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Violent Crime Reduction
Small Rural Tribal

Problem-Oriented Policing SARA Checklist

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Written By
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JSS

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Scanning

Objective: *To identify a specific violent crime problem to address. The more narrowly you can identify the problem, the easier it will be to develop an effective response strategy.*

Example: *You've looked at your data and identified aggravated assaults as the leading driver of your violent crime. Now, use additional data sources (some listed below) to find out that your aggravated assaults are being specifically driven by domestic assaults. This is the type of specific problem suitable for intervention.*

Questions

1. Have you looked at your various data sources and violent crime data to see what that tells you about your violent crime issues? List data sources you looked at.

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2. Have you considered input from the community regarding violent crime challenges facing the community? List methods you used to gather community opinions.

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3. Have you considered input from within your organization? List the groups within the department.

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4. Have you considered input from your partners (prosecutors, other law enforcement agencies, parole and probation, victim service providers, street outreach organizations)? List partners that you gathered input from.

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5. Does your identified violent crime problem meet the CHEERS1 criteria below?

   1. Does the problem you identified negatively impact the **COMMUNITY**? Y/N

   2. Is it **HARMFUL** to the community? Y/N

   3. Is it a problem the public **EXPECTS** you to address? Y/N

   4. Is the problem experienced through a series of separate **EVENTS**? Y/N

   5. Have the events been, and are they likely to continue to be **REOCCURING**? Y/N

   6. Are the events **SIMILAR** to one another? Y/N

Do you need assistance with this phase? Contact JSS at Info@SRTVCR.com.

Congratulations! You have now identified a specific violent crime problem that is suitable for intervention. You are now ready to move to the next step and analyze the problem.

The acronym **CHEERS** (community, harm, expect, events, recurring and similar) was developed to help determine whether a problem is suitable for problem solving (Clarke and Eck, 2003).

Analysis

Objective: *To gain a deeper understanding of the events that make up your crime problem, including people involved, places involved, and the timing of the events, and ultimately select a response that will successfully address the problem. The same type of analysis should be conducted during the assessment phase to determine the changes that may have occurred as a result of your response phase.*

1. What crime analysis tools have you used to help organize this information and identify intervention points or opportunities? Crime mapping? Crime Analysis Triangles? Crime Scripts?

_____

_____

_____

2. Have you thoroughly reviewed police reports and records regarding all the events that comprise the problem? How many events comprise the problem?

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3. Have you talked to or reviewed records of interviews with persons impacted by the problem to gather specific detailed information about the problem? List how many interviews were conducted or review about the problem.

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4. Have you obtained and studied input from the community regarding the problem?

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5. Have you studied the location or locations of the events associated with the problem to see what you can learn about the relationship between the locations and the events, and why the crimes are occurring in those locations? Have you been to and observed the location(s) at relevant times? List the location(s) of the problem.

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6. Have you studied the people involved in the events, including perpetrators and victims, to see what you can learn about their connection to the problem? What are the connections?

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_____

7. Have you studied the timing of the events and how they relate to the events and the larger problem? Have you looked to see what other events occur about the same time that may be related to the events? For example, school dismissal, a bus or subway stop, a business or bar opening or closing? What are the common times, if any.

_____

_____

_____

8. Have you studied the specific details of the events to identify common factors or patterns? For example, were cell phones or electronics stolen in connection with each event? Were they disposed of at a common location? What are the common factors?

_____

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_____

Do you need assistance with this phase? Contact JSS at Info@SRTVCR.com.

Congratulations! You have now analyzed your identified violent crime problem and gathered additional information to create the right response. You can now craft and implement a response.

Response

Objective*: To select a response that is most likely to succeed in impacting the problem based on the information gathered in previous steps. Successful responses are often multifaceted and can involve the use of technology tools like gunshot detection systems, LPRs, and cameras. They can also involve strategies like Gun Violence Intervention, Hot Spot Policing, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design or Community Violence Intervention.*

1. Based on your analysis, have you selected the intervention point(s) that are most likely to work in positively impacting the problem? For example, is there something about the location or the victim's behavior that can be changed? List the intervention point(s).

2. What if anything has been done in the past in your jurisdiction to address this problem? What were the impacts of prior responses? Why has the problem persisted? List the past response and its impact.

3. What has been done in other jurisdictions to address similar problems and what were the impacts? [Your research partner or TTA provider at Justice & Security Strategies (JSS) can assist you with this research!] List any strategies from other jurisdictions.

4. Do the potential responses you are considering align with the intervention points you have identified?

5. How do you anticipate that the response(s) you are considering will positively impact the problem?

6. Do you have the resources and partners you need to implement the response you are considering? List the resources and partners.

