PART III

Mobilization and Engagement

Problem-Solving and Problem-Oriented Policing

Officers from the Ottawa Police Service's Marine, Dive, and Trails Unit participate in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, an initiative spearheaded by the Vancouver Aquarium and the World Wildlife Fund. The purpose of the initiative is to remove items that present a hazard to swimmers and boaters in the Rideau Canal.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain what problem-oriented policing is, and how it relates to community policing
- Define and explain the four elements of the SARA problem-solving model
- Explain why the CAPRA problem-solving model is better suited than SARA for community policing
- Explain why police often oversimplify problem analysis
- Define community cohesion and its relationship to violence in high-demand neighbourhoods
- Explain the asset principle in community building
- Define a mobilization moment and explain its role in community policing

Introduction

Part III of this text, Mobilization and Engagement, is where we begin to get down to the mechanics of community policing. How is it actually done? What does it look like on the ground? Who does what to whom, and why? In this first chapter of Part III, we return to the topic of problem-solving and explore in greater depth the SARA, PARE, and CAPRA problem-solving models we introduced in Chapter 2. We discuss what we have learned about problem-solving through well over 20 years of problem-oriented policing. We also closely examine the logic models that underpin problem-solving of any kind—whether done by police or by others.

All of us engage in problem-solving of one kind or another on a daily basis. For most of us it is a relatively automatic process—that is, we do not spend a lot of time taking apart how we go about solving problems. We just do it! Now of course if the solutions we choose do not work, we may begin to question how we are going about solving our problems. Sometimes that review of our internal problem-solving process can lead to improvements that will give us a better solution next time. For example, we may decide we do not know enough about the problem to come up with an optimal solution, so we may decide to consult someone who is more experienced with it. That is the spirit in which we approach this chapter of the text. We want to examine how problem-solving is done in the context of community policing.

This chapter benefits from some very detailed examples of community problems that were solved by police and their community partners. We will tie our ideas about problem-solving processes to these very real, tangible examples. Through it all, we hope the reader will discover that nothing we say here is really new to anyone; most of us have already mastered problem-solving to an appreciable degree. So notwithstanding some scholars' tendencies to put labels on problem-solving and make it sound mysterious or specialized, it is really rooted in common sense. The challenge for police is to apply it to the process of solving community problems in partnership with a host of other actors from the safety and well-being web that we discussed in Chapter 4.

IN THE COMMUNITY

A Good Program but a Bad Solution

Many kids living within the boundaries of Toronto Police Service's 32 Division in the early 1990s really did not have much to do after school—except perhaps bow to peer pressure and run with youth gangs. To address this growing problem, Toronto Housing Authority and Toronto youth workers partnered with Lawrence Heights area teachers to develop a hockey program for at-risk kids attending grades 5 to 8. The targeted youth attended an after-school mentorship session with city workers where the workers would encourage

discussions about respect, loyalty, teamwork, and friendship. Toronto Police officers volunteered as mentors and coaches for the kids at a local arena where a weekly hockey game did its best to reinforce the kids' classroom sessions.

The efforts of city staff and police volunteers became known as the "Junior Blues Hockey Program," and the initiative fit well with the police service's efforts to bolster what they believed was the essence of community policing in marginalized neighbourhoods. Unfortunately, community support and interest in maintaining this partnership approach to the Junior Blues waned over the next ten years. Toronto Housing Authority and Toronto youth workers had other projects to run and besides, the Toronto Police Service was doing a fine job juggling resources and staffing to keep the initiative going. Or were they?

Analysis conducted in the summer of 2011 by supervisors overseeing the 32 Division Community Response Unit found that its officers, who were responsible for community initiatives and events for the entire community and not just Lawrence Heights, were contributing an inordinate number of staffing hours to keep the Junior Blues program going—so much so that it became necessary to commit on-duty time to maintain the program. The Toronto Police Service concluded that its commitment to the Junior Blues was unsustainable. Police efforts to recruit human resources and funding from new community partners were unsuccessful and the Junior Blues program was cancelled.

In 2013, community members in the Lawrence Heights area requested that the Junior Blues be brought back to life. Based on lessons learned and a critical analysis of what the police role could sustainably be, the Toronto Police Service took the lead in reinventing the program (but not running it) by:

■ mobilizing human resource and financial commitments from the City of Toronto, including the donation of free ice time for weekly games;

■ engaging community leaders within the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood to sustain ongoing program leadership and financial support;

■ partnering with ProAction Cops & Kids for significant funding contributions to buy and maintain program equipment and storage space;

■ securing flagship support from the Toronto Marlies AHL hockey team, which provided tickets and transportation to Marlies games two or three times per season; and

■ recommitting its own members to a sustainable level of support for the initiative rather than assuming complete responsibility for it.

Consider the following questions:

1. What was the problem that this police partnership sought to resolve?
2. What solution did the partnership come up with?
3. Why was that solution unsustainable?
4. What adjustments would make it more sustainable?

A Review of Problem-Solving as It Relates to Policing

Police are problem-solvers. They go where people are facing problems or creating problems in order to resolve them. One of the main messages about community policing that we have been repeating in this text is about how limited the traditional policing model is for sustainable problem-solving. That presents police with a choice: they can either keep responding to repeat occurrences of the same problem, or investigate the problem in greater depth in hopes of finding some resolutions that will decrease those occurrences and in the process reduce harms and victimization and demand for police assistance.

Building on Problem-Oriented Policing

We introduced Professor Herman Goldstein's concept of problem-oriented policing in Chapter 2. The basic idea behind problem-oriented policing is that rather than continuing to respond to harmful incidents, police should look for patterns among those incidents to identify underlying problems. By solving these problems, police can reduce the incidence of harm and the demand for police assistance. Numerous police agencies throughout Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom have applied Goldstein's principles and practices, with varying degrees of success. But their experiences have provided many lessons learned, which fit well in this text on community policing. They fit because at its root, community policing is about the efforts of police and all of their community partners in the safety and well-being web to solve the problems that create risks of harm and victimization. Among other things, Goldstein's problem-oriented policing achieved a significant redirection of police investment from merely fighting crime to solving problems, including problems that do not derive from criminal behaviour or chargeable offences.

Goldstein and his collaborators and followers make a distinction between problem-oriented policing and problem-solving. They see problem-oriented policing as bigger; it includes problem-solving behaviour, but it also influences how an entire police agency is organized, resourced, and managed. Problem-oriented policing could be considered a model for delivering policing services. In fact, one of Goldstein's collaborators, Michael S. Scott, founded and became chief of a police agency that has been described as a problem-oriented police service (Fort Lauderdale, Florida). Scott is worth noting in this context because he also completed an extensive analysis of the first 20 years of problem-oriented policing in the United States, Canada, and other countries. Throughout this chapter, we will refer to his observations about what has been learned about police and problem-solving.[1]

Identifying the Problem and Determining Whether It Falls Within the Mandate of Police

One of the best indications of underlying problems in a community is repeat occurrences. Chronic or recurrent incidents indicate patterns that will repeat without **profound interventions**—meaning interventions that involve more than just incident response and enforcement. Upon recognizing such patterns of incidents, the question arises as to what are the most appropriate interventions and who should implement them. Consider these questions as you read the On Patrol feature below.

Partnering with Transit to Reduce Late-Night Noise

Police responded at 2:30 a.m. on a Friday night to a downtown street corner on which several storefronts and a bus stop were located. Above the storefronts were several apartments. The residents above the storefronts complained of disturbances, loud shouting, laughter, and disputes. Police encountered nine bar patrons waiting for a bus after being turned out when the bar closed at 2:00 a.m. Police advised them to quiet down and maintain the peace until their bus came to take them out of the city centre. The same thing happened on most Friday and Saturday nights, until the residents above the storefronts on that corner got angry and started demanding meetings with the chief of police in order to obtain more effective enforcement.

Police investigated the bar in collaboration with liquor licensing and bylaw officials to see whether they were over-serving or violating any other rules for their establishments; they were not. Police asked bar management to cooperate with police in advising patrons, at closing time, to be more mindful of the needs of local residents who were trying to sleep. But the problem persisted—to the point where police routinely deflected a two-officer patrol unit to attend at this street corner shortly after bar closing time every Friday and Saturday night. To ensure order and keep the noise down, officers had to stay with the bar patrons until their bus arrived.

