

An Early Community-Based Intervention for the Prevention of Substance Abuse and Other Delinquent Behavior

This paper presents the results of an evaluation of an early intervention, risk-reduction strategy versus a standard intervention approach in the treatment of inner-city youth at high risk of adopting a deviant lifestyle. It examines baseline and 1-year follow-up information provided by 408 youth admitted to 2 community-based Baltimore City "Youth Bureaus" offering counseling services for neighborhood youth referred for delinquent and other problematic behavior. In the study, one of these bureaus served as the experimental intervention clinic and the other as the control, or standard intervention, clinic. Outcome measures involved substance abuse; sexual activity; contact with juvenile authorities; and delinquent activity, including violence-related activity. Regression analyses of outcome measures revealed significant differential results for delinquent activity, which favored the experimental intervention. Relationships between risk/protective factors and outcome are discussed.