OUR VULNERABLE TEENAGERS:
Their Victimization, Its Consequences, and Directions for Prevention and Intervention

MAY 2002

Prepared by

Madeline Wordes, Ph.D.

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The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, founded in 1907, is a nonprofit organization which promotes effective, humane, fair and economically sound solutions to family, community and justice problems. NCCD conducts research, promotes reform initiatives, and seeks to work with individuals, public and private organizations and the media to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency.

The National Center for Victims of Crime is the nation's leading resource and advocacy organization dedicated to serving individuals, families, and communities harmed by crime. Working with local, state, and federal partners, the National Center:

- Provides direct services and resources to victims of crime and victim service providers;
- Advocates for passage of laws and public policies that create resources and secure rights and protection for crime victims;
- Delivers training and technical assistance to victim service organizations, counselors, attorneys, criminal justice agencies, and allied professionals; and
- Fosters cutting-edge thinking about the impact of crime and the ways in which each of us can help victims of crime regain control of their lives.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR VULNERABLE TEENAGERS: Their Victimization, Its Consequences, and Directions for Prevention and Intervention

The victimization of teenagers in America has gone largely unrecognized. Instead, in the context of crime and violence, our nation's young people are more typically characterized as troublemakers, predators, and violent criminals. When victimization has been recognized, public attention has focused almost solely on large-scale incidents, such as school shootings. Furthermore, the victims of these tragic events represent only a fraction of the teens who become crime victims. After years of focusing solely on juvenile offenders, it is time to shift our attention to the plight of juvenile victims.

The National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) and The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) have joined together to shed light on the issue of teen victimization and create a national network of service providers to meet the needs of young people victimized by crime. This initiative is called the *Teen Victim Project*, and it has a simple, yet ambitious goal – to raise national awareness about the incidence and impact of crimes against teenagers and to help those who have been victimized.

The jointly prepared report, "Our Vulnerable Teenagers: Their Victimization, Its Consequences, and Directions for Prevention and Intervention", which helps launch the *Teen Victim Project*, is a review of existing research that details the high number of teenage victims, and how victimization during the teenage years significantly impacts American youth. It outlines the current research and data available on the nature and extent of victimization within the teenage population.

Teenagers are Disproportionately Represented as Victims of Crime

Teenagers are victimized at alarming rates at home, in school, and on the street. Teenagers are two times more likely than others to be victims of violent crime. In a national survey of high school students, one in five reported they were a victim of a violent crime in the past year. Other data show they are also more likely to be victims of property crimes than adults, although they do not often report it to the police.

For most youths school is a relatively safe haven. Two-thirds of serious violent crimes committed against teenagers happen outside of school property. In fact, students who are expelled from school are victimized at three times the rate of those that are not expelled.

Home is not always safe for adolescents either. One quarter of all substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect were for teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17. This means there are approximately one quarter of a million substantiated child protective service cases involving teens. Moreover, teenagers are more likely to have a substantiated sexual abuse case than younger children.

Youths who are poor, African American, Hispanic, or American Indian are at the highest risk of victimization. For example, African American teenagers are twice as likely to have a substantiated report of child maltreatment and are five times more likely to be killed by a gun than White teenagers. American Indian teenagers were more likely than any other group to be a victim of violent crime – 49% higher than the rate for African Americans.

There are also stark differences in victimization for boys and girls. Seventeen year old boys are six times more likely to be homicide victims than 17 year old girls, mostly due to firearm related homicides. However, almost as many teenage girls reported being raped as teenage boys reported being robbed. Girls were seven times more likely to be raped than boys.

The intersection of gender and race shows that violent victimization rates for African American girls are the highest. Adolescent African American girls are victimized at double the rate of White girls and more than White or African American boys. Homeless adolescents are particularly vulnerable to victimization and are at increased risk of being harmed.

Consequences of Teenage Victimization

Beyond the obvious immediate consequences of victimization, there are longer term consequences for many teenagers. In fact, studies have shown that victimization during adolescence is more deleterious than at other times in our lives. The victimization of an adolescent can have serious consequences on school performance, physical and mental health, substance abuse, delinquent behavior, and future earning potential. The repercussions of being victimized can be immediate or long term.

Abused teenagers show more problems in school, difficulty with teachers, and poor academic performance. Abuse is also a risk factor for teen pregnancy, drug use, and mental health problems. Young women with a history of sexual abuse show problems, including major depression, drug and alcohol addiction, teen pregnancy, prostitution, and suicide.

The data suggest that being a victim of a crime in the previous year is also related to becoming an offender. NCCD analysis of the Adolescent Health Survey showed that of the youths who were violent offenders, only five percent were not victimized in the past year, and fifty-four percent were victimized in both years of the study. Even statistically controlling for other facts that are related to violent offending, victimization in the previous year was the strongest predictor.

It is difficult to isolate these consequences from one another. Adolescents who are abused are more likely to become victims of crime, runaways, and become homeless, leading to continued victimization. Research on homeless and runaway youths has found that familial abuse, both sexual and physical, strongly correlates with victimization on the streets – and past victimization is related to future victimization.

Prevention and Intervention in the Victimization of Teenagers

Teenagers are vulnerable to victimization in their homes, in schools, and on the streets. By not protecting our teenagers as they make the transition to adulthood, we set them on a path toward a difficult future. It is clear that the primary defense against future abuse and victimization is prevention, identification, and treatment now.

In reviewing the literature on the scope of victimization, its consequences, and promising strategies to address it, NCCD and the National Center for Victims of Crime recognize three basic principles upon which a comprehensive approach should be based: providing safe environments to teenage victims; identifying and assessing victimization and its consequences; and protecting teenagers from further harm and strengthening against repeat victimization. A series of promising victimization prevention and intervention strategies based on these principles are presented in the full report.

The *Teen Victim Project*, lead by the National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, will work to generate an effective, focused, national response to the problem of teen victimization. The *Teen Victim Project* aims to bring together two powerful networks – the youth development community and victim service providers – and build a "safety net" for teens based on collaboration and communication and a shared interest in helping America's teenagers. One of the primary objectives of this initiative is to create the Teen Victim Network, an infrastructure of national youth-serving and victim service organizations committed to enhancing their institutional capacity to serve teenage victims of crime. These

youth-serving organizations are found in communities around the country serving millions of young people every day, yet they have not generally organized around the pervasive issue of teen victimization. The creation of the Teen Victim Network will provide a structure for community-based organizations, national youth-serving organizations, and state-wide coalitions against various types of violence and crime, to work together to strengthen the net of services we provide teenagers.

The *Teen Victim Project* is designed to address the needs of the alarming numbers of teens who are victimized in this country and to prevent as many victimizations as possible. Together, the public, policy-makers, youth-serving organizations, and victim service providers can make a difference in reducing the number of adolescents who become crime victims and alleviate some of the pain and consequences for those who are victimized.

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The victimization of teenagers in America has gone largely unrecognized. Instead, in the context of crime and violence, our nation's young people are more typically characterized as troublemakers, predators, and violent criminals. When victimization has been recognized, public attention has focused almost solely on large-scale incidents, such as school shootings. Furthermore, the victims of these tragic events represent only a fraction of the teens who become crime victims. After years of focusing solely on juvenile offenders, it is time to shift our attention to the plight of juvenile victims.

The National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) and The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) have joined together to bring light to the issue of teen victimization and create a national network of service providers to meet the needs of young people victimized by crime. This initiative is called the *Teen Victim Project*, and it has a simple, yet ambitious goal – to raise national awareness about the incidence and impact of crimes against teenagers and to help those who have been victimized.

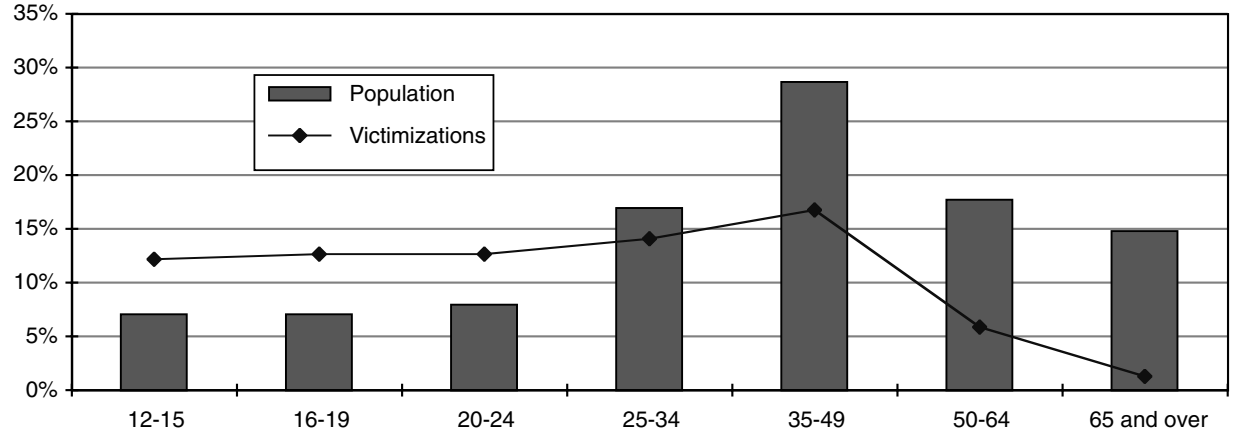
This report, which helps launch the *Teen Victim Project*, is a review of existing research that details the high number of teenage victims and how victimization during the teenage years significantly impacts American teenagers. It outlines the current research and data available on the nature and extent of victimization within the teenage population. In particular, the report highlights the link between victimization and delinquency, as well as the extent of teenage victimization in areas such as school, the family, and the juvenile justice system. Research is also presented on the role ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status play in the experience of victimization. The data describe the complex and interrelated impact of crime and violence on teenagers. Most importantly, it affirms that teenage victimization changes the course of lives. Finally, the report ends with a series of promising targeted prevention and intervention strategies.