Unsatisfied with this solution, police began to get creative. Recognizing a pattern of occurrences that argued for more profound solutions than advising inebriated patrons to keep the peace, police asked the bus company to reschedule the route so that the bus showed up as close to 2:00 a.m. as possible. The bus company was unable to reschedule the bus because of implications for other stops on the route. Undeterred, patrol officers invited a bus route supervisor for a Friday night ride-along so that he could experience the problem first-hand and help problem-solve.

profound interventions interventions that go deeper than incident response and enforcement

After the bus picked up that night's bar patrons, officers and the supervisor brainstormed solutions. The supervisor suggested they move the bus stop to the next block, in front of a two-storey bank building and a parking lot where any disturbances at the bus stop would be less likely to be heard by sleeping residents in the neighbourhood. The problem was solved.

Consider the following questions:

1. Do you think that twice-weekly dispatch of a two-officer patrol unit to attend at this corner for half an hour between 2:00 and 2:30 a.m. was a reasonable use of police resources and time? Explain.

2. How did police know that something more than simple enforcement was required to resolve this problem?

3. What was the role of community partners in resolving this problem?

4. What did it take to get community partners engaged in productive problem-solving?

Goldstein and Scott emphasize that police should limit this kind of analysis and problem-solving to those harmful behaviours or incidents that are of concern to police and that comprise a legitimate component of police business. Their point is that communities have many problems that need solving, but it is only appropriate for police to take the initiative and apply themselves to those problems that fall within their mandate. These include problems that threaten people's safety and security and that, if left unresolved, would require emergency response by police and other acute care providers (for example, mental health workers, children's aid, emergency medical services, or the fire department).

That same rule—solve only those problems that relate to police business—applies to the planned interventions to resolve them. Recall the example from the beginning of this chapter about the Toronto Police Service organizing a hockey program for at-risk youth. Their analysis of the crime and disorder issues created by the youth suggested that an after-school program would help the kids in a number of ways. By choosing to organize a program, police responded appropriately because troubles with youth are certainly within the police mandate and their responsibility. However, police launched the program using the volunteer and in-service time of officers and other police resources to deliver these services. That is where they strayed from the principle of doing things that relate to police business. Police are not in the business of athletic mentoring for youth, and they cannot sustain such an initiative. Their solution to this problem only worked when they figured out that other community partners had to be mobilized and engaged to manage and sustain the solution. Scott sums up this idea in the following passage:

> Under a problem-oriented policing approach, the police would recognize how functions like moral education, youth recreation and charity are integral to public safety, but would not see their role as one of

providing these services directly … . The key for the police is first, to establish some sense of ownership or responsibility for a community problem and if the problem falls within the police mandate, either address it themselves, broker ownership to some other entity or, in some instances, merely refuse to accept ownership.[2]

This is where problem-oriented policing and community policing are complementary. Problem-oriented policing encourages police to identify and analyze problems that relate to the police mandate of providing safety and security for communities. Community policing provides police with some of the tools that are needed to enlist other community actors from the safety and well-being web in the processes of analyzing and resolving those community problems.

Tackling Gang Violence in London's (UK) Boroughs

The Metropolitan Police in the London borough of Waltham Forest piloted a problem-solving strategy for reducing gang violence. Gang violence has been a persistent problem for communities in this borough and in other London boroughs. The Metropolitan Police maintain a database on 250 active criminal gangs in London, 62 of which they classify as "high harm" gangs that commit two-thirds of all gang-related crime. In 2011, this group was responsible for 22 percent of all serious violence, 17 percent of all robberies, 50 percent of all shootings, and 14 percent of all rapes in London.

Called "Operation Connect," this strategy very clearly differentiated the roles of police and other community actors. Operation Connect started when police invited human and social service agencies to meet in order to discuss the gang violence problem in Waltham Forest. Hosting and chairing the discussion, police asked each agency representative to list on a piece of paper 100 names of those gang members in Waltham Forest who were most likely to be violent again. Then police shared their own list, at which point all of their guests realized that everyone in the meeting knew about the same people and shared common concerns about their inclination to be violent. Then police asked the human and social service providers to design customized services and supports for each of the 100 designated gang members should those individuals be convinced to leave gang life forever.

Armed with those custom-designed lists of services (plus all of their requisite tactical gear), police made direct contact with each of the 100 gang members and gave them a simple choice. They could choose to leave gang life forever and immediately become eligible to receive all of the social supports, or they could reject that offer, at which point the police promised relentless enforcement. The supports that gang members were offered included significant social investments, including finding a new place to live for the gang member and vulnerable members of his or her family, education, addictions treatment, employment assistance, counselling, and health

care. In the pilot, half of the original 100 gang members chose to leave gang life and received these supports, yielding within the first year of the pilot a 25 percent reduction in gun crimes, a 13 percent decrease in robberies, and 5 percent decrease in knife crimes.

While active gang members were being engaged by police, members of the local borough council implemented an anti-gang program for young people who were vulnerable to the appeal of gang affiliation. The pilot was so successful that the Met replicated it in the rest of London's boroughs.

SOURCE: Metropolitan Police, "Operation Connect Targets NE Gangs" (16 September 2011) *Total Policing.*

Consider the following questions:

1. Did police stick to their own role and mandate in solving this problem? Explain your answer.
2. How important were the Met's community partners in getting half of the violent gang members to choose to leave gang life forever?
3. What was the role of police in engaging these community partners?

The two most significant take-aways from Operation Connect are that police recognized the pattern of gang violence (persistent repeat occurrences) and chose to tackle the roots of the problem. But at the same time, they recognized that their mandate and capabilities did not extend into the realm of social services and supports. Accordingly, they limited their role to engaging other agencies and making direct contact with the gang members while increasing enforcement actions against those gang members who chose to remain engaged in their criminal activity. Obviously the police understood the sociological and psychological roots of the gang violence problem. But they also clearly limited their own investment and involvement to those actions that were appropriate to the police agency, while leaving the balance of the work to other agencies in the safety and well-being web.
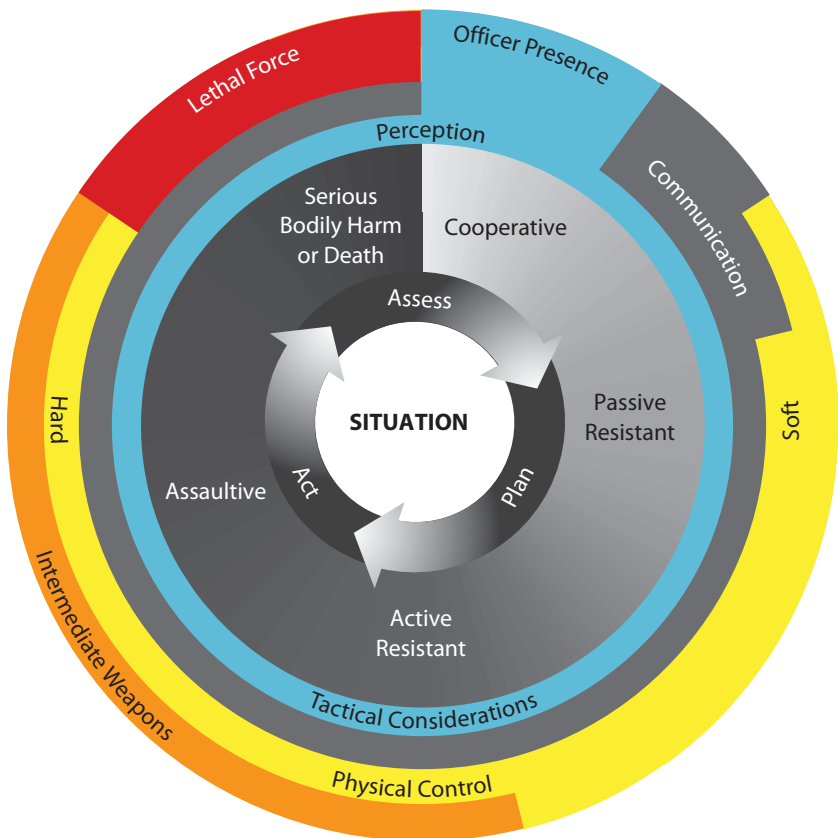
The Assess-Plan-Act Sequence of Problem-Solving

How do you decide what to wear when you get out of bed in the morning? If you are like me, you first think about what you are going to be doing during the day, who you are going to be seeing, and what you want those people to think about you. If, for example, you are going to spend the best part of the day in classrooms, then you will certainly want to wear something comfortable; but you may also want to wear something that expresses your own sense of

style, while not straying too far from style standards and values shared among your classmates. In contrast, if you have a job interview or an important meeting today, maybe you will want to be a little more buttoned-down than you would be if you spent most of the day studying. The point of this example is that deciding what to wear first thing in the morning is a lot like identifying and analyzing problems to be solved through community policing. You have to assess the circumstances of your day, try on some looks, examine them in the mirror to see if they fulfill your expectations, and if they don't, try another look until you get the right result.