7. Have you reviewed your planned response with others inside or outside your department who can give you honest, informed feedback about the response(s)? List the groups you reviewed this plan with.

8. Have you created a formalized plan that covers your detailed response strategy to be shared with the personnel expected to carry out the interventions? Have you oriented your personnel to the response to ensure that it is carried out consistently and in a manner that meets the community's expectations? Have you shared your response with other intervention resources and the affected community?

Do you need assistance with this phase? Contact JSS at Info@SRTVCR.com.

Congratulations! You have now crafted an applicable response, implemented it, and hopefully impacted your identified violent crime problem. You can now assess your response.

Assessment

Objective: *To determine what has changed as a result of the response phase. You should examine the same information that was used in the analysis phase. What were the impacts of the responses/interventions? Were there changes that were not anticipated?*

1. What crime analysis tools have you re-used to help assess whether your response made an impact? Crime mapping? Crime Analysis Triangles? Crime Scripts?

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   _____

   _____

2. Have you re-examined police reports and records regarding all the events that comprised the problem? How many events now comprise the problem?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Have you re-interviewed persons impacted by the problem? What do they say now? List how many interviews were conducted or review about the problem.

   _____

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4. Have you re-examined input from the community regarding the problem? What are their views now?

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Have you re-examined the location or locations of the events associated with the problem? Have the relationships changed between the locations and the events, and why the crimes are occurring in those locations? Have you re-visited and observed the location(s) at relevant times? What appears to have changed?

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   _____

   _____

6. Have you re-studied the people involved in the events, including perpetrators and victims, to see what has changed about their connection to the problem?

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Have you re-studied the timing of the events? What has changed in the timing of the events?

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   _____

   _____

8. Have you re-studied the specific details of the event to identify common factors or patterns? Have those factors changed?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Assessment continues on the next page.

Final Assessment

1. Do you have the capacity to do the assessment yourself or should you look to engage someone with criminal justice research experience?

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   _____

   _____

2. How will you document what was done as part of the response and how that compares to the planned one?

   _____

   _____

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3. Do you have a way to document obstacles encountered in your response and how they were dealt with? Are you monitoring the response tactics to ensure that you are achieving the intended outcomes? Are you monitoring the response tactics to ensure that the response tactics are not resulting in any unanticipated consequences or harm to the community? List how you plan to document and monitor your response.

   _____

   _____

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4. Have you decided how, and how often, you are going to assess your response? Are you going to assess during the response to look at whether course correction is appropriate? How will the mid-response assessments differ from the final assessment at the end of the grant cycle?

   _____

   _____

   What type of reports do you anticipate issuing?

   _____

   _____

   And who will they go to?

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   _____

Remember: Although the SARA Model is presented as a step-by-step circular structure, the Assessment step should be integrated throughout the process. Think about if there is a process in place that could assess the progress being made and processes in place to make the necessary adjustments along the way.

The Assessment step should also be used to provide feedback to the department's administrator, the community's governing body, your community partners, and most importantly the members of the community who have been experiencing the violent crime problem.

Do you need assistance with this phase? Contact JSS at Info@SRTVCR.com.

Suggested Readings

ASU Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. (Updated July 2011). *"Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder through Problem-Solving Partnerships – 2nd Edition,"* Washington, D.C.: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/library/reading/pdfs/ProbSolvTips_2ed.pdf

Police Foundation. *"Refresher: SARA Model and Problem-Oriented Policing,"* Developed by George Mason University. October 2015.
https://www.evidence-basedpolicing.org/refresher-SARA-model-and-problem-oriented-policing

Scott, Michael S. (2015). *"Identifying and Defining Policing Problems: Problem-Oriented Guides for Police,"* Problem-Solving Tools, No. 13. Washington, D.C.: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/identifying_and_defining_policing_problems.pdf

Sidebottom, A.; Bullock, K.; Ashley, M.; Kirby, S.; Armitage, R.; Laycock, G.; & Tilley, N. (2020). *"Successful Police Problem-Solving: A Practice Guide,"* Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science, University College London.
https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/successful_police_problem_solving_a_guide.pdf

Telep, Cody W. & Hibdon, Julie, Arizona State University. (November 2019). *"Understanding and Responding to Crime and Disorderly Hot Spots - Problem-Oriented Guides for Police – Problem-Solving Tools Series, No. 14."* (November 2019). Washington, D.C.: Office of Community Oriented Policing.
https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/understanding_responding_to_crime_disorder_hot_spots_spi_final.pdf