Section I: Teenagers Are Disproportionately Represented As Victims of Crime

Many young people face victimization at home, in school, and in public places. According to the 1999 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), although adolescents represent approximately 14% of the general population, they represent about 25% of people suffering a violent victimization (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001).

Teenagers and young adults are approximately twice as likely to be victimized by violence as other age groups[1]. Figure 1 shows the over representation of young people as victims of violent crime.

Figure 1: Percent of Violent Victimizations Compared with Percent in Population by Age Group, 1999



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001.

[1] It is important to note that the varying methods of determining victimization rates lead to different numbers. Most of the victimization data cited in the literature is taken from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which is a random digit dial telephone survey of American households. Other surveys, such as the Adolescent Health Survey, use questionnaires and interviews of high school students. The in-person interviews yielded much higher reported rates of victimization.

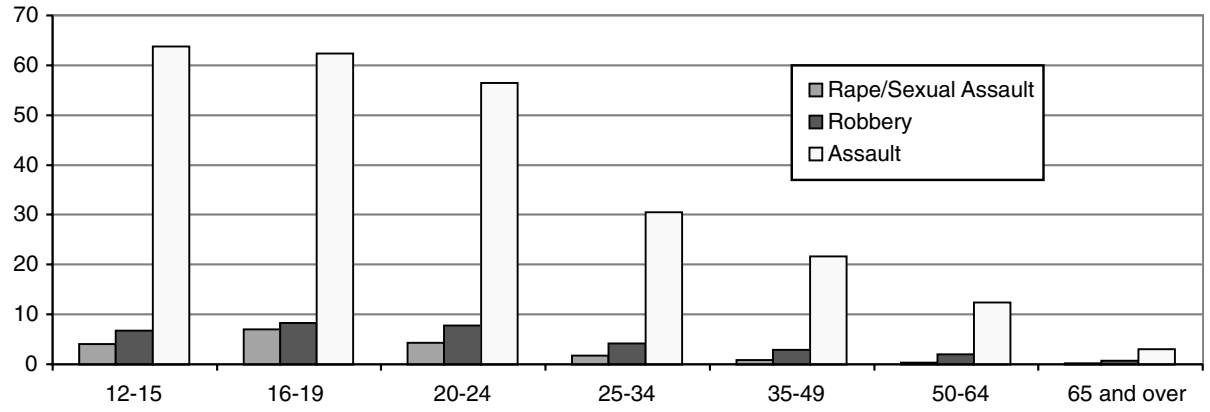
Assaults are the most prevalent violent crime (BJS, 2001). As Figure 2 shows, the annual rate of assaults in 1999 was 60 to 70 per 1,000 for 12 to 19 year olds compared with a rate less than 25 per 1,000 for the largest group of adults (ages 35 to 49). The graph also shows that teenagers are raped and robbed at much higher rates than older people.

According to data from the Adolescent Health Survey, approximately 20% of the adolescents surveyed in 1995 reported being a victim of a violent crime (defined as having a knife/gun pulled on them, being shot, stabbed, or jumped) in the past year (Sieving et al., 2000). These data indicate that adolescents suffer about three times the number of violent victimizations than reported in the NCVS.

Homicide rates are much less likely to vary depending on the source. Young people are victims of homicide at alarming rates, although the under 18 rate is less than the young adult rate. Homicide rates climbed substantially during the early 1990's and are finally beginning to recede (OJJDP, 2001). However, there were still approximately 1,100 reported homicides of youths 12 through 17 in 1998.

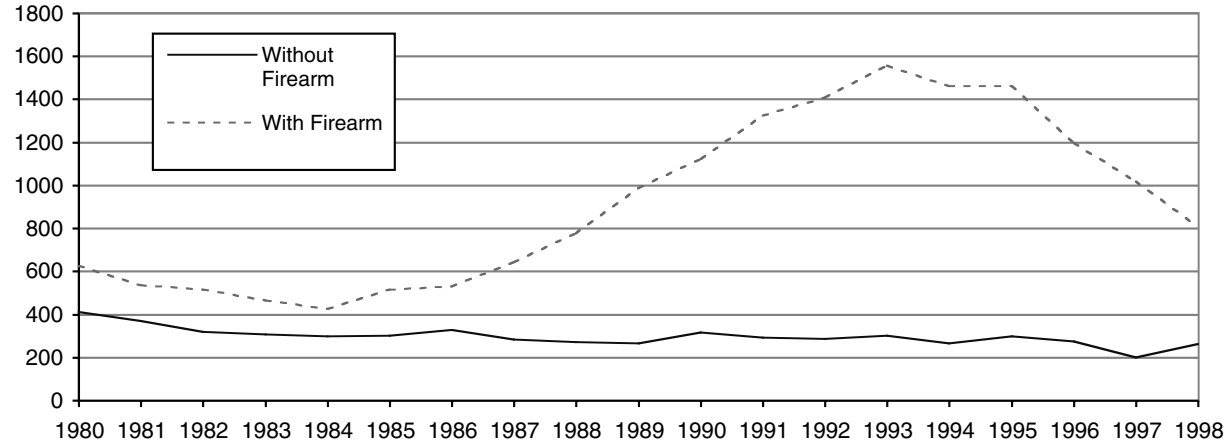
The increase in homicides of juveniles in the 1990's shows a clear connection to the use of firearms. Figure 3 shows a trend of increasing firearm usage in homicides beginning in 1986. At its peak in 1993, 4.5 times as many juveniles were killed with firearms as without firearms.

Figure 2: Violent Victimization Rates per 1,000 by Age Group and Crime Type, 1999



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001.

Figure 3: Number of Juvenile Homicide Victims Ages 12 - 17 Involving Firearms by Year of Incident



Source: Snyder & Finnegan, 2000.

Finkelhor & Ormrod (2000) reported that juveniles also experienced higher rates of property crimes than adults (166 and 118 per 1,000 respectively). They found teenage victims of property crimes are much less likely to report these offenses to the police, and thus, these crimes are often overlooked. While the monetary value of a young person's property may not be as high, the impact of the crime on their psychological and emotional well-being could be very high.

Victimization at Home

Although reported physical abuse in the home is less frequent for adolescents than younger children, it is still clearly a problem. According to National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999), approximately one in four children for whom child protective services substantiated a report of abuse or neglect was between the ages of 12 and 17. This represents approximately 246,000 teenagers every year.

The largest number of maltreatment cases for all age groups was for neglect, followed by physical abuse (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). While adolescents make up 25% of all substantiated maltreatment cases, about 40% of substantiated sexual abuse cases and 35% of physical abuse cases were for youths 12 and over.

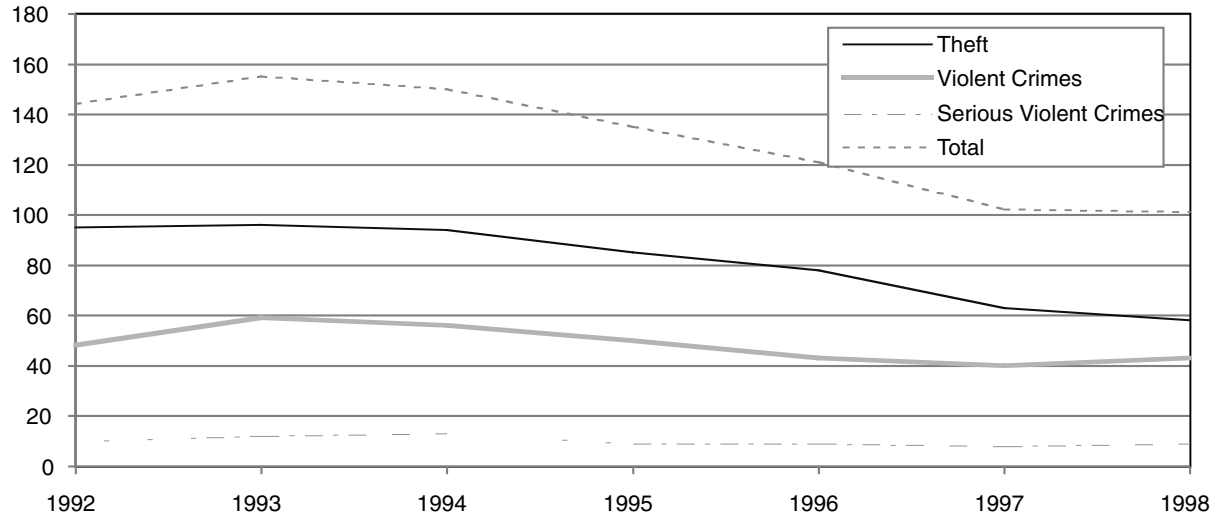
Victimization in School

According to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice report, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2000*, about 10% of students reported that a violent or property crime was committed against them on school property (Kaufman et al., 2000). Although the rate of victimization in school has been decreasing, Figure 4 shows most of the decrease can be attributed to fewer thefts rather than fewer instances of violent crime.