One reason for using the dressing analogy is to simply demonstrate that problem-solving does not require expert knowledge—all of us engage in problem-solving on a daily basis. But in the context of community policing, we want to unpack problem-solving a little more and break it down into a logical, stepwise process. The Ontario Use of Force Model depicts just such a breakdown in the bullseye of Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5.1   Ontario Use-of-Force Model

SOURCE: MA Hoffman, C Lawrence & G Brown, "Canada's National Use-of-Force Framework for Police Officers" (2004) 71:10 The Police Chief 125. Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Used with permission.

The bullseye shows that when officers arrive at the scene of a call for service, they have to immediately assess the situation for any threats to the people or property at the scene, or to themselves. Some of that assessment process commenced at the point where the officers received the call from dispatch to attend the scene—based on whatever information about the situation that dispatch picked up in the call for service.
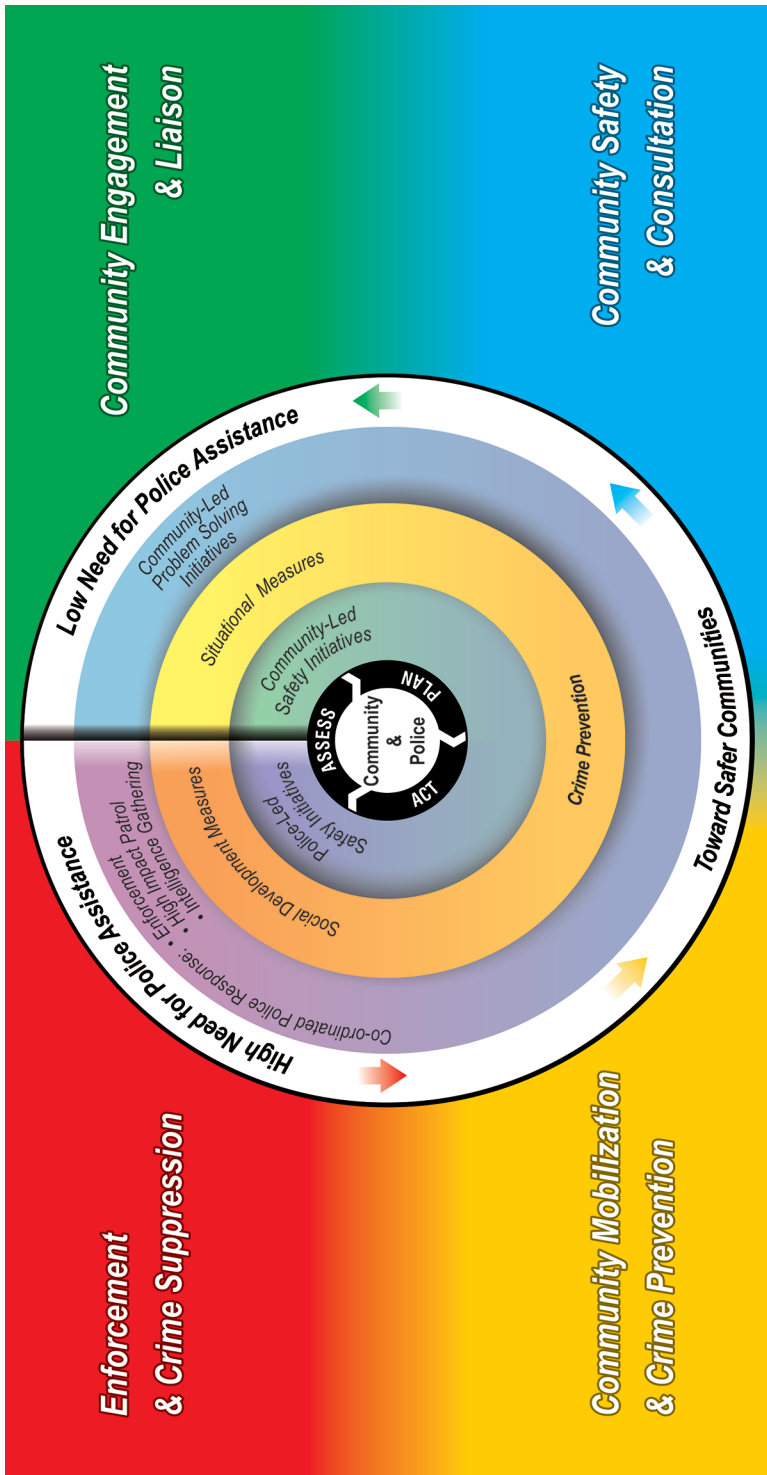
That assessment guides officers in planning their approach to dealing with subjects at the scene. If, upon arrival, they do not detect any significant threats, they may choose to use communication tactics to defuse any problems or disputes in the situation. If, on the other hand, there are some real threats of violence toward officers, anyone else at the scene, or property, officers may rapidly escalate to harder forms of physical control over the situation. That is the assess-plan-act sequence of problem-solving. In this case, it has been applied to the problem of deciding how much force to use in a given situation.

A modified version of that bullseye appears in Ontario's Mobilization & Engagement Model of Community Policing, as shown in Figure 5.2. That bullseye is almost the same as the one used in the Ontario Use of Force Model; the only difference is that whereas the Use of Force Model presumes that police are doing the assessing, planning, and acting, the community policing model says that those functions are to be carried out by community members and police working in partnership. The difference between these two bullseyes reflects the differences between problem-oriented policing as conceived and promoted by Goldstein and Scott, and community policing. In the Use-of-Force Model, police are doing the assess-plan-act. Similarly, in problem-oriented policing, police are principally responsible for identifying and analyzing the problem to be resolved; and they limit their efforts in resolving the problem to those actions that fit the policing mandate.

In contrast, Ontario's community policing model stresses primary roles for actors in the safety and well-being web who work with police to ensure safety and well-being for all. As Scott said, "Problem-oriented policing primarily emphasizes the substantive societal problems the police are held principally responsible for addressing," like safety and security, whereas "community policing primarily emphasizes having the police engage the community in the policing process," like public consultations for establishing policing priorities.[3]

One of the first things police and community partners assess is whether they are dealing with a problem in a relatively high- or low-demand neighbourhood. In fact, that assessment process will probably be quite different in these two neighbourhoods. In a high-demand neighbourhood (a red zone neighbourhood), police will most likely not discover many neighbourhood partners to share this responsibility with them. In a low-demand neighbourhood (a green zone neighbourhood), police will probably find many community members who have already thoroughly assessed the problem and have some proposed solutions. You will recall in Chapter 1 that this distinction led the architects of Ontario's community policing model to distinguish between mobilization in the high-demand neighbourhoods and engagement in the low-demand neighbourhoods.

FIGURE 5.2 Ontario's Mobilization & Engagement Model of Community Policing

Community Engagement & Liaison

Community Safety & Consultation

Low Need for Police Assistance

Community-Led Problem Solving Initiatives

Situational Measures

Community-Led Safety Initiatives

PLAN

ASSESS

Community & Police

ACT

Police-Led Safety Initiatives

Social Development Measures

Co-ordinated Police Response:
• High Impact Gathering
• Intelligence Gathering
• Enforcement Patrol

High Need for Police Assistance

Crime Prevention

Toward Safer Communities

Enforcement & Crime Suppression

Community Mobilization & Crime Prevention

To summarize, community policing benefits significantly from problem-solving techniques and practices learned through the problem-oriented policing movement. Community policing is definitely about solving problems. But community policing differs from problem-oriented policing to the extent that it emphasizes the roles and responsibilities of everyone in the safety and well-being web working in partnership (including police). Further, community policing focuses on police leveraging all of those partnerships to address the community's priority problems.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is problem-oriented policing?
2. How does problem-oriented policing differ from community policing?
3. How can police identify problems that would benefit from problem-oriented policing?
4. Communities have many problems and police cannot solve them all. Whether applying problem-oriented policing or problem-solving in general, police should limit their involvement to what kinds of problems and solutions?

