *Goals* are broad aims of the intervention (e.g., to reduce drug abuse); *objectives* specify explicit and measurable outcomes (e.g., in a one-year follow-up of ex-offenders who participated in a drug treatment program while in prison, researchers predict that participants will have a lower rearrest rate than nonparticipants).

### *Objectives*

Explicit and measurable aims of an intervention.

## IDENTIFYING GOALS AND VALUES

Generally, goals are broad statements intended to provide direction for change. While goals lack the specificity needed to measure actual outcomes of the intervention, they provide some sense of mission that may be crucial to gaining political support for the intervention. For example, the goals of a shelter for abused women might be “to provide temporary shelter for victims of domestic violence and reduce spouse abuse”; the goals of a drug treatment program might be “to reduce drug dependency and help clients lead productive, drug-free lives.” Goal statements should be relatively brief (one or two sentences), but at the same time they should accurately capture the intent of a particular program or policy and explain the rationale (reasons) for its creation and its particular structure.

Writing goal statements can be difficult, particularly where relevant stakeholders (individuals, groups, and organizations) have widely differing viewpoints about the desired results of a proposed change (think about the challenge of reducing gun violence). Formulating goal statements requires disclosure and discussion of personal beliefs and values. It requires officials to be clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Sometimes their political positions and aspirations interfere with the need for transparency.

Below are a few brief examples of the most common goals of criminal sanctions, and then some of the most common normative values guiding the formulation of criminal justice programs and policies. Case studies at the end of this chapter ask you to consider these issues further and apply the concepts to specific examples. The change agent and relevant stakeholders involved should seek to explicitly identify and acknowledge the goals and values that underlie any specific program or policy being considered.

## THE GOALS OF CRIMINAL SANCTIONS

Five different goals (retribution, rehabilitation, deterrence, incapacitation, and restoration) are commonly asserted as reasons for punishing particular offenders and offenses in particular ways. Some authors (Rothman, 1980; Bernard & Kurlycheck, 2010) have suggested that our society alternates or cycles through punitive and rehabilitative extremes over time, while others (Richard, 2005; Von Hirsch, 1985) have argued that a more discrete progression from one set of goals (e.g., rehabilitation in the 1950s and 1960s) to another (e.g., incapacitation in the later 1980s and early 1990s) has occurred. More recent policy developments emphasize offender accountability to victims and their communities. Regardless of the historical perspective that one adopts, the dominance of any one goal at any one time in history is never complete. The five goals below are currently relevant and are likely to be hotly debated for some time, as they have been recently with regard to mass incarceration (Clear & Frost, 2014; Alexander, 2012).

### Retribution

According to advocates of this position, the rightful purpose of punishment is to assign blame and punishment to the wrongdoer. No future good for society is intended, only that the balance of justice be restored by making the offender pay for his or her transgression against society. Advocates of the death penalty often justify its use on such grounds.

### Rehabilitation

The purpose of punishment, according to this view, is to reduce the likelihood of future offending by diagnosing and treating its causes within the individual. Implicit are theoretical notions that criminal behavior is learned and can be unlearned, and that individual deficits can be corrected. Programs may attempt to alter educational deficits or psychological factors such as anger control, social, and problem-solving skills.

### Deterrence

According to *general deterrence*, the purpose of punishment is to send a message to other potential lawbreakers that the specific offense being punished will not

be tolerated. Potential lawbreakers, as a result of fearing the punishment they see inflicted on others, should be “deterred” from committing similar acts. This approach assumes that people make a rational calculation of costs and benefits associated with specific actions, and its advocates intend that the “pain” (of apprehension, prosecution, and punishment) outweigh the “gain” (the benefits of criminal behavior). For *specific deterrence*, the message is not to others who might be deterred, but to the specific individual being punished. The individual is expected to learn his or her lesson and refrain from future criminal acts. Many “shock incarceration” programs such as Scared Straight and boot camps have been based on such premises.

### **Incapacitation**

The simple purpose of incapacitation is to physically restrain the offender from committing further crimes. The logic is simple: a person cannot commit further crimes against society during the time they are locked up or incapacitated. Long prison sentences for certain offenses are often based, at least in part, upon such notions. Less severe forms of incapacitation might include curfews, house arrest, intensive supervision probation, and day reporting centers. Advocates often believe that crime rates can be reduced by incarcerating (incapacitating) the worst offenders (“career criminals”) for long periods of time (Auerhahn, 2001).