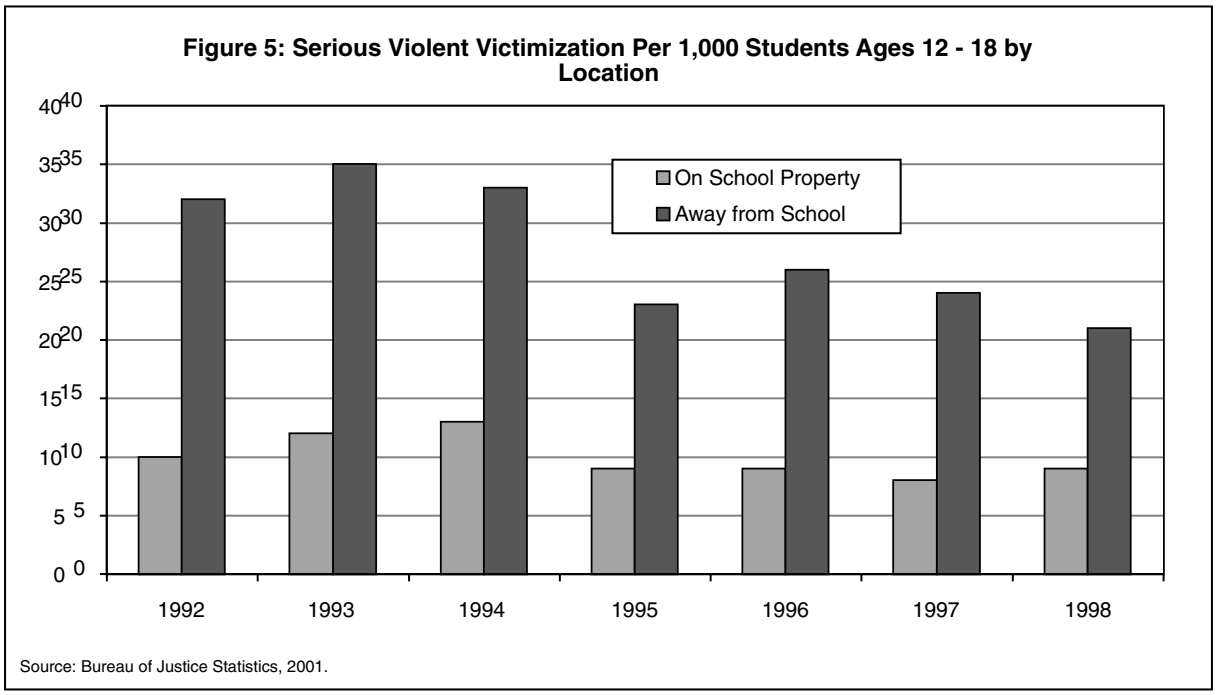
Still, serious violent crimes committed against youths are more likely to happen away from school property. Figure 5 shows that approximately two in three serious violent crimes (includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) happen outside of school property.

Thus, youths are safer while on school property. Being expelled also has a strong relationship to victimization. According to the NCCD analysis of two years of data from the Adolescent Health Survey, while expelled youths made up only 5% of the sample, they were three times more likely to be victimized than non-expelled youths (30% vs. 9%).

Figure 4: Non Fatal Crimes On School Property Per 1,000 Students Ages 12 - 18



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001.



Victimization in High-Risk Areas

While thefts and property crimes are widespread across the country, violent crimes against juveniles are concentrated in high-risk areas characterized by poverty and high official crime rates (Menard, 1998). The killing of juveniles is concentrated in approximately 15% of the more than 3,100 counties in the United States. Eighty-five percent of reporting counties recorded no murders of juveniles in 1997. In fact, 25% of the juvenile homicides occurred in the counties that encompassed only 9% of the general juvenile population (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). These counties include the large cities of Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Detroit.

Homeless teens tend to be concentrated in these areas. Although it is difficult to determine the rate at which homeless teens are victimized, studies seeking to learn more about this population report physical and sexual abuse rates from 3% to 80% depending on population surveyed and method (Kurtz, Kurtz, & Jarvis, 1991; Kufeldt & Nimmo, 1987; Whitbeck & Simmons, 1993; Saltonstal, 1973). These studies report that these homeless teens have increased physical, sexual, and emotional problems, as well as more family problems, suicidal feelings, and sadness. Often times they describe unbearable living conditions and are generally understood not to be running to something, but running away from something:

> A review of the children's records revealed in addition to family disruption a high incidence of beatings, sexual abuse, forcible restraint, and almost warlike atmosphere in the children's homes. An extraordinary number of children left circumstances that had become overwhelming and intolerable for them: they were both psychologically deprived and physically abused. For these children running away seems to be a healthy reaction to an impossible situation (Saltonstal, 1973).

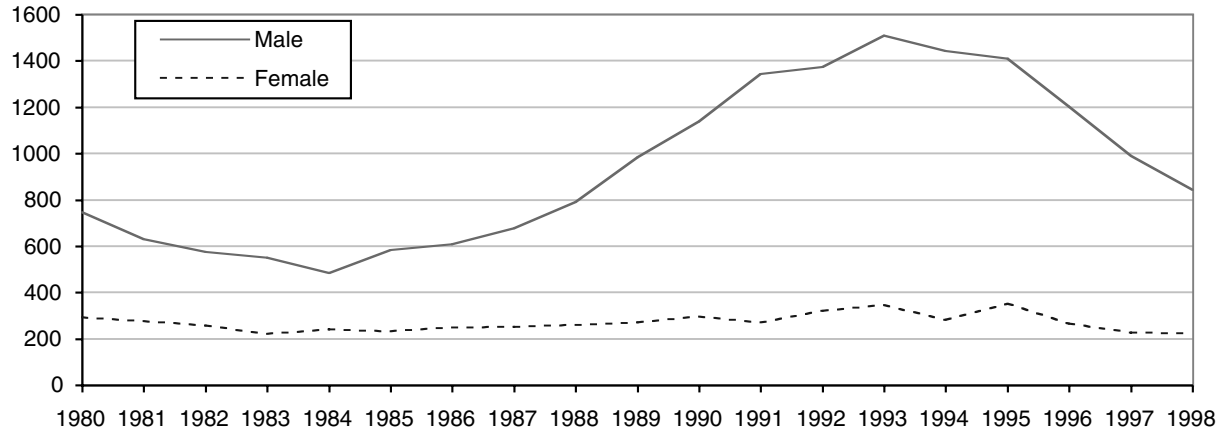
Although many are leaving difficult situations, being homeless puts them at high risk of victimization. Studies have found that living on the street increases chances of being victimized and the longer the child has spent away from home, the higher the chance of victimization (Kufeldt & Nimmo, 1987).

Differences in Victimization by Gender

In general, the crimes committed against adolescents differ based on gender. The large increase in juvenile homicides by firearm was comprised mostly of teenage boys. Figure 6 shows a tremendous spike in homicides by firearm for boys compared to a slight increase in the numbers for girls.

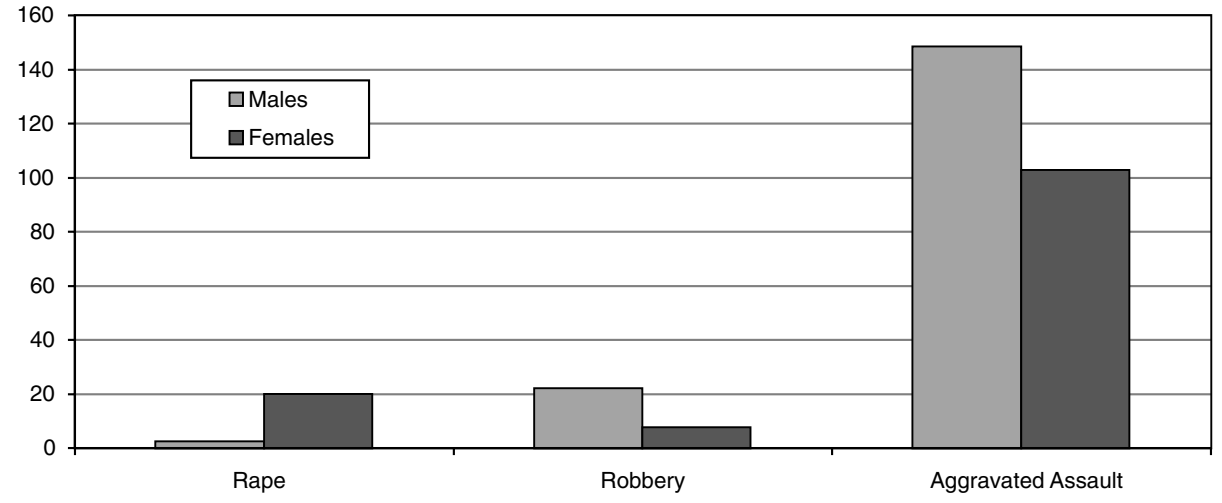
Teenage boys are also more likely to be victims of serious assault (not including sexual assault) and robbery, although the gender differences are much smaller (see Figure 7). According to the NCVS, approximately 15% of boys reported being a victim of aggravated assault, compared to 10% of girls. Boys were about twice as likely to report being a robbery victim. Data from the Adolescent Health Survey confirmed that there were gender differences in the number of violent victimizations (in 1995, 28% of boys and 12% of girls reported that they had been either shot, stabbed, jumped, or had a gun/knife pulled on them).