Standard Planning Models and SARA, PARE, and CAPRA

During the Second World War, British and American engineers developed a logical, step-wise process for inventing and producing new technologies. Known as "technology assessment," their process has become the mainstay for contemporary planning models used in many areas, including community planning and social development. It is this process that is reflected in the common-sense approach to choosing what clothes to wear every morning when you wake up, and it forms the basis of the assess-plan-act sequence of problem-solving that we have just covered. Technology assessment has the following standard steps:

1. Analyze the problem to be resolved.
2. Develop some objectives and benchmarks for the final solution to the problem.
3. Examine alternative solutions and pick the solution that is most likely to achieve those objectives.
4. Apply the chosen solution.
5. Evaluate whether the chosen solution meets the objectives and benchmarks.
6. If necessary, try another solution to see if it will work better. Repeat the process until the best solution is discovered.

Problem-solving in community policing relies on these same standard steps, although some of them may be combined or they may be labelled differently.

Community policing and problem-oriented policing in Canada have adapted the technology assessment approach to problem-solving. Most agencies claiming to do problem-oriented policing teach their officers SARA. Recall from Chapter 2 that SARA stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment. If we apply the SARA approach to our earlier analogy of deciding what clothes to wear, each step in the process might look something like this:

1. Scanning: "I want to wear the right clothes for what I'm going to do today."
2. Analysis: "What am I going to do today and who am I going to be seeing?"
3. Response: "I should pick something buttoned-down for that job interview—maybe a suit."
4. Assessment: "Now, to look in the mirror and see if that works!"

Another version of that same sequence of steps is PARE: Problem identification (what should I wear?), Analysis (what will I do today and who will I see?), Response (I've got a job interview, so a suit might be best), and Evaluation (how do I look in the mirror?).

The RCMP added two steps to this same sequence to create the CAPRA problem-solving model. These added steps make their approach particularly useful in a community policing context. Each step is described below.

1. Clients: identify people with a stake in the problem or the solution to the problem
2. Acquiring and analyzing information: acquire and analyze relevant information to help resolve an incident and to investigate possible offences
3. Partnerships: engage others in the safety and well-being web to help solve the problem
4. Response: choose a solution
5. Assessment: see if the solution works

The most common approach among Canadian police agencies is SARA, so we will review it in detail. But we will also expand on CAPRA because in some ways it is better suited than SARA for community policing.

SARA

SARA emerged in 1987 as a proposed problem-solving approach to be applied by problem-oriented policing agencies.[4] It was designed to complement Herman Goldstein's problem-oriented policing as applied in controlled experiments on crime reduction in Newport News, Virginia.

SCANNING

This first step involves recognizing that there is a pattern of occurrences suggesting an underlying problem or problems that need to be resolved before the occurrences will decrease. Applied to problem-oriented policing, these would be problems that are of concern to the public, but also fit within the mandate of police. Scanning also includes an effort to summarize the consequences of these problems, because knowing the consequences helps establish some objectives and benchmarks for problem-solving. Notice that in completing this first step, we still do not know what created the problem or problems in the first place. So we cannot, upon completion of scanning, say much about proposed solutions. Scanning merely helps us isolate the problem and set up some acceptable standards for resolving it.

Scanning a Drug House Problem

This scenario, based on a true story,[5] will be presented in four parts to correspond with SARA. In this part, you will be presented with the facts of the problem. In later parts, you will be guided through the analysis, response, and assessment of the response to the problem. Consider each part and the questions following each part before moving to the next.

Irate neighbours of a single street address in Southwestern Ontario demanded that the chief of police train and empower them to patrol their own neighbourhood. This neighbourhood of early 20th-century brick homes, within walking distance of the downtown core, was slowly being bought up and restored by young couples. But a particular two-storey home, owned by an absentee landlord, threatened the whole neighbourhood because of the high incidence of drug use and attendant crime and disorder (drug trafficking, sex trade activity, and disturbances) that occurred there. Police admitted that this single address had accounted for 16 percent of their calls for service, per year, over the past 15 years. Citizens' demands for more rigorous enforcement forced police to examine these patterns and consider underlying problems. Police knew that the home was a base for drug using and dealing. Users would phone their dealer and arrange to meet a "mule" (a person who assists a dealer by delivering drugs to buyers and returning the money to the dealer) at the address. Frequently, the mule was an addicted woman who would provide sexual favours at the address in exchange for some of the drug.

Scanning disclosed that the house was occupied by five tenants—all of whom suffered from mental health and addictions issues and were in the care of various provincial and federal social assistance programs. Frequently, these drug and sex exchanges would take place within the confines of one of the five apartments. Police told stories of chasing various dealers, users, sex trade workers, and others into the house and having them disappear somewhere inside.

The five tenants of this house were incapable of policing their own living spaces, much less the whole house. There was no responsible supervision in the house; no secure ingress or egress; no smoke or carbon monoxide detectors; no fire suppression systems; no phones; and no locks on the five tenants' apartment doors. The landlord, who lived in a nearby suburb, received direct payments from the rent portion of his tenants' monthly social assistance allotments. As a consequence, there was no accountability mechanism between the landlord and the tenants. (Rent money usually gives a tenant some leverage for demanding safe and healthy living conditions from landlords.) Upon further scanning, police discovered that this address was listed on municipal records as a licensed lodging house. The landlord paid a fee to the municipality every year to renew that licence, and the renewal was supposed to be contingent upon, among other things, annual inspections by bylaws officials for safety and other standards. These inspections had not been done.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is the pattern of occurrences that led police to scan for deeper, underlying problems?
2. What underlying problems were disclosed when police applied scanning at this address?
3. From the police standpoint, what should be the objectives of problem-solving at this address?
4. From the standpoint of other agencies, what should be the objectives of problem-solving?

ANALYSIS

There is an obvious blurring between scanning and analysis in the SARA model. Once we dive into trying to understand the conditions that underlie a pattern of occurrences, it is not easy to say when scanning stops and analysis begins. However, drawing a clear line between scanning and analysis is not important. What is important is to continue analyzing deeply enough that we can be fairly sure that our proposed solutions will have the desired effect and that they will be sustainable. Analysis includes discovering all of the actions and conditions attendant to the problem; deciding what kinds of data and information are needed to get to the roots of the problem; and examining how the problem and the underlying conditions have been dealt with to date. Usually, through this process, we will also discover other agencies, organizations, and people with some connection to the problem and its roots. These

parties will need to be brought into the scope of the analysis and the proposed solutions.

Analyzing the Roots of the Drug House Problem

A police constable took some of the irate neighbours with him to visit the municipal bylaw office that issued the lodging house licences. The constable called for the meeting and introduced the neighbours. The neighbours described in detail the problems they had been experiencing with this drug house over the years. After some protracted discussions and a little soul-searching, the municipal bylaws officials admitted that the lodging house licence was renewed without inspecting the house, principally because the bylaw officer responsible for inspections was afraid to attend there. The constable immediately arranged an inspection blitz of the address with police, fire department, and bylaws officials attending at the same time. As well as all of the safety and security infractions, they discovered an attic trap door above a closet on the second floor. This was the space into which people fled when police responded at this address. The attic was the classic "drug den," with drug paraphernalia and mattresses thrown about the floor on which users could more comfortably cater to their addictions.

With a list of bylaw infractions, the constable and citizens once again met with municipal officials and discovered that current lodging house bylaws permitted the city to order a landlord to correct the infractions, and if they refused to do so, the city could file civil charges against the landlord, shut down the house, make the corrections, and charge the landlord for all of those costs on his annual tax bill. Of course, in order to shut down the house, the city would have to come up with alternative housing for the five disabled and dysfunctional tenants.

The constable arranged for some new recruit officers to canvass other addresses around the drug house to see if they could get other neighbours involved. They interviewed neighbours on both sides of the drug house. A small mom-and-pop grocery operated on one side; a 90-year-old widow lived on the other. Owners of the first-floor grocery, who had a small baby and lived upstairs, complained to police that drug dealers, users, and sex trade workers were regularly using the pay telephone affixed to the side of their building to arrange drug deals and solicit; so they had the phone company remove the phone. That only led to various unsavoury and intimidating people coming into the store and demanding to use the proprietor's behind-the-counter phone. So they asked the phone company to come back and re-install the exterior phone.