### **Restoration**

More recent than the other four types of goals, restoration or reparation attempts to restore the victim and or the community to his or her (its) prior state before the crime occurred. It is similar to retribution in the sense that crime is viewed as a disruption of the peace. However, restoration seeks to repair the harm that resulted from the offense, where retribution seeks only to apply blame and punishment. Many current programs are exploring options such as financial restitution to victims, as well as requiring offenders to perform community service work. Still others involve the offender, the victim, and family members and friends of both parties in face-to-face encounters during which reparation steps are negotiated and empathy is encouraged (Braithwaite, 2002; Llewellyn & Philpott, 2014).

## **NORMATIVE VALUES**

Normative values are guiding assumptions held by individuals about how the justice system *should* work. For example, Packer (1968) discusses two very broad, competing value orientations of the criminal justice system. To some officials, criminal case processing is like an assembly line, through which cases should be processed and disposed of as quickly as possible. Proponents of this view, the *crime control model*, believe that for the most part, police, prosecutors, judges, and juries make

correct decisions, and the system effectively ferrets out the guilty from the innocent. In contrast, those who lean more toward the *due process model* view believe that the system is imperfect, and that individual officials frequently make hasty and incorrect decisions. As a result, many safeguards are needed to protect the interests of the accused against the much greater power of the state. Criminal case processing, according to this view, is more like an obstacle course than an assembly line. We warn the reader that neither model truly represents reality. No individual should completely adopt one or the other orientations. In Packer's own words, "A person who subscribed to all of the values underlying one model to the exclusion of all of the values underlying the other would be rightly viewed as a fanatic" (Packer, 1968).

Criminal justice officials hold normative values about what type of change should be pursued and why, how important specific goals are, and what results should be expected from a specific program or policy. For example, the discussion of restorative justice at the end of Chapter 1 illustrated that a value orientation toward handling criminal cases was dramatically at odds with the orientation of using traditional law enforcement strategies to protect public safety. Any potential solution had to account for at least the values and interests of police and court personnel. Four very broad value orientations common to criminal justice are described below.

### **Proportionality**

*Proportionality* is a principle that punishment for criminal behavior should not be any more onerous, intrusive, or painful than warranted by the severity of the crime. At least in theory, this principle holds that there is some logical hierarchy of crimes, and a corresponding ("proportional") hierarchy of appropriate punishments. One does not give the death penalty to jaywalkers, for example. A fine might be more appropriate.

### **Equity**

*Equity* is the principle that similarly situated offenders should be treated similarly. For example, those accused of committing the same criminal offense should receive similar punishments, unrelated to their personal or demographic characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender, or income).

### **Parsimony**

*Parsimony* is the principle of using the least drastic and expensive measure needed to produce a specific objective. For example, if a one-year driver's license suspension and probation term is sufficient to motivate a first-time offender to abstain from drunk driving, a three-year suspension and probation term would be overly harsh and wasteful.

## Humane Treatment

*Humane treatment* is a principle meaning that the decision about appropriate punishment is guided by a preference to seek the least painful and intrusive method to achieve specific objectives. One attempts to avoid unnecessary humiliation, pain, and discomfort. For example, incarceration and its associated deprivations of liberty can be considered appropriate punishment in and of itself. Only considerations of appropriate sentence length, security classification, and perhaps rehabilitation opportunities should guide the decision about where and how the offender serves his or her sentence, and for how long. Under this principle, one would not impose additional punishment by making prison conditions as unbearable as possible (e.g., by denying inmates a heated facility in cold weather).

## What are the “Right” Goals and Values?

Mine, of course! Actually, we do not advocate any particular set of punishment goals or values in this book; we want to give you the tools you need to make such decisions explicit. We also caution that different goals and values are not necessarily mutually exclusive: it is possible that a specific program or policy could address more than one goal or value simultaneously. For example, specific deterrence may be part of a rehabilitation program when an offender is exposed to the likely consequences of a continued path of destructive behavior.

Do rehabilitation programs work sufficiently well to serve as a basis for correctional policy? Does retributive justice result in satisfaction of the victim that justice was done? Does the threat of punishment deter others from committing crimes? Consulting the body of research that addresses these questions will help to avoid unrealistic expectations and increase our capacity to clearly identify and evaluate the intended outcomes of our programs and policies. Moreover, we still have much to learn about controlling crime; the role of research is never-ending.