Figure 6: Number of Juvenile Homicides Ages 12 - 17 Involving a Firearm by Gender



Source: Snyder & Finnegan, 2000.

Figure 7: 1999 Number of Violent Personal Crimes Against Juveniles Ages 12 - 19 by Victims Gender and Type of Crime



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001.

Figure 7 also shows that girls were much more likely to be victimized by rape than boys. Strikingly, almost as many girls reported being raped as boys reported being robbed. Girls were approximately seven times more likely to be a victim of rape (BJS, 2001).

The gender related crimes of rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence are often overlooked for teenage girls as they are thought to be crimes mostly committed against adults. Since being a victim of these crimes carries such a stigma, there are vast differences in the number reported depending on the method of gathering the data. Official statistics and telephone surveys such as the National Crime Victims' Survey, tend to elicit less reporting than other methods.

The National Violence Against Women Survey reported that one in six women has been the victim of rape or attempted rape and the majority of these occurred before age 18. Of these rapes and attempted rapes approximately 22% occurred when the girls were under age 12 and 32% happened to adolescents ages 12-17 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2001). The survey also found that women who reported being raped before age 18 were significantly more likely to report being raped as adults. In another study, Himelien (1995) found that of college-aged women who answered affirmatively to having been sexually victimized while in college, 38% had first been victims prior to entering college – making past victimization the best predictor of future victimization. The authors of these studies suggest that rape prevention interventions should focus on rapes committed against minors and the long-term effects of rape occurring at an early age.

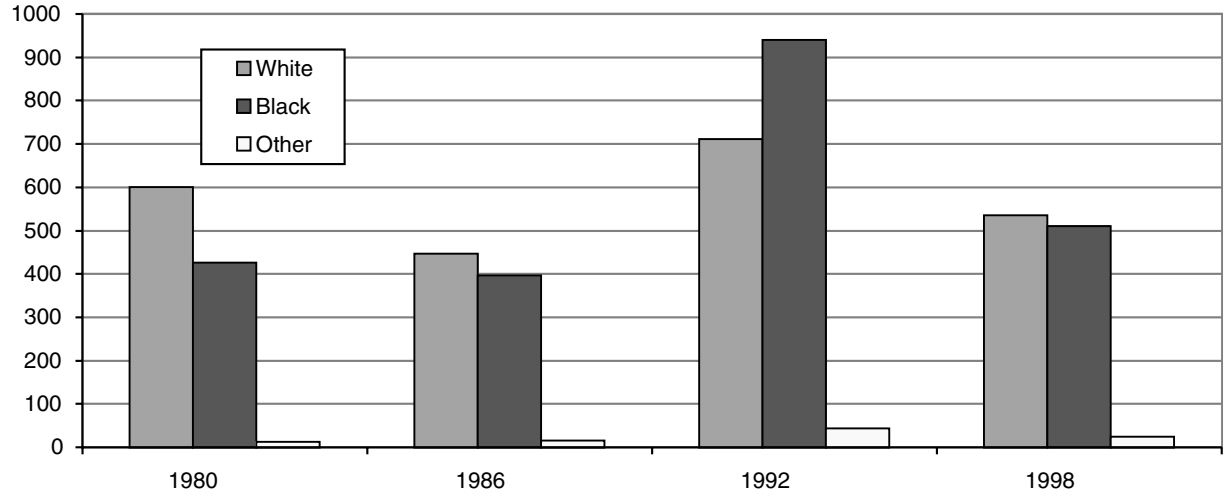
Adolescent girls are also potential victims of dating violence. In summarizing many studies on adolescent dating violence, the CDC has found the general prevalence rate for high school students to be about 22% (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989).

While some studies have found that males and females are at equal risk of dating violence, the motivation for women is usually self-defense (White & Koss, 1991). Studies however, report that women are anywhere from two to six times (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995; White & Koss, 1991) more likely to be victims – it is generally believed that about 85% of dating violence is perpetrated by men and boys.

Differences in Victimization by Race/Ethnicity

Overall rates of teenage victimization vary little by race. However, the racial differences in the rate of violent victimization are considerable (see Figure 8). For example, victimization rates involving rape, sexual assault, simple assault, and aggravated assault

Figure 8: Number of Juvenile Homicide Victims Ages 12 - 17 by Race and Year



Source: Snyder & Finnegan, 2000.

were 37% higher among African American youths ages 12-19 than White youths in 1999. African American youths were almost twice as likely (92% higher rate) as White youths to be victimized by aggravated assault.

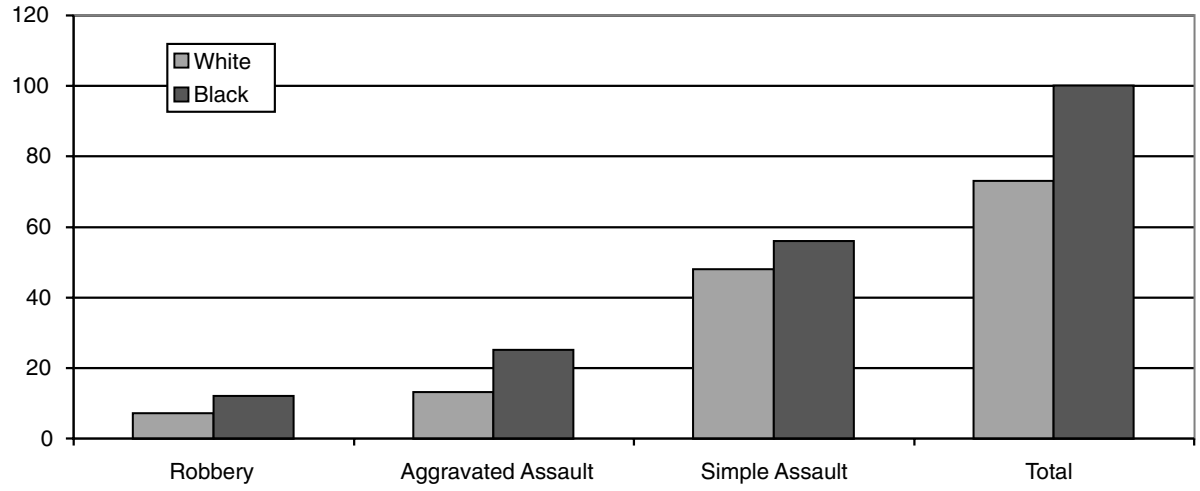
A Bureau of Justice Statistics analysis of victimization rates combining four years of data from the NCVS, revealed that American Indians were more likely than other racial groups to be the victims of violent crime. Between 1992 and 1996, the rate of violent victimizations per 1,000 youths ages 12-17 was 49% higher among American Indian than African American youths.

Other studies have also found racial differences in victimization rates for violent crimes as well. An NCCD analysis of the Adolescent Health Survey data found that 28% of Hispanic and 25% of African American high school students said they were victims of violent crime, compared to 11% of Asians and 16% of Whites.

Overall, African American and White male teenagers were victimized at about the same rate. However, African American boys were more likely to be victimized by more serious violence than White boys. White male teenagers were 36% more likely to be victims of *simple* assault and African American male teenagers were 63% more likely to be victims of *aggravated* assault and 27% more likely to be robbed.

African American youths are similarly over represented among teen homicide victims. Though African American youths accounted for only 15% of the juvenile population, Figure 8 shows approximately the same numbers of African American and White youths were murdered in 1998. As a result, the juvenile homicide rate for African American youths was five times the White rate.

Figure 9: 1999 Violent Victimization Rates per 1,000 Juveniles by Race and Crime



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001.

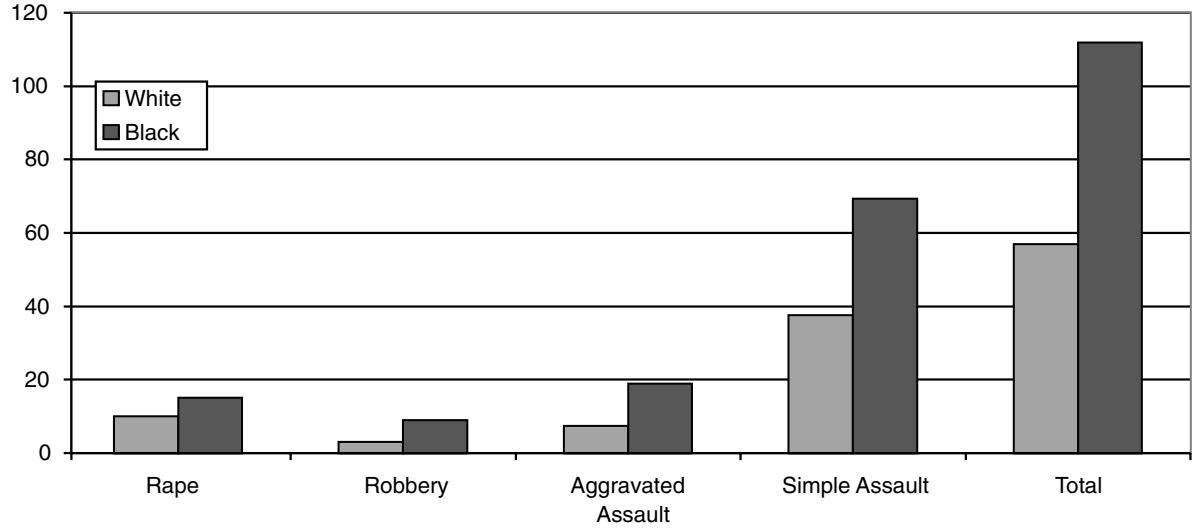
During the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the proportion of homicides involving a firearm grew dramatically. While this was true of homicides involving both White and African American youths, the likelihood of firearm-related victimizations was greater among African American than White youths. In 1997, 62% of teenage African American homicide victims were killed by a gun compared to 49% of White youths.