The 90-year-old widow claimed she was a prisoner in her own house. She was afraid of the five tenants who were her neighbours. She said whenever she walked to the grocery to get a newspaper or a bottle of milk, one of the tenants, who was schizophrenic and was frequently off his medications, would confront and threaten her. So she stopped going there.

This particular tenant seemed to be primarily responsible for much of the disorder at this address. So the constable and his team of irate neighbours visited the mental health care provider to find out what kind of supervision this tenant should be under. They discovered a situation much like that involving the lodging house bylaw inspector. The social worker who was supposed to be supplying and supervising the administration of medication for the schizophrenic tenant was afraid to attend this address. So she gave the tenant money and asked him to use public transit once a month to come to her office, across town, in order to pick up his medication. Quite obviously that system was not working.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How had problems at this address been dealt with up to the time the police decided to apply SARA and try to resolve them?
2. What were the consequences of these past efforts to deal with the problems at this address?
3. What did the analysis reveal about the role of social service agencies and organizations in addressing the problems?
4. What was the police constable's role in engaging these agencies and organizations, and what was the role of the irate neighbours?

There are some important points to note about the above analysis. First, consistent with a community policing and problem-oriented policing approach, police focused only on those issues and actions that were appropriate to their role and mandate. Safety and security were their responsibility, and they applied SARA in order to increase safety and security. Second, only moderate effort was required to apply SARA; it required just one enterprising constable and a few new recruits to do this work. Granted, the constable had to have good investigative skills, but most experienced officers do. Third, this officer used his influence as a police officer to get in the front door of those agencies and organizations that needed to be engaged to deal more constructively with this problem. Finally, he did not need to carry the arguments with other agency people because he relied on the interests and concerns of the irate neighbours to express their anger, frustration, fear, and discomfort caused by the disturbances at this address. That is good community policing.

RESPONSE

The response step involves choosing viable solutions to the underlying problems. The challenge for police agencies is to stick with those measures that are

appropriate to the police agency and engage and support other actors in the safety and well-being web sufficiently so that they do their part too.

Responding to the Drug House Problem

Police mounted surveillance on the drug house. That led to the arrest of a small-time drug dealer who forced his girlfriend into the sex trade to support his own drug habits and chosen lifestyle. The same operation shut down some mid-level suppliers of crack cocaine, who were operating out of a house eight blocks away from the drug house.

Accompanied by the constable, irate neighbours demanded that the municipality charge the landlord with bylaw infractions, shut down the house, retrofit it, and pass the costs on to the landlord on his tax bill. The city refused because it did not have alternative housing for the five disabled tenants. So the constable arranged a meeting for the neighbours with a social service agency that provided temporary shelter for women. There were no women tenants in the drug house, but this particular agency was the only one in the temporary shelter business that agreed to help police and neighbours with this problem. Once again, the officer booked the meeting and made introductions; the neighbours carried the arguments and provided the explanations. The agency agreed to help by reaching out to all other agencies in the region that provided any kind of temporary housing, and convene them to discuss the problem. At the meeting, temporary housing officials agreed to divide the five tenants among themselves. That made it possible for the neighbours to go back to the city and ask that it retrofit the house and act against the landlord. The city responded by finding and installing a responsible housing supervisor; installing hall phones on both floors; installing steel doors and door frames on all apartments (with locks); securing ingress and egress; and installing smoke detectors, alarms, and fire-suppressing equipment. The landlord was required to pay the costs and fines.

One of the biggest systemic flaws that underpinned the problem of this drug house was a weak lodging house bylaw. That led a couple of the irate neighbours to research such bylaws from other, neighbouring municipalities and draft a new one for this city. The constable and neighbours engaged a local councillor to sponsor the motion, and a new, more stringent bylaw was passed by city council.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What solutions were implemented by police?

2. What solutions were implemented by other actors in the safety and well-being web?

3. What was the principal role of police in getting all of these other agencies, organizations, and individuals to play a constructive role in problem-solving?

ASSESSMENT

The assessment step involves comparing outcomes of the applied problem resolution to the objectives and benchmarks set out in the scanning step. There are many ways to do that, depending on the nature and scope of the problem. But without going into details about quantitative and qualitative data assessments here, it is important to note that comparing outcomes to expectations is important for everyone involved in the solutions, not least because frequently, adjustments have to be made in order to maximize outcomes. Further, desirable outcomes need to be sustained and only constant monitoring and assessment can inform actors in the safety and well-being web when something else has to be done to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Assessment of Solutions to the Drug House Problem

Police cleared five drug dealers from the wider neighbourhood. Addicts no longer reside at the residence. The house and grounds meet all municipal property standards. Neighbours have a good and helpful relationship with tenants at this address, who need various kinds of personal supports and social assistance. Neighbouring residences and the street itself have strengthened their security (called **target hardening** in crime prevention language) with improved street lighting and motion-sensitive residential lighting. Living conditions for the tenants have improved markedly. Police calls for service to this address have decreased by 75 percent. But police still look in on the address from time to time, to monitor what is going on and to see whether any new supports are needed to sustain these positive outcomes.

CAPRA

CAPRA stands for Clients, Acquiring and analyzing information, Partnerships, Response, and Assessment. You can see the parallels to SARA, where CAPRA's Acquiring and analyzing information comprise SARA's Scanning and Analysis. But the RCMP adds two new elements to this problem-oriented policing model: Clients and Partnerships. That makes it more suitable for community policing than either SARA or PARE.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, community policing is all about developing social capital in a neighbourhood that is marginalized. Chapter 2 reinforced

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target hardening efforts taken through situational measures to strengthen the security of people, places, or things

the observation that the traditional model of policing, which revolves around enforcement, has proved inadequate to either develop or sustain community safety and well-being. However, traditional police tactics are necessary in an emergency situation where there are significant threats to personal safety or property. But enforcement is insufficient for building a community that takes good care of itself. For that, the neighbourhood needs social capital: people in the neighbourhood connecting with each other and respecting each other sufficiently to recognize common goals for safety and well-being, and working together to resolve any emerging community problems.

As a consequence, community policing is about connecting people to each other, mobilizing those who are afraid to deal with community problems or are distracted by their own issues, engaging a wide variety of human and social service agencies to address issues collaboratively, and basically reweaving the social fabric, which is everybody's safety net when there are problems in the community. That is why the RCMP's use of Clients and Partnerships adds so much value to the standard planning model. With CAPRA, they are acknowledging the importance of social capital, social cohesion, and collaboration. If police do not acknowledge the importance of those qualities, then they too often end up owning the problem and being held accountable for the solutions. If that is not bad enough, any solutions the police bring usually end up being unsustainable because the community does not own them. This creates a vicious circle of repeat occurrences with significant levels of harm and victimization, to say nothing of the cost to society and the criminal justice system.

IDENTIFYING THOSE WHO ARE MOST AFFECTED BY THE PROBLEM

As CAPRA suggests, identifying key actors in the safety and well-being web surrounding any community problem starts right at the outset of scanning and analysis. One of the most useful rules of thumb is to look for those individuals, families, businesses, organizations, and agencies that are most directly affected by the problem. These include the victims, people who care about the victims, and those who are in a position to help resolve the problem. All of them are affected by the problem; hence all of them are essential to finding sustainable solutions.

Take a look at those who were most directly affected by the drug house problem examined earlier in this chapter. At the outset, you may recall, a group of angry neighbours of that drug house confronted the chief of police with a demand that they be trained and equipped to patrol their own neighbourhood—with the implication that they thought police were not doing a good enough job at that. We can make two important observations about this group. First, they are profoundly affected by the crime and disorder associated with the drug house in their neighbourhood. Second, they are connected to each other and they are addressing the problem. In other words, there already exists, at least among these neighbours, a degree of social capital and

community cohesion that the police can build on to find more permanent solutions to this problem.

Rather than be defensive when these angry neighbours confronted the chief, police judiciously solicited their cooperation in finding more permanent solutions to the problem. That was followed by police using some new recruit officers to canvass other addresses around the drug house to see if they could get other neighbours involved. That helped too. Remember the story of the 90-year-old widow who felt imprisoned in her own home? Officers found a neighbour, down the street and around the corner from her address, who worked across town in a seniors' home. She was very familiar with the kinds of personal and social issues some seniors face. So it took very little effort to get her to agree to assist this particular senior whenever she felt like she needed some support in going to the grocery store for her bottle of milk or newspaper. That is social capital triggered by police; notice how it made a vulnerable senior safer in a potentially dangerous environment.

