THE PREVENTION OF CRIME

DELBERT ELLIOTT AND ABIGAIL FAGAN

with website

WILEY Blackwell

Praise for
The Prevention of Crime

The Prevention of Crime is scholarly, comprehensive, and accessible—three essential criteria for making a text ideal for classroom use. But two insights, integrated across its pages, allow this volume to provide a special learning experience. First, it shows that crime can be prevented in diverse ways, whether across the life course or across social contexts. And second, it shows that evidence matters, playing a crucial role in telling us which interventions are most likely to save offenders from a life in crime and to make communities safer.

Francis T. Cullen, *University of Cincinnati*

This is the first text on evidence-based crime prevention that provides a comprehensive overview of how to identify effective programs, what they offer, what is required to implement them, and their current utilization. Both authors played leading roles in identifying and promoting evidence-based programs, and in making them more accessible to public officials and practitioners.

Peter Greenwood, *Association for the Advancement of Evidence-Based Practice*

The Prevention of Crime is an indispensable resource for prevention researchers, instructors, and students. This tour de force combines in one source up-to-date research on all aspects relevant to the prevention of crime. It provides definitions of crime and prevention, relates the history of crime prevention, summarizes theories about the causes of crime and research on the causes and consequences of crime, and discusses crime measurement and standards for intervention research. It provides a comprehensive framework for thinking about different prevention approaches and summarizes what is known about each approach generally as well as about specific examples of policies and practices within each approach. It discusses challenges to translating research on effective programs into usual practice. This book is a valuable reference for prevention researchers and will quickly become the main text used for teaching about prevention.

Denise C. Gottfredson, *University of Maryland*

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Preface

Our aim with this text is to present a fresh, up to date, comprehensive, and first-hand account of what is currently known about crime prevention. The content includes the theoretical foundation of crime prevention, new strategies and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of prevention programs, the identification of interventions that have been proven to work, and issues involved in getting these programs adopted and well implemented on a national or state-wide scale. As you may or may not know prior to reading this book, there are also programs that have been proven ineffective and in some cases even harmful. We will identify these interventions as well. It is as critical to know what does not work as what does work, especially since most interventions used in the past were ineffective, and even today, interventions shown to *increase* crime are being used.

An updated approach to crime prevention is needed because in the past decade, there has been a paradigm shift in theoretical thinking about the causes of crime. This shift in thinking about the causes of crime has led to new research findings and new approaches to the design, evaluation, and implementation of crime prevention and rehabilitation programs. It also involves the emergence of the life course developmental paradigm which views crime as a response to social, emotional, and physical barriers to a positive course of child and adolescent development. A new field of prevention science based on the public health approach to prevention and involving a new classification of types of prevention programs has also emerged. In addition, we now have improved measures of criminal behavior based upon the National Research Council's (1986) study of criminal careers that improve our understanding about different dimensions of involvement in criminal activity. These are relatively recent developments which have reshaped criminological thinking about crime prevention, and we draw from these advances with the goal of stimulating your interest in prevention science and providing you with scientifically proven methods for significantly reducing rates of criminal behavior.

We are now in what has been called "the golden age" of evidence-based interventions. Evidence-based interventions are prevention programs, practices, and policies that have been proven effective in experimental evaluations, primarily in randomized controlled trials (RCTs) like those used to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of new medical drugs. National task forces have been created to review

the scientific standards that should be used to certify interventions as evidence-based, and many federal justice, health, and human service agencies, as well as a number of related professional organizations, have established registries with lists of interventions shown to be evidence-based in order to promote their increased use. In the United States, federal legislation has funded large-scale initiatives to increase the dissemination of specific evidence-based programs, including those that claim to prevent delinquency, like the $1.5 billion initiative (2010–2014) funding evidence-based home visitation programs and a $109 million (FY 2014) initiative for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs. Recent legislation (in 2016) has established a federal bipartisan Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking. And there is now strong public and private support for RCT evaluations as the preferred standard for certifying evidence-based interventions. All of these developments will be described in this book with particular attention to their significance for the prevention of crime.