Racial differences in the violent victimization of youths also varied by gender. A troubling finding is African American girls were more likely than all other youths to be victims of violence. Figure 10 shows the violent victimization rate for African American girls was almost double the rate for White girls (112 vs. 60). It was also approximately 25% greater than the rate for African American boys and White boys. Moreover, the violent victimization rate for younger African American girls ages 12-15 exceeded the rate for African American girls ages 16-19 by more than one-third (128 vs. 94).

Child maltreatment rates indicate a similar over-representation in victimization of African American and American Indian teenagers. Figure 11 shows that children in these two minority groups are about twice as likely to be represented in the number of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect.

In this country, there is a strong relationship between race/ethnicity and income. Thus, much of the difference in victimization by race are likely attributable to socioeconomic status and neighborhood conditions. NCCD analysis of the Adolescent Health Survey data shows that as income rises, victimization rates decrease. For instance, for the lowest income families (under $10,000/year), 39% of youths were victimized within the two years of the study. For higher income families (over $51,000/year), under 20% of youths were victimized.

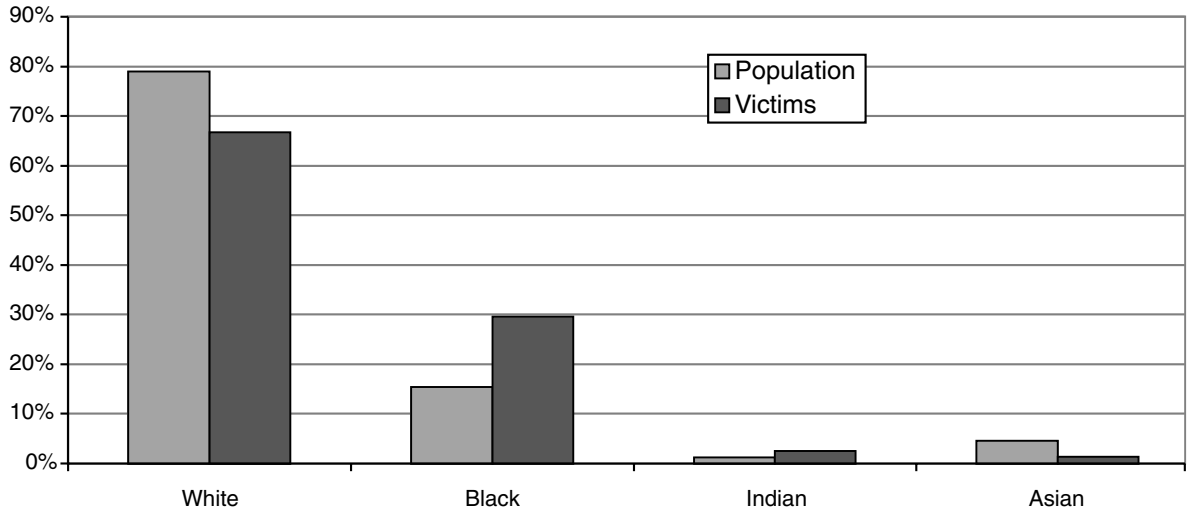
Figure 10: Rate of Violent Crimes Against Female Juveniles Ages 12 - 19 by Crime Type and Victims Race, 1999



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001.

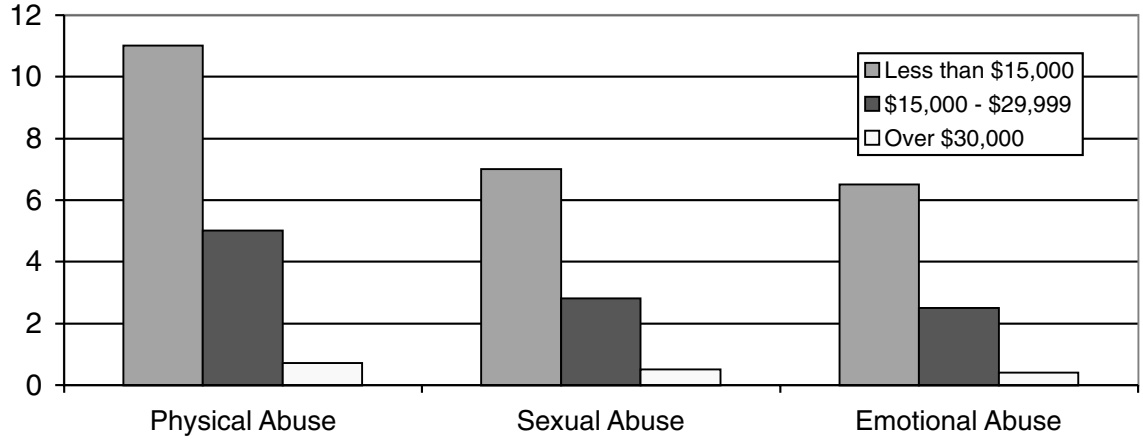
The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996) found that in the U.S. those on the bottom income level suffer the highest rates of abuse and neglect. Figure 12 shows the rates of different types of child maltreatment by family income. It is important to note here, that families that are poor may be more likely identified as abusive while wealthier families may be less likely to come to the attention of the authorities.

Figure 11: Juvenile Representation in the Population and as Victims of Abuse and Maltreatment by Race



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Child Maltreatment 1997: Reports From the States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999).

Figure 12: Child Abuse Rates by Family Income and Type of Abuse 1993



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996.

Victimization Issues and Juveniles within the Justice System

The foregoing data show that race, gender, and socioeconomic status are related to the type and rate of victimization of teenagers. A critical subpopulation of our youths, those involved in the juvenile justice system, have strikingly high victimization rates. These rates are also strongly influenced by the race, gender, and socioeconomic status of these youths. It is important that we assess the victimization issues of youths involved in the justice system in order to intervene, stop continued victimization, and end the "cycle of violence" (Widom, 1989).

As part of an evaluation of a program designed to intervene in the lives of adolescent girls on juvenile probation in Alameda County, California, NCCD gathered data on the victimization experiences of 390 girls. One in five girls on probation were victims of physical abuse and 17% were victims of sexual abuse. Over one-half (57%) of the girls said they had witnessed severe violence or abuse and 18% said they had witnessed a murder or an attempted murder (Arifuku & Nuñez, 2000).

In a needs assessment of youths entering the juvenile detention center in Alameda County, California, NCCD researchers gathered information pertaining to victimization. These data represent the responses of 361 juveniles entering the detention center between February and May of 2000.

- Females were almost three times more likely than males to respond that they had been physically hurt by someone in their home or someone close to them (11% vs. 4%).

- Fifteen percent of females and 1% of males coming to juvenile hall responded that they had been forced to engage in sexual activity against their will; for a third of the females reporting sexual abuse, the incident(s) occurred in the home.

- About 20% of youths reported that police or child protective service workers were called to their house as a result of domestic disputes. Females were more likely than males to report police/agency contact as a result of family/household disputes; 29% of females reported one or more incidents.

- Twenty-two percent of all youths coming to juvenile hall said they had witnessed or been the victim of shootings, stabbings or other forms of severe violence.

In another NCCD study, 200 adolescent girls were given an in depth interview in four detention centers in California (Acoca, 1998). The interviews identified childhood victimization among 92% of the female detainees. Among this population, 88% had experienced emotional abuse, 81% had been physically abused, and 56% had been sexually assaulted.

Patterns of Victimization

One of the most striking findings in the literature is that those who have been victimized are at most risk of continued and repeated victimizations. Studies have found that the best predictor of future victimization is past victimization – holding true for all types of crimes from property crimes to rape and sexual assault (Collins, 1998; Boney-McCoy & Finklehor, 1995b; Dembo et al., 1992; Hoyt, Ryan, & Cauce, 1999). Hoyt and colleagues (1999) found that homeless adolescents with a history of abuse are 2.5 times more likely to be revictimized than their non-abused homeless counterparts. Menard (1998) found repeated victimization of the adolescent not the exception, but the rule. Eighty percent of youths reporting violent victimization were either chronic, multiple, or chronic and multiple victims of violent crimes. Retrospective studies report a strong relationship between adult victimization, adolescent victimization, and child abuse (Janus et al., 1987; Simons, & Whitbeck, 1991; Whitbeck et al., 1999).

Prevention and early intervention seems even more critical in light of these findings. The reasons why young people who are victimized are more likely to be victimized again are unclear. It is likely that the risk factors present for the initial victimization continue to be present, thus affecting future victimization. For instance, continuing to live in poverty puts one at greater risk of homicide. Also, the consequences of the initial victimization may also be related to greater risk of future victimization. For example, research indicates being victimized puts young people at greater risk of becoming offenders, which puts them at risk of being re-victimized.