It is important to understand that the pursuit of specific goals may be driven by values, in spite of past failures to achieve these goals. The goal of rehabilitation, for example, has been challenged consistently over the past three decades, and yet we continue to believe that people can change and that positive change can be facilitated by well-designed interventions (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). This belief has driven the search for programs that are effective. We use the term “evidence-based” to refer to programs that have been proven to work, largely in terms of a reduction in subsequent offending (Greenwood & Edwards, 2011).

## STATING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR EACH GOAL

*Objectives* are much more specific than goals. Objectives should define clearly and concisely exactly what outcome is to be achieved by the intervention. Objectives precisely describe the intended results of the intervention in measurable terms.

An intervention should have at least one specific goal, and each goal should be accompanied by at least one specific objective. It is possible, therefore, to have several objectives for each goal. For example, the goal of a new drug treatment program may be "to help clients lead drug-free lives." Two possible objectives are:

- Objective #1: Six months after leaving the program, fewer clients will have been rearrested on drug charges, compared to those who didn't go through the program.
- Objective #2: After six months, treated clients, relative to untreated clients, will score higher (on average) on a "personal and family responsibility" scale.

Objectives must always be *measurable* and *specific*. They should include four major components:

1. *A time frame*: date by which the objective will be completed.
2. *A target population*: who will exhibit the intended change?
3. *A result*: the key outcome intended; a specific change in the problem (or one of its causes).
4. *A criterion*: a standard for measuring successful achievement of the result.

### Example 2.1 Four Components of an Objective: The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment

In the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (Sherman & Berk, 1984), researchers reviewed major studies of police response to domestic violence. In various jurisdictions, they found a rather low rate of arrest out of all calls reported to the police. Other more frequently used police responses included: separation (ordering the offender to leave the house for a cooling-off period, often overnight) and mediation (officers encourage a couple to resolve the conflict).

The researchers hypothesized that, due to greater deterrent effects, mandatory arrest for misdemeanor domestic assault would result in fewer repeat offenses (recidivism) than either separation (order the suspect to leave for at least eight hours) or mediation (try to restore peace, informally solve the conflict). Researchers convinced police to randomly assign all misdemeanor domestic violence cases in two precincts to one of these three interventions. Six months later, researchers predicted, there would be a lower rate of repeat incidents of domestic assault for cases where mandatory arrest was used. We can summarize the four components of the objective as follows:

1. *Time frame*: six months.
2. *Target population*: the experiment included only misdemeanor assaults, where police were empowered (but not required) to make arrests under a new state law. Police had to have

probable cause, and felonies (e.g., obvious or serious injury) were excluded (i.e., felony suspects were always arrested). Two precincts with the highest density of domestic violence were selected for the study.

3. *Result*: fewer repeat incidents of domestic abuse.
4. *Criteria*: two measures were used: (1) police arrest records (incident reports over a six-month period); and victim self-reports (follow-up interviews were conducted with victims every two weeks for 24 weeks, asking about frequency and seriousness of any victimization).

Note that these four components could have been quite different depending upon the results of the problem analysis. First, a different time frame could have been specified (e.g., one year? Two years? Three years?). Second, a different target population could have been specified (e.g., different demographic and income groups could have been studied in different neighborhoods). Third, a different result could have been specified (e.g., victim satisfaction with the police response they received). Finally, different criteria (measures) could have been used (e.g., hospital records of injuries, incidents reported to social service agencies or crisis lines). Any change agent should define the four components of an objective, and explain the reasoning behind these specifications.

Another distinction is sometimes made between process and outcome objectives. *Process objectives* refer to short-term tasks or steps that must be completed in order to implement a program (e.g., within 30 days, all police agencies will hold orientation sessions to acquaint officers with a new domestic violence policy). Strictly speaking, these are not objectives of the intervention at all, because they do *not* define any specific change in the problem. We note this distinction only because it is likely to arise as one reads published reports of interventions, and one should be aware of the difference. We are concerned here with *outcome objectives* (specific, measurable changes in the problem or their causes).