The irate neighbours were key to resolving this problem. Look how police relied on them telling their own stories about the drug house in their neighbourhood to leverage a whole raft of other agencies and organizations, including four or five temporary housing agencies, municipal agencies and bylaws officials, mental health officials, social assistance workers, and a municipal councillor.

Analyzing the Neighbourhood

An important part of scanning and analyzing the problem to be resolved is the process of learning about the neighbourhood. Who lives, works, and plays there? Are they aware of the problem? What do they think about the problem? Are they willing to get involved in problem-solving? If a bunch of neighbours come to police and demand that their problems be addressed, that analysis is relatively easy—as in the case of the drug house neighbourhood. With the notable exception of the drug house, that was an upwardly mobile, middle-class neighbourhood. So that case did not require a lot of effort by police to analyze the neighbourhood and figure out where the neighbourhood assets were. The job is a little tougher in a high-demand neighbourhood where people are less inclined to worry about anything other than their own personal problems, and where there is very little community cohesion.

Sources of Useful Data and Information

There are a lot of ways to find out useful things about the neighbourhood in which there is a significant community problem to be resolved. Patrol officers who are called to the neighbourhood will certainly have a useful perspective. However, it is important to realize that their impressions may be more negative than those of others because usually these officers are not called to the

neighbourhood unless someone has been harmed or victimized and offences have been committed. Hence, it is also useful to consult other officers who may have a different perspective on the neighbourhood.

In the drug house example, police used new recruit officers to canvass homes near the house, in order to get other neighbours' perspectives. But another approach would be to use what sociologists refer to as **gatekeepers**. These are local community members such as grocers, faith leaders, municipal councillors, school administrators or teachers, community activists, and others who make it their business to know what is going on in the neighbourhood. Often, they are aware of who in the neighbourhood could be a useful asset in resolving community problems.

Just as police have some knowledge about the neighbourhood because they are frequently called for assistance there, front-line workers from human and social service agencies that work in the neighbourhood have a tremendous amount of useful information that can be brought to bear on problem-solving. However, obtaining their information requires that the police develop a rapport and relationship with these front-line workers and their supervisors in their home agencies, which supports this kind of information exchange. Developing such relationships is a sound investment in productive community policing.

Police Data and Other Social Service Data

Police data on calls for service and occurrences can reveal a lot about a neighbourhood. But of course it requires a qualified crime analyst to get the most meaning out of that data. You saw in Chapter 4 how those data, turned into a map, can help police and other agencies focus on elements of a neighbourhood that deserve extra attention and investment in problem-solving.

Human and social service agencies also have databases about neighbourhoods. These databases often include the levels of demand for assistance, types of assistance provided, demographics of client populations, and other parameters, which can tell a lot about the nature of problems to be solved, as well as the experiences of agencies that should probably be engaged in the problem-solving process. Therefore, it is prudent for front-line patrol officers to establish a relationship with front-line workers from other agencies when they encounter them in the neighbourhood. Similarly, it is helpful if command officers take some responsibility for outreach to executives of those same agencies in order to talk about opportunities to collaborate on problem-solving, as well as encouraging front-line workers from all agencies to become acquainted with one another and look for opportunities to work together on behalf of the community.

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gatekeepers a term sociologists use to refer to community members who know the most about what is going on in a neighbourhood, and on whom others can rely for that kind of information

Crime and Disorder

Crime and disorder in a community, as documented by police, certainly indicate that the community has problems that need to be resolved. In the end, however, crime and disorder are merely symptoms of more profound problems in a community. Think back to the problem of the noisy, inebriated people disturbing the peace at 2:00 a.m. on a downtown street corner. The traditional policing response would be to insist they keep the peace, and if they did not do that, hold them accountable. The more fundamental problem, and the source of a solution, has to do with the decision to put the bus stop in front of a bar in the first place. That was not good route planning. But it was easy to fix once police and the bus company figured that out.

A similar problem occurred in Toronto in an area known as the "Entertainment District," so known because of its nightlife and many night clubs. The problem came about as a result of a planning decision. Municipal council had noted that the area was undergoing a period of high-rise condominium construction that was expected to take five to six years, and voted to allow entertainment establishments to be set up in order to bring more life and income to this old warehouse district. The resulting bus stop problem occurred in spades on Queen Street West. In fact, it took three Toronto Police Service divisions and all the tactical and specialized units to patrol that area, three nights per week, when thousands of inebriated young people exited the clubs at closing time. Significant harms (shootings, stabbings, assaults, etc.) prevailed all because of a bad land use planning decision made by council and supported by land use developers and entertainment club owners. The traditional policing response could not make this area safer or reduce these harms and victimizations. It required changes and enforcement in liquor licensing and entertainment density bylaws—a public policy strategy—to fix this problem.

There are three key lessons to be learned from these anecdotes. First, crime and disorder are the indicators of problems, but not the roots of problems. Second, traditional policing is not a significant deterrent or a sustainable solution to these more profound problems. Third, police need to scan and analyze the problem far more deeply, and do more than simply look for quicker, more efficient ways to do enforcement. They have to look past their own roles and responsibilities for safety and security to the more profound roots of crime and disorder in the first place. When they do that, they will no doubt discover at least two things: first, the most viable solutions may not include much of a role for police, and second, a whole host of other actors in the safety and well-being web need to be brought into problem-solving.

Using SARA to Resolve a Booze Can Problem

The city of Toronto has vibrant entertainment districts and nightlife. Hundreds of liquor licensed clubs and lounges are found throughout the city,

and the Toronto Police Service often has its hands full enforcing regulatory compliance and the requisite runoff of issues related to alcohol abuse—like excessive noise, unruly and intoxicated persons, and violence.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, police saw a rapid increase in illegal and unlicensed after-hours clubs, more commonly known as "booze cans." Popping up all over the city, they catered to an all-night crowd that didn't know when to call it quits. Widespread problems associated with booze cans, including violent crime, significantly increased demands on police.

Specialized plainclothes units identified booze can locations and applied various tactics to shut them down. Undercover officers would enter the premises, learn as much as they could about the operation, purchase and consume liquor, and then help prepare *Provincial Offences Act*[6] search warrants to support a follow-up raid, the seizure of liquor, and the laying of applicable *Liquor Licence Act*[7] charges. But these efforts were time consuming, and in some cases, dangerous. Analysis of the management and locations of booze cans revealed that an operator charged one night would simply absorb losses related to liquor seizures and relatively minor *Liquor Licence Act* fines and set up shop in another leased location the next night. Profits far outweighed the risks of running an illegal after-hours club.

Toronto Police eventually rethought their enforcement strategies by using the SARA model of problem-solving. Rather than simply targeting the operators of these leased booze can locations, police partnered with Toronto Fire Services, City of Toronto bylaw officials, and the insurance industry to crack down on the landlords who leased their properties for these illegal purposes. Police conducted undercover operations, seized liquor, and charged booze can operators under the authority of the *Liquor Licence Act*. Toronto Fire Services addressed compliance relating to municipal and provincial fire codes, including overcrowding standards. City bylaw officials addressed business licensing and anti-smoking and property insurance standards. Finally, the insurance industry, in partnership with financial institutions, worked to terminate insurance and mortgage agreements for the most egregious offenders.

Landlords eventually took notice and became increasingly hesitant to support the operation of these illegal clubs. The booze cans became a thing of the past as their potential profits no longer outweighed the risks of engaging in illegal business.

Consider the following questions:

1. Initially, police tried traditional enforcement; how well did that work?

2. What made their second strategy more effective?

3. How did SARA help police come up with a better solution?

Types and Levels of Risks

We introduced the idea of risk, or risk factors, in Chapter 4. Recall that we defined risk factors as negative characteristics or conditions in individuals, families, communities, or society that may increase social disorder, crime or fear of crime, or the likelihood of harms or victimization to persons or property. Obviously then, any attempt to reduce crime, social disorder, or fear of crime and social disorder, much less the actual harms or victimization that result from them, has to reduce those risk factors. That means it is necessary to first identify the predominant risk factors that people in the neighbourhood are experiencing. In the drug house case, the biggest risk factor for the neighbours was the house itself because of all the offensive behaviours that took place there. But behind offensive behaviours lie more risk factors that are closer to the roots of the problem, such as addictions, mental health issues, and anti-social behaviour stemming from negative life experiences. In introducing the concept of risk factors, Ontario's Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services gave examples such as those in Table 5.1.