Section Summary

This section has shown that adolescents are victimized at alarming rates, at home, in school, and on the street. Teenagers are two times more likely than others to be victims of violent crime. Youths who are poor, African American, Hispanic, or American Indian are at the highest risk of victimization. For example, African American teenagers are twice as likely to have a substantiated report of child maltreatment and are five times more likely to be killed by a gun than White teenagers. Adolescent boys are slightly more likely to be a victim of an assault or a robbery than adolescent girls. However, boys are much more likely to be killed, especially with a firearm. Girls are more likely to be victims of sexual abuse, rape, and assaults within an intimate relationship. Homeless adolescents are particularly vulnerable to victimization and are at increased risk of being harmed.

Teenagers involved in the juvenile justice system have high rates of prior victimization. For girls within the justice system these levels are particularly high. In one study, the large majority of the young incarcerated women reported being victimized at some point in their lives (Acoca, 1998).

Many teens face a stressful environment with dangers to both person and property. Section II will focus on the consequences of this victimization and its effects on a young person's behavior.

The repercussions of being victimized may be overtly apparent or insidious and potentially long term. The victimization of adolescents can have serious consequences for their physical and mental health, school performance, delinquent behavior, and future earning potential. Some studies have found adolescents who have been victimized show a wider variety of symptoms than those victimized either during childhood or adulthood (MacMillan, 2000; Murphy et al., 1988). Thus, victimization during the teenage years may be even more deleterious than at other times in the life cycle.

Effects on School Performance

Adolescents who are victimized tend to have problems with academic performance (Fagan, 1997; Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1995b). Other studies have found that victimized youths report more truancy and have more negative contacts with their teachers than their cohorts who are not victimized (Rigby, 2000). Results from the NCCD analysis of the Adolescent Health Survey data showed that youths who were victimized were more likely to begin skipping school than non-victimized youths. There was also a slight increase in victimized students reporting "increased conflict with other students" compared to non-victimized students.

MacMillan (2000) reported that criminal violence experienced in adolescence appears to influence later earnings by disrupting the youth's education and subsequent career prospects and earning potential. Regarding the long-term costs of victimization, he said that, "income losses from violent victimization tend to be age-graded, with the greatest costs occurring for victimization experienced in adolescence."

Effects on Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse

Abused and victimized adolescents are more likely to suffer from physical and emotional problems than non-victimized youths. This suffering is true for maltreatment in the home, as well as victimization by peers and strangers.

Child maltreatment is a risk factor for teen pregnancy, drug use, low academic achievement, and mental health problems (Smith & Thornberry, 1995). Sexual assault had similar effects on young people. Females with a history of sexual abuse present problems that include major depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, personality disorders, suicide, and drug and alcohol addiction (Fergusson et al., 1996). Sexually abused adolescent girls were also more likely to show impaired social functioning, bulimia, and sexual mutilation (Briere & Elliot, 1994). Widom & Kuhns (1996) found that sexual abuse was a significant predictor of teenage pregnancy and prostitution for females. In fact, research shows that adolescent females with a history of sexual abuse and sexual assault were three times more likely to participate in prostitution (Simmons & Whitbeck, 1991), have children at an earlier age, and abuse those children (Horowitz et al., 1995).

Substance abuse is another consequence of victimization. Studies have found that substance abuse tends to be more severe for youths who have suffered from child abuse (Kilpatrick et al., 2000; Whitbeck et al., 1999; Hussey & Singer, 1993; Watts & Ellis, 1993). Abuse victims also reported a greater variety of drugs used than drug users who were not abused (Hussey & Singer, 1993).

Effects on Homelessness and Running Away

Being abused or neglected is a significant predicator of running away (Widom & Ames, 1994). Homeless adolescents are more likely to have been abused, have runaway, associate with deviant peers, and engage in deviant behavior to support themselves on the street (Whitbeck et al., 1999; Whitbeck & Simmons, 1993). By running away, abused and neglected kids almost double their chances of being arrested (Kaufman & Widom, 1999). The chronology of victimization of homeless adolescents seems to start with an abusive family life, later antisocial behavior by the youths, deviant sustenance strategies (such as prostitution or drug sales), and finally, revictimization (Whitbeck & Simmons, 1993).

Effects on Delinquent Behavior

There have been studies proposing a causal link between child maltreatment and delinquency and adult criminal behavior. Recently, however, new thinking and research has occurred in this area. Below is a brief review of the studies linking child abuse to delinquency and a presentation of new data linking non-familial victimization to delinquency.

Much of the research addresses the concept of a cycle of violence and suggests a link between child maltreatment and later delinquency (Widom, 1989; Woodward & Fergusson, 2000). Children experiencing multiple forms of family violence in the home were twice as likely as others to commit violence themselves (Thornberry, 1994). Reaffirming these results, Widom (1998) found that children with a documented history of abuse were twice as likely to engage in criminal activities. They were likely to commit more crimes, to commit more violent crimes, and to be arrested for the first time at a younger age.

Widom's research on the "cycle of violence" is supported by several studies using diverse methods of measuring delinquency or child abuse. Smith and Thornberry (1995) found that, "having a history of childhood maltreatment serious enough to warrant official intervention by child protective services is a significant risk factor for later involvement in serious delinquency." Studies using official records indicate that abuse and neglect during childhood significantly increased the likelihood of committing a violent crime (Widom, 1989). Zingraff and colleagues (1993) found that maltreated children had higher rates of juvenile court referrals than the comparison group.

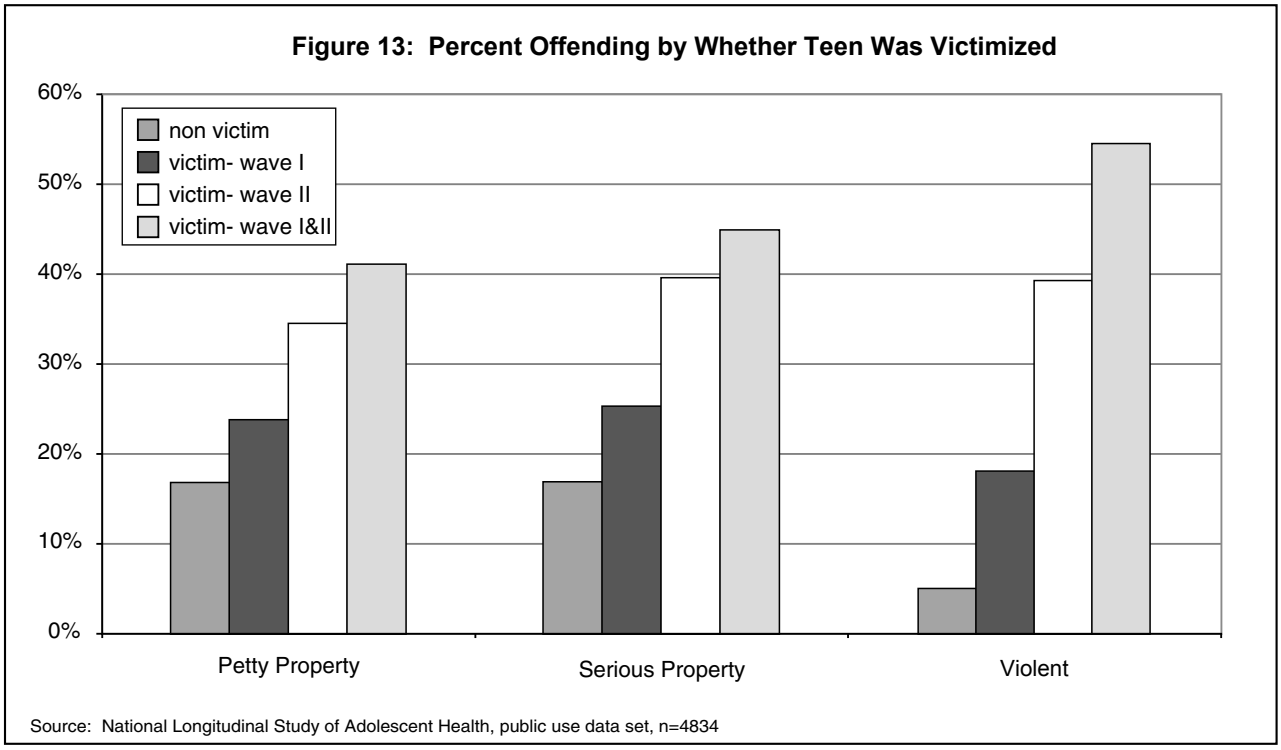
The "cycle of violence" theory has been applied to intimate partner violence as well. Some studies have associated men's battering with either observing or being the victim of abuse or battering in their family of origin (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986). Indeed, for batterers, violence in the family of origin has been reported to be as high as 75% (Fitch & Papantonio, 1983).

The literature also suggests a differential effect of abuse by gender and race. Physical abuse was a stronger predictor of violent criminal behavior for females than males (Widom, 1991). When crime rates were compared by race, abuse and neglect played a more significant role with African American juvenile delinquents than White (Widom, 1991). Hernandez and colleagues (1993) found that African American males were more likely than White males to engage in risk-taking behavior, however, when sexual and physical abuse were accounted for, racial differences became much less pronounced. This suggests a link, especially for African American youths and girls, between childhood maltreatment and subsequent delinquency.

The link between being the victim of a violent crime (non-child abuse) and delinquent behavior is not as well documented. The data collected through the Adolescent Health Survey offers one way to examine this relationship.[2]

There seems to be a strong relationship between being a victim of a crime and offending behavior. Figure 13 shows this relationship by plotting the percentage of teens who reported committing an offense in Wave II of the data collection by whether they had been victimized.