## SEEKING PARTICIPATION IN GOAL SETTING

Is it necessary that everyone agree on the same goals of a specific program or policy? What are the implications if they don't? At the most basic level, the implications are that different individuals (stakeholders) perceive that they are each working toward some specific end point. They may believe, correctly or incorrectly, that they are working toward the same desired end. The problem is: if they have not articulated or discussed their own goals and values with each other, they may find out after considerable expenditure of energy and resources that they are working toward very different ends. Certainly no effective program or policy can be constructed if those responsible for designing the program or policy hold widely disparate or conflicting goals. Participants need some basic agreement about what it is

they are trying to achieve, and why. It is not necessary that every stakeholder agree on the final goals, but those responsible for implementing the program or policy must be held accountable for articulating what it is they are doing and why.

Once again, we stress the virtues of broad participation in program planning. Having the relevant stakeholders involved in setting program goals and objectives is crucial to gaining the support and participation necessary to make the intervention work. An important step, if it has not already been accomplished (see Chapter 1), is to identify relevant participants for inclusion in the goal-setting and objective-setting phase.

The *change agent* (e.g., the person responsible for coordinating the program planning effort) should involve various participants in the planning process, not just agency administrators. Participants might include program staff, potential clients, citizens in the surrounding community, representatives from justice and social service agencies, schools, and so on. This requires patience and negotiating skills, as there are likely to be different assumptions and opinions regarding the problem, its causes, and the type of intervention needed.

Targets and clients are often overlooked at this stage, as are front-line workers: what should *they* expect to see result from this planned change? A major question to ask at this point is whether goal-setting should proceed from a "top-down" or "bottom-up" approach.

Typically, change follows a top-down format. This is often the case because the change agent is likely to be working for, or contracted by, the agency that is funding the intervention, and the change agent must give more weight to their definitions of goals. There may be advantages to this situation, as well as costs. It may be the case that those in the higher levels of the organization have the most experience with interventions of this type, and they might indeed be in the best position to state realistic, feasible outcomes to be expected. They might also be best equipped to formulate goals that can garner widespread political support for the program (e.g., support from other stakeholders). However, there is a very real danger in ignoring the views of program staff and clients. The danger is that the goals handed down from above may be unrealistic to program staff, or irrelevant to the clients. Staff may view an imposed program element as too burdensome, while clients may see the intervention as not particularly relevant to their main needs. In either case, the impact of the intervention could be severely compromised. The goals might prove unrealistic in terms of resources, in which case the program would be held accountable for unreachable goals.

### Goal Setting: "Top-Down" versus "Bottom-Up" Approaches

#### Top-Down

The change agent begins by getting goal definitions from top officials at the administrative level of his or her organization (e.g., the Chief of County Probation, the Chief of Police, the Director of Social

Services, etc.), and then gets responses from lower levels of the organization: perhaps from agency supervisors, then program staff, and eventually from potential clients. Thus, those at the top of the organizational hierarchy have more “say” in defining the program’s goals, because their definition is the first one, and it carries more weight and more power as subordinates and clients are asked to respond to it.

### Bottom-Up

The change agent begins by seeking goal definitions at the client or staff level. In contrast to the top-down approach, here the change agent first gets definitions from clients and staff about what the program goals are or should be, and then gets responses to these goal definitions from successively higher levels of the agency responsible for implementing the intervention, as well as the agency that is funding the intervention. Other stakeholders to approach may include agency supervisors, administrators, and representatives from organizations that share similar or related missions. The views of clients and program staff are given more priority using this format; their definitions guide subsequent responses. Obviously, this approach is favored when it is widely viewed that so-called experts are out of touch, and that front-line program staff and/or clients are in a better position to state the needs and goals of the target population. Many grassroots organizations follow this format.

Regardless of which approach is used to formulate initial goals, therefore, it is crucial that all stakeholders eventually have some input into defining program goals. These issues are examined in more detail in Case Study 2.1 at the end of this chapter.

## SPECIFYING AN IMPACT MODEL

We discussed causes and theories in Chapter 1. An examination of relevant theories helps us to formulate what is called an *impact model*: a prediction that a particular intervention will bring about a specific change in the problem. Formulating such a model forces us to answer several important questions: What is the intervention? Why would we expect a proposed intervention to work? Which causes of the problem will it address? In other words, through what process will change occur, and why? What outcome (a change in the problem) is expected? Thus, the impact model is made up of three key elements we’ve discussed: the intervention (policies and programs); the problem’s cause(s) that will be addressed by the intervention (theories about what causes the problem); and some specific outcome—a desired change in the problem (goals and objectives). We can analyze an existing intervention by working backward, first specifying the intervention, then the causes of that problem, and finally the problem the intervention addresses. Program or policy creation, on the other hand, proceeds from problem analysis to causal analysis to formulation of goals and objectives and then to intervention design (Figure 2.1).