We have chosen to write this book because we have been on the front lines of current research on crime prevention. Dr Elliott's research includes directing one of the few national longitudinal studies of crime, substance use, and mental health problems. The National Youth Survey involved a representative panel of American youth followed into their middle adult years, allowing identification of the major risk factors and barriers to a successful course of child and adolescent development that predicted later involvement in criminal behavior. Dr Elliott also directs one of the current evidence-based registries of effective prevention programs, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, a Consumers Reports type initiative which reviews all the evidence for a program's effectiveness and certifies those programs proven to work. Both authors have conducted many evaluations of delinquency, drug and crime prevention programs, including RCTs of individual programs and evaluations of community-based systems and national crime prevention initiatives designed to increase the dissemination of evidence-based initiatives. Dr Fagan has provided one-on-one training and consultation to numerous schools, community coalitions, and other groups to improve the implementation of evidence-based interventions. We are intimately aware of the issues surrounding the identification of evidence-based crime prevention programs, practices, and policies, and why so few of these interventions are being well implemented in communities and at a scale necessary to have some impact on national rates of crime. We believe this text represents the cutting edge of knowledge about crime prevention and provides insight into what is known about crime prevention, what is controversial, and the direction of future work on the prevention of crime.

Finally, we have tried to present this information in an engaging, forthright manner. If you find it boring, we will have failed. We think that understanding why persons come to engage in criminal behavior and how we can intervene to prevent this type of behavior are among the most exciting tasks we can engage in as scientists and practitioners of crime prevention. These topics should not be boring. They are complex and will require some study and diligence on your part, but if the information you learn in this textbook leads to a deeper understanding and/or to a career in some aspect of crime prevention, we will have realized our goal. In any event, we thank you for reading the text and welcome your comments and suggestions.

Delbert Elliott and Abigail Fagan
August 2016

Acknowledgments

This book discusses findings generated by passionate, dedicated, and forward-thinking scientists too numerous to count. We want to offer a general acknowledgment of all those working to increase our understanding of how to effectively prevent crime. Without your insights, we could not have written this textbook.

More personally, Del's acknowledgment's are as follows: I would like to acknowledge Dr Clarence Schrag, the person who introduced me to the study of criminal behavior in graduate school, made this an exciting field of inquiry, and supported and encouraged me during my early research career in criminology. When invited to write this text, the first person I thought of as a co-author was Dr Abby Fagan, a brilliant young criminologist I had the pleasure of mentoring in graduate school. Abby's early career also involved working with me on the Blueprints for Violence Prevention initiative, a kind of Consumer's Report website identifying crime prevention programs that have been proven to work. So it was only natural we should co-author this text. My career in criminology now spans over 55 years and no one has been more supportive and encouraging over these many years than my wife, Mary Grace Elliott.

Abby's acknowledgments are as follows: I would like to acknowledge my appreciation for the opportunity to collaborate on this book with Dr Del Elliott, my first mentor in the field of crime prevention. Del has had a tremendous impact on my knowledge and attitudes regarding the causes and prevention of youth delinquency. Similarly, my understanding of community-based crime prevention could not have been gained without the mentoring of Drs David Hawkins and Richard Catalano at the University of Washington. I am honored to follow in the footsteps of these three prevention giants! I would also like to acknowledge and thank the undergraduate and graduate students who assisted me in conducting literature review searches, proofreading chapters, and preparing materials for the book: Molly Buchanan, Andrea Lindsey, Stephanie Mintz, Danielle Rapapport, Mary Ann Thursh, and Kathryn Zambrana.

About the Companion Website

Don't forget to visit the companion website for this book:

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- Sample syllabus

Section I
Introduction to Crime Prevention

1

The Goals and Logic of Crime Prevention

Learning Objectives

Upon finishing this chapter, students should be able to:

- Understand the goals and logic of crime prevention
- Identify the personal and social costs of crime
- Distinguish between criminal behavior and other types of antisocial behavior
- Understand how crimes are classified
- Identify the primary measures of crime and how they differ
- Understand the objectives of prevention science.

Introduction

Consider the following three scenarios:

Scenario 1 *On January 5, 2012 in Chicago, a woman was awakened late at night and saw a man going through the jewelry box on her bedroom dresser. She screamed. Startled, the man attacked her: covering her mouth, tying her up and raping her. When he left shortly before daybreak, he took all of her expensive jewelry.*

If this violent crime happened to your mother or sister, you would almost certainly want this man found, arrested, convicted, and sent to prison for a long time. You would want justice. But wouldn't it be better, for your mother or sister, for yourself and for the whole community, if this crime never happened in the first place? If the personal, social, or environmental factors that led this man to commit this violent crime had been recognized earlier in his life and some action taken that would

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change his and the victim's future? If this event could have been *prevented*, and this victim never assaulted, wouldn't it be even better than having to seek justice after the fact?