[2]These data were collected in two waves. Wave I data was collected from April to December, 1995. The Wave II data collection period was April to August, 1996. Wave II surveys were conducted with high school students who participated in Wave I. Thus, we were able to compare youth who suffered a violent victimization in Wave I to youth who suffered no self-reported victimization. Violent victimization was defined as being shot, stabbed, jumped, or having a knife/gun pulled on you. It is important to note that two important types of violent victimization were not included in this study: child maltreatment by a parent or guardian and sexual assault or rape.



These data show that of the teens in Wave II who reported committing an offense, the vast majority were victimized in Wave I, Wave II, or both. Victimized youths were much more likely to be offenders and the difference is especially evident for violent offenders. While only 5% of the violent offenders reported no victimization, over one-half (54%) reported being victimized in both years. Thus, for every one violent offender who was not victimized the previous or current year, there were ten who were victimized in both.

Many potential factors intervene between being a victim and offending. One way to explore the effect of victimization on offending is to statistically control for other factors. The multivariate analysis demonstrated that violent offending rates tended to be higher among youths who had a history within the previous year of victimization, poor peer relations, poor family relations, low school performance or learning disabilities, access to a gun at home, higher levels of sexual activity, feelings of unhappiness, and pessimism and moodiness.

Being a victim of a crime was the strongest predictor of violent offending after accounting for the influence of other important factors. Of course, there are likely other factors that were unaccounted for, but this analysis provides evidence that non-familial victimization is strongly related to delinquency and strengthens the argument that being a victim of a crime has an influence on violent behavior.

Section Summary

The victimization of an adolescent can have serious consequences on their school performance, physical and mental health, substance abuse, future earning potential and delinquent behavior. The repercussions of being victimized can be immediate or long term.

It is difficult to isolate these consequences from one another. Adolescents who are maltreated in the home, and/or victimized outside the home are at greater risk for emotional and psychological problems, alcohol and drug abuse, school problems, and delinquency. They are more likely to runaway and become homeless, leading to continued victimization. Research on homeless and runaway youths has found that familial abuse, both sexual and physical, strongly correlates with victimization on the streets – and past victimization is related to future victimization.

The literature has shown that there is a cycle of violence, often beginning with physical and sexual abuse of the child. Moreover, NCCD's new analysis of the Adolescent Health Survey data indicates that there may be a direct causal relationship between non-familial victimization and violent offending.

Section III: Prevention and Intervention in the Victimization of Teenagers

The evidence is overwhelming and compelling: teenagers are vulnerable to victimization in their homes, in schools, and on the streets. Not protecting our teenagers as they make the transition to adulthood, sets them on a path toward a difficult future. It is clear that the primary defense against future abuse and victimization is immediate prevention, identification, and intervention.

The *Teen Victim Project*, lead by the National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, will work to generate an effective, focused, national response to the problem of teen victimization. The *Teen Victim Project* aims to bring together two powerful networks – the youth development community and victim service providers – and build a "safety net" for teens based on collaboration and communication and a shared interest in helping America's teenagers.

One of the primary objectives of this initiative is to create the Teen Victim Network, an infrastructure of national youth-serving and victim service organizations committed to enhancing their institutional capacity to serve teenage victims of crime. These youth-serving organizations are found in communities around the country serving millions of young people every day, yet they have not generally organized around the pervasive issue of teen victimization. Also, the victim service providers have not fully embraced the needs of adolescents victimized by crime. The creation of the Teen Victim Network will provide a structure for community-based organizations, national youth-serving organizations and state-wide coalitions against various types of violence and crime, to work together to strengthen the net of services we provide to teenagers.

The Teen Victim Network will be a vehicle for testing new approaches for addressing the service needs of teenage victims and reducing the social isolation they experience. The National Center for Victims of Crime will develop separate curricula for youth-serving and victim service organizations, test the curriculum in a small number of sites, construct a training protocol for the staff of these respective disciplines, and then, with the active support of members of the Network, broadly disseminate the training.

Promising Victimization Prevention and Intervention Strategies

In reviewing the literature on the scope of victimization, its consequences, and promising strategies to address it, NCCD and the National Center for Victims of Crime recognize three basic principles upon which a comprehensive approach should be based:

1. Provide safe environments;

2. Identify and assess victimization and its consequences; and

3. Protect from further harm and strengthen against repeat victimization.

Provide Safe Environments

Providing safe environments for teenagers is the key to primary prevention of victimization. While this principle seems basic and obvious, it generally receives little attention. Safe environments must be created at home, at school, and on the streets. Promising strategies and programs to create safer environments follow.

SAFER HOMES

Creating a safe environment in the home for an adolescent should be the basic premise of victimization prevention efforts. Unfortunately, the literature contains very little information on preventing the abuse or neglect of teenagers. However, the maltreatment of teenagers often begins in childhood (Murphy et al., 1988).

Strategy 1: Target high-risk families with maltreatment prevention programs.

Since living in a high-risk neighborhood, being poor, living in a single parent household, and teenage motherhood are all associated with child maltreatment, programs targeted at these populations could reduce the first incidence of victimization and abuse (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1995). Studies that have evaluated long-term results of programs directed towards improving parenting skills and assisting young mothers have found lowered instances of abuse and neglect for their children as well as more positive feelings about themselves and better scholastic achievement (Olds et al., 1998; Johnson & Walker, 1987).

One study, by Widom (1998), examined the effects of home visitations by public health nurses on a group of high-risk teenage mothers. The study found that children who had participated in the program had fewer reports of abuse, fewer medical problems, and did better in school than the cohort that did not participate in the home visitation program. The study also showed that this program was cost effective in the long run. Other less rigorous studies have indicated that parenting classes and mutual support programs for parents show promise in reducing the incidence of abuse and neglect (Kline et al., 1990; MacFarlane & Lieber, 1978).

SAFER SCHOOLS

Although schools are relatively safe places for young people, it is still important to work to improve their safety. Primary prevention in the schools ranges from providing a nurturing and constructive environment for young people to providing specific training on violence prevention and victimization.

Strategy 2: Adequately fund quality after-school activities.

Access to positive group activities, especially in poor neighborhoods, is especially important in preventing victimization. Adolescents are most likely to be victimized in the hours immediately following school (Kaufman et al., 2000). School and community-based programs keeping teenagers safe and engaged in positive activities should be targeted to the hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. After school activities such as sports programs, art, dance, music, and academic tutoring are often lacking for the teens who are the most vulnerable to violence.

Strategy 3: Specifically train School Resource Officers in violence prevention techniques, identification of victims, and intervention strategies.

School Resource Officers can provide a feeling of safety for students and respond to crimes immediately. These specialized law enforcement officers have "been the most successful in settings where their role is clearly defined and well understood by students, teachers, and staff and where they have received extensive training" (Decker, 2000). They should not only be trained to help create safe environments but also in how to identify and respond to victims appropriately.

Strategy 4: Modify rigid expulsion policies that put young people at risk of victimization through expulsion and do not address underlying problems.

Evidence presented earlier suggests that youths who are expelled from school are much more likely to be victimized than other students. Automatic expulsion policies may eliminate the last vestige of supervision and care for troubled youngsters, propelling them into even greater trouble. Schools need adequate resources to have a variety of ways of intervening in this downward trajectory, besides pushing teenagers

out in the community to inadequately fend for themselves.

Strategy 5: Use curricula aimed at reducing dating violence.

We must also focus our attention on the victimization of girls and young women, especially in the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence. Too often we think of these offenses as adult crimes. Although young women under 18 comprise 25% of the population, they are victims in 51% of sexual assaults (Langan & Wolf-Harlow, 1994). Small & Kerns (1993) found date rape is three times more likely on the first date. They suggested that rapists were difficult to identify and recommended educating young women on how best to safeguard themselves, especially on the first date. Heimlien (1995) found evidence that risk factors for victimization by rape begin in high school and that they are cumulative. She suggests sex education with a focus on victimization prevention should be an integral part of the school system. Given that the research was unable to distinguish rapists from other young men, we must also focus on changing the aspect of our culture that assigns prowess to a young man for forcing sex on a girl or a woman. Thus, curricula need to be tested and used for young women and young men to see if it can be effective in reducing the incidence of sexual assault and dating violence.

Strategy 6: Create school environment emphasizing tolerance and respect for diversity.

Often young people become victims of crimes simply because of the color of their skin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation. According to the school crime supplement to the NCVS (2001) 13% of youths reported being targets of hate-related words and 36% report seeing hate-related graffiti. Hate crimes are likely to happen much more often than reported and they tear at the very fabric of our society.

Tolerance programs that help students feel responsible for creating a safe environment free of hate language, graffiti, and behavior, may prevent victimization both in and out of schools. One program that could be modified to include a tolerance curriculum is Teens on Target. This program seeks to reduce violence by teaching high school students about the effects of violence and how to prevent it and, in turn, having those high school students teach younger middle school children. Preliminary evaluation of the program found that the self-selected group of students who participated in the program had better attitudes towards violence, were more aware of violence, had better grades, and a much lower rate of truancy (Arifuku & Nuñez, 2000). More rigorous experimental designs should be implemented to more accurately assess the effects of this type of program.

SAFER STREETS

Age plays a significant part in the time of day in which victimization is likely to occur. While adults are more likely to be victimized between 8 p.m. and midnight, youths are more likely to become victims in the hours immediately following school.

Strategy 7: Provide opportunities for youths that build self-esteem and create a sense of control in their lives.