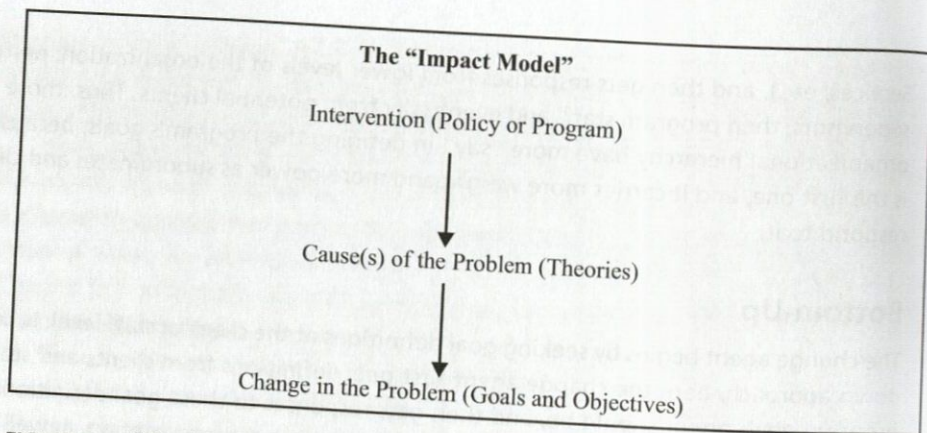


FIGURE 2.1 *The "Impact Model"*

**Example 2.2** *An Impact Model for a Reentry Program*

*The Problem*

Texas has a prison population well in excess of 162,000. As far back as 1984, researchers in Texas reported that 38 percent of parolees were reincarcerated within a period of three years. Both the huge corrections costs and the failure of parolees to succeed in the community produced a demand for solving the parole failure problem.

*The Program*

Project RIO (Re-Integration of Offenders) was started as a joint effort of the Texas Department of Corrections and the Texas Workforce Commission. Originally started in two cities as a federally funded pilot project, it is now a statewide and state-funded program. Project RIO has assembled 2,000 employers who hire parolees, and every parolee in the state has access to its services. Preparatory work with parolees begins while they are still in prison. Six months prior to release, Project RIO staff conduct assessments of skills and work history, and initiate job-readiness training. Vocational training is made available, and many employers come to the prison to meet with inmates and to encourage them during this difficult time of transition back to the community. Once released from prison, parolees receive more preparation and help with job placement.

*The Cause(s)*

Parolees with jobs are less likely to reoffend and are found to reoffend less than those with low income; one factor that drives parolees back into crime.

### *The Intended Change in the Problem*

A study of recidivism conducted by a research team from Texas A&M University found that participants in Project RIO were less likely to recidivate than nonparticipants. For example, among high-risk parolees, 48 percent of Project RIO parolees were arrested during the first year of parole, compared with 57 percent of nonparticipants. Among this same group, 23 percent of the Project RIO participants were returned to prison, compared to 38 percent of nonparticipants.

(summarized from Finn, 1998)

## IDENTIFYING COMPATIBLE AND INCOMPATIBLE GOALS IN THE LARGER SYSTEM

As we discussed in Chapter 1, criminal justice programs and policies are shaped by the interactive actions of various decision makers and agencies in any jurisdiction. We argued that a “systems assessment” provides a common language for describing the structure, policies, practices, and norms of the system in which the problem has been identified, in order to shape a common vision for the future, and to make that vision a reality.

It is the notion of shaping a common vision that is relevant to this chapter. Based upon information collected in Stage 1, Problem Analysis, we should be able to identify and describe the competing interests of different individuals and agencies. We try to determine where agreement and disagreement about goals exist, and we try to get stakeholders to articulate and discuss their desired goals for any specific program or policy.

In Case Study 1.3 (Incorporating Restorative and Community Justice into American Sentencing and Corrections), for example, we saw that government control over criminal justice has not resulted in safer and more closely knit communities. Proponents of restorative and community justice strategies argue that communities should exercise control over certain justice processes. On the one hand, communities feel safer when there is a significant police presence and when the courts imprison wrongdoers. But the problems that generate crime don't go away because of these criminal justice system responses, and victims generally feel left out of the process. Community justice strategies engage members of the community in the business of solving community crime problems. Restorative justice strategies involve victims in the process of deciding on an appropriate sanction. Even members of the offender's family can have a role in efforts to restore victims to preoffense conditions (further information on restorative justice is available at <http://www.realjustice.org>).