In doing the neighbourhood analysis, police could simply look at the offensive behaviours that occur in and around the drug house and they might come up with some strategies to reduce those offensive behaviours through improved enforcement. But a deeper analysis shows the kinds of risk factors

TABLE 5.1   Examples of Risk Factors

Individual	Family/Peers	Community	Society
Behavioural problems	Abuse	Crime in area	Cultural norms supporting violence
Poor educational achievement	Few economic resources	Few social services	Social disorganization
Poor mental health	Neglect	High poverty concentration	Negative media messaging
Prior criminal behaviour	Negative parenting	Poor housing	
Racism/ marginalization	Poor peer influences		
Victimization/ abuse	Parent/sibling criminality		

SOURCE: Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, *Crime Prevention in Ontario: A Framework for Action* (Toronto: Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, 2012) at 9.

listed above in the ministry's table. There is not much that police can do about those. So many other agencies have to be involved in solving this problem. An even deeper analysis shows more profound risk factors surrounding the drug house. These included the municipality's failure to enforce a lodging house bylaw, which was weak to start with, and a mental health agency's failure to fulfill its mandate to provide medication for the schizophrenic tenant and supervise its administration. As these examples show, effective community policing and problem-solving has to dive as deep as possible into analysis of the problem.

Vulnerable Groups

Analysis of the problem also involves identifying vulnerable groups—that is, those individuals, families, and groups that are most vulnerable to the harms and victimization that come from the risk factors. Clearly, the irate neighbours of the drug house perceived themselves as vulnerable to what was happening at the drug house. Further analysis of this community problem also showed that the young couple with a baby who owned the grocery store were vulnerable to risk factors at the house. So was the 90-year-old widow next door. Were there any other vulnerable people?

What about the five disabled and dysfunctional tenants of the drug house? Because their home had no secure ingress or egress, bad people were constantly coming through there for a variety of harmful and illegal purposes. The schizophrenic tenant who went off his medications because his social worker would not deliver them or supervise their administration was vulnerable—and of course, in turn, he made others vulnerable. What about the municipality itself? Start with the costs of policing. The drug house accounted for 16 percent of all calls for service in that part of town, making the municipality and all of its taxpayers financially vulnerable. A good problem analysis will identify all of these vulnerable groups in some detail in order to give the problem-solving strategy a good sense of priorities and desirable outcomes.

Avoiding Linear Problem-Solving and Oversimplification

In his report, Scott said, "A thorough problem analysis, at a minimum, means fully describing the problem, describing the multiple and often conflicting interests at stake in the problem, calculating the nature and costs of the harm arising from the problem, and taking inventory of and critiquing the current responses to the problem."[8] He pointed out that police problem analysis is most often flawed because of four factors: insufficient time, insufficient expert guidance on the problem, oversimplified problem-solving models, and

insufficient consultation with local informants about the problem. SARA and CAPRA can be grossly oversimplified. For example, both of them suggest that problem-solving is a linear process—scan, analyze, respond, and assess. But real problem-solving does not work that way. We have already seen that finding the roots of the problem requires successive deep dives from superficial symptoms (like crime and disorder) to underlying dysfunctions (like health issues or anti-social behaviour), to failures in public policy. In that sense, problem-solving is not a simple, straight-line process. It is more iterative; it moves back and forth, and around and around.

In their studies, Cordner and Biebel have been quite critical of problem-oriented policing, largely because of oversimplified problem analysis by police officers. They make four key points:

- Crime analysis is only the starting point. Officers doing this work have to look at other sources of data such as that from other agencies, observations of other officers, and even field interviews.
- Problem analysis has to include diverse sources of information—particularly those sources that are knowledgeable about and have experience with the problem.
- Oversimplified analysis comes from basing analyses on anecdote, hearsay, or routine observations of other officers or neighbours.
- In high-demand neighbourhoods, police need to talk more with residents and neighbours. That is an opportunity to not only get their perspective on the problem but also pull them together into a coalition of like-minded community assets who identify in each other a common goal to support problem resolution (building social capital).[9]

In summary, police are most effective at problem-solving when they avoid linear thinking and oversimplification. Community policing requires a deeper level of analysis and problem-solving, and police can do this kind of work.

Mobilizing Assets in High-Demand Neighbourhoods

The most significant community problems that cause crime and disorder, and require the most investment in problem-solving, occur in high-demand neighbourhoods. Applying problem-solving models in high-demand neighbourhoods is quite different from applying them in low-demand neighbourhoods—like the drug house neighbourhood, which, other than that single street address, was a middle-class neighbourhood. Low-demand neighbourhoods like that one have neighbours who are already well connected with each other—like those irate neighbours who banded together to demand more police enforcement.

Sociologists call that **community cohesion**: strong and positive relationships between people who may have different backgrounds, tackling community problems together and developing a positive climate for community building. In high-demand neighbourhoods, community cohesion rarely exists, so it has to be developed. That is a good job for community policing and it is essential for effective problem-solving. Examining data from over 380 Chicago neighbourhoods, Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls identified a strong connection between the presence of community cohesion in a neighbourhood and the absence of family violence, assaults, and disputes between neighbours.[10] In Chapter 1, we introduced the concepts of social control and social capital. Community cohesion completes the trio, as shown in Figure 5.3.

Of course this figure, like SARA or CAPRA, can grossly oversimplify the process of community building. Here it looks like a straightforward, linear process. But experience will demonstrate that even this process not only takes a long time, but also occasionally suffers from fits and starts, and has to recycle on itself in order to achieve the desired ends. So treat this graphic as a schematic of a process only, not a prescription for speedy problem-solving.

The Asset Principle and the Role of Police

Researchers Kretzmann and McKnight have been working in the community-building movement for a long time, and they have concluded that "[c]ommunities can only be built by focusing on the strengths and capacities of the citizens who call those communities 'home.'"[11] Their research and experience in community building led them to conclusions that fly in the face of common prejudices and misconceptions that high-demand neighbourhoods are cesspools of human deficiency. They discovered that most people in high-demand neighbourhoods have some capacity to make better decisions for themselves and their neighbours if it is safe for them to do so, and if they are supported in doing so. This idea that even in the most broken neighbourhoods, there are

FIGURE 5.3   Building Community in High-Demand Neighbourhoods

community cohesion strong and positive relationships between people who may have different backgrounds, tackling community problems together and developing a positive climate for community building

people, agencies, organizations, and groups that can and will make good decisions for themselves and their neighbours, and will engage constructively in community problem-solving, is known as the **asset principle**. Kretzmann and McKnight coined the phrase "community assets" to get community builders to see the residents and neighbours in highly marginalized neighbourhoods in a more positive and constructive light. Ontario has adopted this concept in its Mobilization & Engagement Model of Community Policing.

Finding those community assets can be challenging because too often, in the most marginalized neighbourhoods, people are preoccupied with their own problems, they may be reluctant to reach out to their neighbours, they may be afraid of crime and social disorder in their neighbourhood, or, for any of a host of other reasons, they avoid broadcasting what they could do for the neighbourhood. But as reported in the Mrs. Robertson story in Chapter 1, street-wise and experienced police officers are particularly good at finding community assets—even in the most broken neighbourhoods.

Once found, community assets may face personal obstacles to getting involved in community building. They may truly doubt that they have anything to offer the enterprise; they may have relied on social assistance for so long that they think they cannot do anything better for themselves and their neighbours; and they may truly believe the prejudice and misconception that only the generosity and charity of more privileged people will save their neighbourhood. These are some of the personal obstacles that community policing has to overcome. The best way to do that is for police officers to constantly refuse to do things for people, but support them in doing things for themselves.

Mobilization Moments

We have mentioned a number of times in this text that a high priority for police officers is making a high-demand neighbourhood safe enough for community assets to step up and become involved in developing social capital and community cohesion. In a gang-ridden neighbourhood, for example, even the best community assets will think twice about engaging other neighbours in cleaning up the neighbourhood if they fear retribution from gangs. So police need to do what they do best—using the best of the traditional policing model—to make it safe enough for community assets to mobilize.