Programs that keep teenagers safe between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., such as community centers that are open after school, could have considerable impact on adolescent victimization. Youth development staff should be trained to recognize victimization, understand the impact it can have, and refer teenagers to appropriate services.

Other strategies to keep youths safe and off the streets include starting entrepreneurial activities so the young people can acquire employment skills and earn money. A promising example of this type of program, Barrios Unidos, is in California. This program attempts to build cultural pride and economic opportunity for poor young people who have few opportunities.

Often teenagers who have been victimized benefit from programs which reestablish self-esteem and help them regain a sense of control over their lives.

Strategy 8: Restrict juveniles' access to firearms.

As discussed earlier, non-firearm homicides of teenagers have not increased, but the number of young people killed by guns has increased substantially. African American young men are particularly at risk of victimization through firearms. The statistics reported here only focused on victimization through a criminal act, however, it must be noted that the number of accidental shootings and suicides by firearms have also skyrocketed.

There are two especially promising strategies that could prevent gun violence: 1) requiring trigger locks on all firearms, and 2) requiring gun manufacturers to sell firearms that only function with the owner's fingerprint. These precautions could prevent many of the tragic accidental and deliberate shootings of children and adolescents.

Identify Victimization and Its Consequences

For those individuals and organizations who have the direct and daily impact on the lives of teenagers, adequate training must be provided to assure that the indicators of victimization are identified and assessed in order to provide immediate intervention.

Strategy 9: Train health care providers, youth development staff, as well as teachers and school counselors, to assess victimization.

Incorporating victimization issues into medical and nursing school curricula is a good beginning in using the strength of health care providers to identify victimized teens. It is important that hospital and clinic policies regarding victimization be clear to providers. Furthermore, valid and reliable assessment tools must be developed as victimization is as much or more of a health risk to teens than many diseases.

Due to severe underreporting, the American Medical Association suggests that adolescents be screened for chronic sexual abuse yearly. Disproportionately high rates of psychiatric disorders common with abuse and incest victims (Van Husselt et al., 1992), make it important that practitioners elicit a history of sexual abuse, especially when severe depression is present for adolescents in clinical settings (Sansonnet-Hayden et al., 1987).

Reinstating funding for school nurses and training them to recognize victimization could increase our ability to appropriately identify victims and refer them for help. Teachers and school counselors should also receive specialized training. Given that consequences of victimization include poor academic performance and truancy, school staff should focus their initial efforts in assessing the victimization of these youths. Furthermore, the prevalence of substance abuse among victimized youths, calls for appropriate assessment and intervention (Watts & Ellis, 1993). Because substance abuse can be a symptom of victimization, substance abuse treatment should be focused at the underlying issues leading to substance abuse rather than only focusing on detoxification and punishment (Briere & Elliott, 1994).

Strategy 10: Assess all juvenile justice involved youths for victimization and related problems.

Research has consistently shown that youths involved in the juvenile justice system are more likely to have been victimized than other young people. However, most courts, probation staff, and treatment providers have no standardized method of assessing victimization and/or its consequences. Reliable and valid assessment tools should be developed, tested, and used.

Strategy 11: Provide a safety net for abused/neglected youths so they do not become homeless.

Youths who become homeless are at much greater risk of victimization, and those who were abused and neglected are at even greater risk. The difficulty in finding appropriate foster care for adolescents and the fact that they are more self-sufficient than younger children often results in less intervention for older youths. Intervening in their lives prior to their being forced from their homes or running away from an abusive situation is paramount.

Strategy 12: Encourage important adults in children's lives to talk about victimization and be supportive.

Adolescence is a time when young people come to terms with themselves and their bodies as well as their families. At this particularly vulnerable stage in development, it is important that young people have resources they can rely on. The first step to intervention is identifying the adolescent victim. This is often the most challenging part because evidence shows that adolescents are least likely to report victimization. All youths should have a trusted adult who they can talk to without fearing repercussions.

It is estimated by NCANDS that only one in three reports of abuse is actually investigated (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999), leaving many potentially abused youths without recourse. By the time a report is substantiated, the young person may have been victimized on numerous occasions. Moreover, many sex crimes go unreported, and many victims of sexual abuse and assault never talk to anybody about the crime. The Center for Disease Control report calls it "hidden rape" and states one study's findings that only 5% of college aged women who said they were a victim or rape or attempted rape actually reported it to the police (CDC, 2001). The lack of reporting may be because young women ages 12-18 who were victimized by violence were more likely to know the perpetrator than older women (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995).

Research studying the effects of victimization on young people has found that unsupportive family environments worsen the effects of sexual assault and date rape (Heimlein, 1995). Lack of parental monitoring and authoritarian parental styles have also been linked to increased victimizations in adolescents (Paradise et al., 1994; Small & Kerns, 1993). Supportive adults, whether they are parents, other family, or friends are critical to identifying and intervening in the victimization of young people.

Protect Teens from Further Harm and Strengthen Against Repeat Victimization

For those young people that we have not succeeded in protecting, we must make sure that they are safe from further harm and give them tools to combat the potentially self-destructive consequences of their victimization.

Strategy 13: If homeless, provide youths with safe shelter and educational opportunities.

The research shows that homeless youths are at a high risk of victimization. It is likely that they have already been victimized and will fall victim again. Janus and colleagues (1987) contended that there are not enough shelter beds to meet this need. For the hundreds of thousands of teenagers who are homeless every year, we must provide safe shelter and a nurturing environment.

Strategy 14: Hold offenders accountable.

Create swift and sure sanctions and rehabilitative services for perpetrators. Provide avenues for restitution and other means of restoring victims when appropriate. Emphasize removing sexually abusive family members from the home, rather than victims. Unfortunately, it is often easier to remove the victim from the home than the offending parent, thus adding to the internalization of blame many sexual abuse survivors face.

Around the country, jurisdictions are making it easier to prosecute intimate partner violence and sexual assault. How well these new policies and procedures address the needs of teenagers is unknown. We must make the safety of victim paramount, while at the same time holding the perpetrator of date rape, intimate partner violence, and other sexual assaults accountable.

Strategy 15: Provide quality foster care for victimized youths with special training on victimization, its consequences, and potential for revictimization.

Many abused and neglected children fall into the foster care system where inadequate monitoring can lead to continued abuse and neglect. It is estimated that 7,500 of the 550,000 children in foster care continue to be abused (Roche, 2000). Foster families need quality support and monitoring to ensure that young people are not revictimized.

Strategy 16: Make appropriate counseling and support available for survivors of abuse and other victimization.

Abused and victimized adolescents suffer from a profusion of negative symptoms both directly and indirectly related to their victimization. Self-destructive behavior such as substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, and suicide attempts can be symptoms of abuse and victimization. Once victimization has been identified as a potential causal factor in self-destructive behaviors, a range of resources from individual and group counseling to more traditional mental health therapy should be available to help teenagers understand the consequences of this victimization and provide tools to strengthen the young person against future victimization.

There is also a growing body of evidence that sexual assault and rape are often recurring incidents and repeat victimization seems not to be the exception, but the rule (Menard, 1998). This evidence supports the notion that counseling and therapeutic efforts should focus on already victimized teens (Small & Kerns, 1993).

Strategy 17: Provide training and support for local victim service agencies in order for them to work efficiently with teenaged victims of crime.

While victim service providers are skilled in crisis intervention, counseling, and support services for adult and sometimes child victims, few are trained to work with adolescents. The particular needs and concerns of teenagers must be taken into account if services are to be effective.

Strategy 18: Provide quality victim services to teenagers who are runaways, homeless, or involved in the juvenile justice system.

Whether male or female, mounting research has shown the majority of youths involved in the criminal justice system have a varied and extensive history of victimization. As discussed earlier, many studies have also shown that many homeless and runaway youths have a history of abuse. For runaway and homeless adolescents, deviant sustenance strategies may be the only means of survival. Being arrested for running away can be the first step in their criminalization, or it can be another opportunity to provide appropriate intervention services. Runaways need programs that focus on early intervention (Kaufman & Widom, 1999).

Summary and Conclusion

Primary prevention programs, better assessment practices, and quality intervention programs must be implemented to create a comprehensive strategy to reduce and respond to teenage victimization. We have presented seventeen different promising strategies to address the problem of adolescent victimization within each of these three areas. Based on the best evidence we have to date, these strategies are the most promising. Clearly, the evidence for their effectiveness is limited, and we must continue to evaluate these efforts with the most rigorous research designs possible.

We have attempted to address the issue of teenage victimization in three ways. First, we presented the statistics on the staggering numbers of young people who are victimized at home, in school, and on the streets. The level and type of victimization varies by race, gender, and socio-economic status. These data support cultural and gender specific approaches to ameliorating the suffering of our teenagers. Second, we showed the damaging consequences of the various types of victimization children and adolescents face. These include emotional and mental health problems, difficulties in school, family problems, running away, and delinquent behavior. Each of these consequences puts the young person at greater risk of revictimization. Finally, we presented strategies to prevent and intervene with these youths rather than punishing them for the repercussions of these victimizing experiences.

The *Teen Victim Project*, a joint effort of the National Center for Victims of Crime and The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, is designed to address the needs of the alarming numbers of teens who are victimized in this country. The ultimate goal is to help these teenagers rebuild their lives and to prevent as many victimizations as possible. Together, the public, policymakers, youth-serving organizations, and victim service providers can make a difference in reducing the number of adolescents who are victimized by crime and alleviate some of the pain and consequences for those who are victimized.

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