In another example, contracting out prison operations to private companies (i.e., privatization of prison operations) is often seen by elected officials as superior

to public correctional organizations due to assumed cost savings. Other stakeholders disagree about whether cost savings are likely, and whether cost savings should be the goal at all. Several major objections to privatization have emerged (Shichor, 1995; Clear & Frost, 2002).

- Correctional officers have initiated lawsuits alleging violation of their collective bargaining agreements. Privatization, they argue, is designed to drive down wages and benefits that were won through hard-fought, legitimate union negotiations.
- Inmate advocates and attorneys, concerned with civil rights, argue that turning over the power to punish from government to the private sector is absolutely unethical. Private corporations are motivated to make profits, not to rehabilitate prisoners, protect public safety, or provide constitutionally mandated, humane conditions of confinement.
- Private interests, many argue, will attempt to use inmates as a source of cheap labor, or worse, indentured slavery. Such conditions would mark a return to the barbaric days of inmate exploitation and abuse prior to court intervention.
- Cost-cutting motivations, it is feared, will lead to lapses in prison security that threaten public safety (e.g., higher inmate-to-guard staffing ratios).

A systems perspective is no less important at the goal-setting stage than any other stage, and perhaps more so because the fundamental assumptions developed at this stage will critically shape the design and structure of the entire program or policy. That is, changes in one criminal justice agency may affect decisions in other agencies. Case Study 2.2 at the end of this chapter further examines these issues, using mandatory sentencing as a context for analysis.

We offer six guidelines for identifying compatible and incompatible goals or values in the larger system:

1. Have the appropriate stakeholders been identified via a thorough problem analysis (see Chapter 1)?
2. Review the five goals and four values described earlier in this chapter. Do different stakeholders disagree over specific goals and values? Have their assumptions about the problem, its possible causes, and possible solutions been described?
3. Do individuals within the same agency agree or disagree about the goals or values of the proposed change? How?
4. Do individuals within different agencies agree or disagree about the goals or values of the proposed change? How?

5. Has a systems analysis been conducted to provide stakeholders with relevant information about criminal case processing in this jurisdiction? Is all the information needed to make decisions about goals available, or does some information need to be developed?
6. Do any group mechanisms (e.g., a Criminal Justice Cabinet) exist for bringing stakeholders together to discuss the goals of a proposed change? Is it necessary to create or further develop such a group before proceeding?

## IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

It is highly likely that any criminal justice intervention will at some point require the cooperation of other agencies to achieve its goals. Many criminal justice interventions, to be successful, require the participation of police, prosecutors, courts, and corrections to carry out their program plans. Other public agencies such as public health or social service agencies may also be called upon, depending upon the problem to be addressed (e.g., gun violence) and the type of intervention to be attempted. The change agent, as part of the planning process, needs to consider his or her agency's "external environment" when attempting any kind of change. Different types of collaboration or support may be required: political support, shared information, exchange of services, joint client intake or assessment, and perhaps even cross-referrals of clients among different agencies (Rossi et al., 1982). Such forms of cooperation, obviously, must be negotiated and agreed upon. Each agency must perceive tangible benefits from undertaking such cooperation.

Interagency cooperation is not always possible or even desirable, however. Political conflicts and administrative hierarchies occasionally preclude opportunities for collaboration.

### *Example 2.3 Agency Politics: Roadblocks to Collaboration?*

In a recent project, we found that the juvenile court, part of a state agency, was resistant to participating in the development of an information system that would benefit a group of city agencies. The purpose of the information system project was to create an integrated system that would link the databases of the juvenile court, the department of human services, the police, the district attorney, the public defender, and the school district. Sharing information electronically was viewed as a primary means of supporting effective decisions and avoiding fragmented planning for individual youths and families. The juvenile court resisted involvement because preexisting political conflicts with other agencies had not been resolved and because of its stated desire to protect confidential court data from misuse by other agencies.