Experience in red zone neighbourhoods in Ontario and elsewhere has shown that community policing projects are best started with a major enforcement blitz. That happened at the drug house. The first step—after the citizens persuaded the police to invest in a more effective and sustainable strategy—was surveillance by the drug unit, followed by a bust that removed five

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asset principle the idea that even in the most broken neighbourhoods, there are people, agencies, organizations, and groups that can and will make good decisions for themselves and their neighbours, and will engage constructively in community problem-solving

neighbourhood drug dealers who were using that address as a base for their business. Another example is found in the *60 Minutes* video "Counterinsurgency Cops: Military Tactics Fight Street Crime" cited in Chapter 1.

Enforcement measures like these are excellent ways to begin to mobilize community assets in high-demand neighbourhoods. We call them "**mobilization moments**" in Ontario's Mobilization & Engagement Model of Community Policing. That is because police get a lot of people's attention when they engage in an enforcement action, and getting people's attention in a high-demand neighbourhood is the first step in identifying assets and demonstrating to them that police will not only make it safe for them to engage in community building, but continue to keep it safe and support them in their efforts.

Asset-Based Community Development

The rest of the process of community building in high-demand neighbourhoods follows the principles of what Kretzmann and McKnight called "asset-based community development." They have founded an institute and run workshops on this subject.[12] Additionally, there is a vast technical literature on it. In Canada, the Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement offers technical advice, courses, research, and workshops on the subject.[13] In the next chapter of this text, we offer some concrete techniques for mobilizing community assets in high-demand neighbourhoods and promoting asset-based community development.

Supporting Problem-Solving Partnerships

In this chapter we have established that police have a very important role in identifying problems to be solved and analyzing them in order to not only ferret out their roots, but also identify risk factors, vulnerable groups, and individuals, agencies, and organizations that should be enlisted in the problem-solving process. We have also discovered that if police do a deep enough analysis of the roots of the problem, they will probably also discover that they do not have a primary role in problem-solving. But they have an important supporting role to play.

Enforcement, Safety, and Security

Enforcement always has to be considered a high priority for police in high-demand neighbourhoods. It is obvious that enforcement is needed to ensure that people are abiding by the law and living peacefully. But equally important, community assets cannot be reasonably expected to get to know each

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mobilization moment a brief moment in time during which police draw neighbours' attention to a community problem through their enforcement actions

other, work together, develop community cohesion, and tackle some of the neighbourhood's more profound problems if it is not safe for them to do so. Safety and security is one of the foundation stones for effective community policing, and police are uniquely qualified to deliver it.

Outreach, Representation, and Engagement

Remember how the constable found Mrs. Robertson and how, upon being guided to her door by an 11-year-old boy, the officer got Mrs. Robertson to open the door and consider his overture for her involvement in a community-building initiative? That is effective outreach. Police are particularly good at it and they have a lot of experience with it. They also have learned to be assertive and respectful at the same time. Further, their uniform helps a lot: Mrs. Robertson probably would not have been as inclined to open her door and listen to the same overture if it had been delivered by a stranger who was not a police officer—no matter how well qualified that stranger was to do that work.

When it comes to engaging a wide range of community agencies and organizations, police, once again, have a knack for getting the attention of executives and decision-makers of those agencies in ways that people who are not police officers cannot. Think back to the constable's role in getting an audience with municipal officials in the drug house case or arranging a meeting with officials from temporary housing agencies. To get those appointments the constable only had to identify his agency, and the earliest possible appointment with those executives was given to him.

Also notice that once the officers leveraged the audiences, the irate citizens carried the discussions about the community problem and the agencies' roles in helping resolve it. The officer did not have to do the talking on behalf of the group. Two lessons come from that point: first, it is important that the officer not dominate the discussion because effective mobilization and engagement means fostering a relationship between the community assets and the helper agencies; and second, notwithstanding that first lesson, it is important for the officer to continue to be present during those discussions (if relatively silent) because his or her presence reminds everyone that police want this problem fixed, and they expect everyone else to engage in the problem-solving process.

Presence and Encouragement

As community assets in high-demand neighbourhoods begin to connect with each other, share in problem-solving, and engage with external agencies and service providers, police presence and encouragement are vital. It does not have to be a large presence; remember that it was only one constable who worked with the irate neighbours to solve the drug house problem. On the other hand, it is important that the officer(s) providing that presence and encouragement be the same one(s) who helped start the initiative, identify assets, mobilize them, and engage agencies. It does not work to constantly

rotate other officers through the problem-solving process. That is one of the adjustments that police agencies have to make in order to have effective community policing initiatives. After all, this work is all about building and maintaining effective relationships: among community assets; between community assets and human and social service agencies; and between police and community assets, as well as other agencies. That is not possible if the personnel keep changing.

Technical Consultation and Advice

Occasionally police can be a source of technical information and advice that will assist a community-building initiative. **Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)** is a good example. Other situational crime prevention measures may also be within the purview of some officers who have received crime prevention training. When police have technical information that could serve the project, they can switch from some of their other roles (enforcement, safety, outreach, representation, support, presence, and encouragement) to an active role in guiding the initiative toward some of its objectives and outcomes.

Monitoring Effects on Crime and Disorder

Finally, because police data on calls for service and occurrences may have been the original stimulus for a community-building initiative, monitoring those occurrences throughout the initiative can also help police and community partners discern whether they are having any appreciable impact on crime and disorder. A caution, though: public calls for police assistance frequently increase at the start of such an initiative in a high-demand neighbourhood. That is because active police presence and increased police legitimacy encourage people to report more often when they have a concern. Therefore, it is important for police to not only monitor these data, but also engage in further analysis about what they mean and their implications for the direction and outcomes of the project.

Of course, other agency partners also track data that pertain to their own agency's roles and services in the initiative. So there is another opportunity to monitor data in order to inform the direction and outcomes of the initiative.

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crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) a wide range of spatial, architectural, and physical measures applied to buildings and grounds in order to strengthen their security and the security of people who use them

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Problem-solving in high-demand neighbourhoods needs to be initiated by police. This is because the neighbourhood would not have a high demand for police assistance if other agencies or problem-solving initiatives were reducing crime and disorder. So it comes down to police launching problem-solving initiatives. But that does not mean that police have to come up with the solutions to the community's problems. Therein lies a trap for too many police agencies. One way to avoid that trap is to stick to the business of policing. Another is to recognize, early in the scanning and analysis stages of problem-solving, that a whole host of other agencies and organizations, individuals, and groups do have mandates, resources, roles, and responsibilities that can help solve community problems. Then it becomes a community policing job to mobilize and engage them in applying themselves more productively to the problem-solving process.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is problem-oriented policing, and how does it relate to community policing?
2. Define and explain the four elements of SARA.
3. What do the "C" and "P" in the RCMP's CAPRA problem-solving model stand for? Describe each.
4. Why is CAPRA a more suitable problem-solving model than SARA for community policing?
5. From what sources can police obtain data and information to analyze a given community problem?
6. Why do police often oversimplify problem analysis?
7. What is community cohesion, and how does it relate to violence in high-demand neighbourhoods?
8. What is the asset principle in community building?
9. What is the role of police in applying the asset principle to community policing?
10. What is a mobilization moment, and what is its role in community policing in a high-demand neighbourhood?

KEY TERMS

NOTES

1   Michael S Scott, *Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections on the First 20 Years* (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2000).

2   *Ibid* at 6.

3   *Ibid* at 98.

4   William Spelman & John E Eck, "Problem-Oriented Policing," *Research in Brief* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, January 1987) at 2.

5   Jeff Outhit, "Former Crack House Gets Clean Bill of Health," *The Record* (18 November 2000) B8.

6   *Provincial Offences Act*, RSO 1990, c P.33.

7   *Liquor Licence Act*, RSO 1990, c L.19.

8   Scott, *supra* note 1 at 59.

9   G Cordner & E Biebel, "Problem-Oriented Policing in Practice" (2005) 4:2 *Criminol Public Policy* 155.

10 Robert J Sampson, Stephen W Raudenbush & Felton Earls, "Neighbourhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy" (1997) 277 *Science* 918.

11 Jody Kretzmann & John McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Evanston, Ill: Centre for Civic Engagement, Northwestern University, 1993) at 21.

12 *Ibid*.

13 Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, "How We Work," online: <http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/howwework>.