## THE BENEFITS OF GOAL CONFLICT

Under some circumstances, planning partnerships may not be desirable. Kevin Wright, for example, argues that a complex justice system in a complex society cannot and should not have any common set of goals and values (Wright, 1999). There is (and should be) a certain tension between some criminal justice agencies, because they do not (and should not) all have the same goals. For example, prosecutors tend to emphasize goals of crime control while defense attorneys emphasize due process. According to Wright (1999), such goal "tension" helps protect the competing interests of victims and suspects. Moreover, distinctions need to be made between goal conflicts and agency conflicts. Opposition on specific goals does not imply that agencies cannot work together under all circumstances. There will be many situations in which collaboration will serve the purposes of agencies that represent different interests. Plea bargaining between prosecutors and defense attorneys is perhaps the classic example of such exchange relations.

### *Example 2.4 Goal Conflict in Criminal Justice: Roadblocks or Speedbumps for Interagency Collaboration?*

According to Wright, there are at least three reasons why goal conflict within the criminal justice system is desirable: (1) reflective diversity, (2) mediation of interests and system adaptation, and (3) efficient offender processing.

1. *Reflective Diversity:* Fragmentation and lack of integration allow different interests to be incorporated into the system. Conflict may be necessary to mediate among differing interests in the community, including competing demands for crime prevention, public order, fairness, due process, efficiency, and accountability.
2. *Mediation of Interests and System Adaptation:* Conflicting goals promote a system of checks and balances. No single component of the system can dominate others, nor can any unitary interest be overemphasized. Conflict establishes and maintains a balance of power within the structure of the system (e.g., a prosecutor gives an overly stiff sentence in reaction to public sentiment, but corrections [parole] may modify that sentence and balance out the fairness [and vice versa]).
3. *Offender Processing:* Conflict and fragmentation may actually promote and support rather than hinder the processing of offenders. Prosecution, for example, may be smoother and more efficient precisely because police officers do consider decisions about prosecution, and that tension reduces the likelihood that prosecutors will need to invalidate illegal, improper, or weak arrests.

## LOOSE COUPLING AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

The concept of *loose coupling* further illustrates the need for interagency cooperation among criminal justice agencies if effective interventions are to be developed. Loose coupling refers to agencies that are responsive to one another and yet maintain independent identities (Cohen et al., 1972; Hagan, 1989; Weick, 1976; Welsh, 1992). In such systems, "structural elements are only loosely linked to one another and to activities, rules are often violated, decisions often go unimplemented, if implemented have uncertain consequences, and techniques are often subverted or rendered so vague as to provide little coordination" (Hagan, 1989: p. 119). In other words, the criminal justice "system" has been called a "nonsystem" due to its decentralized and fragmented nature (Wagenaar et al., 2007; Berman & Aubrey, 2010; Eisenstein & Herbert, 1977; Forst, 1977; President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1968). For example, prosecutors and defense attorneys may appear together in criminal trials, but each group answers to a different administrative head, and their goals reflect very different missions. Similarly, the police and prosecutors are not linked administratively, but to process cases, they need to work toward successful prosecutions of offenders.

For example, narcotics enforcement and white-collar crime prosecution require a departure from the loose coupling that dominates criminal justice organizations (Hagan, 1989). While reactive police work based on loosely coupled processes is the norm, proactive policing requires more tightly coupled interagency relations. Narcotics work requires police to use more controversial tactics to obtain evidence, including undercover work, entrapment, and informants (Skolnick, 1966). Police officers are more dependent upon prosecutors for feedback on the legal permissibility of evidence, and prosecutors are more dependent upon police officers for extensive information and cooperation in the preparation of cases. Such information exchange influences charging decisions and plea bargains engineered to develop cooperation from informants and codefendants. Hagan argues that the proactive prosecution of white-collar criminals requires similar leverage to "turn witnesses." Judges must participate in these decisions as well, because their approval is necessary to implement charge reductions or negotiated sentences.

Using loose coupling as an explanatory concept, Hagan describes how sudden changes in the external environment of an organization (e.g., a riot; a murder committed by an escaped prisoner; court orders to reduce jail overcrowding) create demands for tighter coupling (Hagan, 1989). The distinction between proactive and reactive problem solving is crucial. For example, proactive policing or prosecution implies that officials actively target certain problems for attention. Proactive problem solving, however, requires a departure from the norm of "loose coupling": it necessitates cooperation and planning from multiple agencies and actors. In an analysis of urban riots in Los Angeles and Detroit, Balbus (1973) suggested that black suspects were rounded up en masse, at least initially, to serve an ostensible order maintenance function ("clearing the streets"). This initial increase in restrictiveness was followed by "uncharacteristic leniency" as bail release became much more

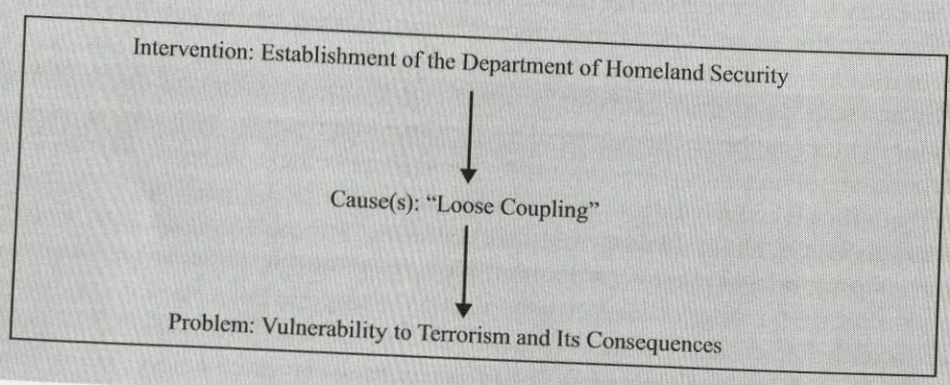
frequent than usual ("clearing the jails"). This shift from "normal" court operations required a tightening of the relations between the police, prosecutorial, and judicial subsystems, so that bail decisions became more consistent.

In addition, Carter, Phillips, and Gayadeen (2014) describe how the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan recommendations regarding greater sharing of intelligence among law enforcement agencies made local policing agencies more tightly coupled. This plan emerged in response to the information-sharing problems exposed after the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York City and Washington, DC. The implications of this agency fragmentation perspective are illustrated in Example 2.5 below.

**Example 2.5** *Reorganizing the Federal Government to Meet the Threat of Terrorist Attacks (Office of Homeland Security, 2002)*

In the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the Bush Administration proposed the reorganization of those federal agencies responsible for protecting U.S. citizens and the creation of a Department of Homeland Security. Those attacks demonstrated the vulnerability of our country to terrorist attacks and caused our leaders to perform a quick analysis of our sources of weakness. The problems identified included an inability to share and use existing intelligence information, lack of strategic coordination of resources among those agencies responsible for our national security, and a lack of technical preparedness for the kinds of weapons likely to be used by terrorists. In fact, several federal agencies, including the FBI and CIA, had information relevant to this tragedy, but this information was not shared. Competition and administrative barriers among these agencies had created a security system that was so loosely coupled that it was incapable of adequately meeting national security needs.

The proposal to create a Department of Homeland Security was passed quickly by Congress, and former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge was appointed to head the new agency. The "impact model" looks like this:



The overall Homeland Security strategy was designed to enhance resources that are designed to prevent terrorist attacks, such as increased airline security; to reduce our vulnerability to attacks by doing such things as increasing border controls; and to increase our capacity to respond to attacks if and when they occur. Under the Department of Homeland Security, 22 smaller agencies were brought together under one administrative entity, thus eliminating some of the "loose coupling" that existed. The Department of Homeland Security also was made an intelligence analysis and reporting hub for all intelligence-gathering agencies, including state and local law enforcement agencies. In addition to creation of this new agency, other agencies such as the CIA and FBI were restructured in light of the mission laid out by the White House in its National Strategy for Homeland Security.

**CONCLUSION**

Failure to clearly identify the goals, values, and expectations guiding the development of an intervention can spell certain failure. At best, continued disagreement over intended goals and outcomes can be expected long after the program or policy is implemented. While discussion between stakeholders of competing goals and values can initially heighten conflict, it may also direct us toward eventual compromise or collaboration, more effective planning, and a reduction in the problem of concern. Similarly, failure to specify measurable objectives makes accountability elusive and measuring effectiveness impossible.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. At the end of the Introduction, we asked you to write a short essay describing one possible intervention to address a specific problem in criminal justice. You are also likely to be doing one of the following in this course: (a) writing about a specific problem and/or intervention as a class assignment, or (b) participating in the development of a specific program or policy within the agency you work for. Briefly describe a specific criminal justice program or policy, and then describe one goal and one objective for this intervention.
2. Define: (a) goal, and (b) objective. (c) Describe the difference between the two.
3. Describe the four components of an objective.
4. Some argue that goal-setting should proceed from the bottom up; others argue it should proceed from the top down. (a) Describe each of these positions. (b) Which position do you agree with? Why?