Scenario 2 *The young man who committed the rape and burglary was caught two weeks following this event, was convicted and sentenced to 12 years in prison. After serving 8 years, he was released back into the community on parole. Twenty days after being released, he was involved in a car-jacking which left the car owner with a serious head injury requiring hospitalization. The perpetrator was apprehended by police, convicted and sentenced back to the same state prison that previously hosted him.*

When the victim of the first crime found out that her attacker was released from prison and committed another serious violent crime, she was outraged. Do you agree with her? Wasn't justice served, given that the man was caught and punished for the first crime and served eight years in prison? Would you be satisfied with his punishment if you knew that there were treatment options available in his prison that had been shown to rehabilitate nearly half of their participants so that they did not re-offend once out of prison, but that he never received such programming? Wouldn't requiring that the offender receive treatment be a better option than releasing him back to the community with no help in addressing the problems and conditions that led him to commit another crime?

Scenario 3 *In 1967, the manager of public safety in Denver, Colorado was reviewing a report of yet another robbery of a city bus driver that happened the night before. She was angry about how many similar robberies had occurred in the past several years and the recent increase in such crimes in the past year. Bus drivers were often targets for robbery, as they carried relatively large sums of money towards the end of their shift, after cash fares had accumulated. Not only was the city losing a significant amount of money, but in an increasing number of cases, bus drivers were injured in these robberies.*

Although the city manager did not realize it at the time, a relatively simple prevention strategy was available that had been shown to greatly reduce bus and transportation robberies. In the late 1960s, locked bus fare boxes, similar to safes in homes, were introduced in order to reduce bus drivers' and would-be offenders' access to cash. As a result of this innovation, opportunities for successful bus robberies were significantly lowered. Moreover, these reductions resulted in savings that far exceeded the cost of installing the boxes. Unlike crime prevention strategies that try to change an individual's behavior, which can be difficult, this and other types of situational crime prevention efforts try to affect the circumstances or opportunities that make it easier or less risky to commit a crime.

As these examples show, criminal behavior, no matter what form it takes, can result in significant financial costs to society and much pain and suffering for victims and their families. One of the first questions asked after events like those described above is: *Why did this happen?* This question is often followed by another: *How could we have stopped this from happening?* Then we might ask: *What was going on in these offenders' minds? What happened to them at school, work, or in their homes that led them to even consider, let alone carry out, these crimes? Why was this particular person or place targeted? How can we make places and persons less vulnerable to crime?*

The implication is that if we knew more about what caused a crime, we could do something to prevent it from ever happening. *The goal of crime prevention is to reduce the number of persons or groups committing criminal acts in society, to reduce the number of offenses they commit, and to reduce the overall number of criminal acts committed in a school, community, or society.*

> *Intellectuals solve problems. Geniuses prevent them.*
>
> Albert Einstein

It is generally accepted that the causes which lead a person or group to initially engage in a crime might be psychological or biological (e.g., a mental health disorder, genetic predisposition, or some type of physical illness); found in the offender's childhood upbringing; or related to the conditions, situations, or experiences the person or group encountered while at school, in their family, at work, or in their neighborhood. While it may not be possible to change or fix some of these factors, others can be successfully modified using carefully designed and well-implemented prevention programs. As we will emphasize throughout this book, *the key to crime prevention is successfully identifying the cause(s) of crime*. The logic of crime prevention is to then do something about these causes. Doing so may involve changing the conditions, situations, personal characteristics, and experiences which influence offending by individuals or groups.

Different types of crimes may require different types of crime prevention programs or policies. Recall the scenarios discussed at the beginning of this chapter. To prevent the rape and burglary described in the first example, we would use what is called a **universal** or **selective** prevention program. This type of intervention involves working with an individual or group *before* any criminal behavior has occurred; the goal is to reduce the likelihood of future criminal behavior. The type of prevention program that would address the crimes of the offender in the second scenario is called an **indicated** prevention program. This type of intervention is aimed at individuals who have already committed an illegal offense; the goal is to end or at least reduce their further involvement in criminal activity. The third scenario described an **environmental** or **situational** prevention strategy to reduce bus robberies. Rather than trying to change individuals, these types of prevention try to alter social or physical environments that facilitate or provide opportunities for crime, making it harder to carry out crimes and/or increasing the likelihood offenders will be caught. In some cases, they might involve creating legal statutes and policies to deter criminal activity among the general population.

We will provide more details about these and other types of strategies that can be used to prevent crime in the following chapters. The goal of this textbook is to share with you exactly what criminologists know about crime prevention, including the types of actions highlighted above as well as many other crime prevention strategies. Even if you do not think you have been directly affected by crime, it is likely that you have felt its impact in some way. For example, have you ever been afraid to walk down a dark alley or gone back to your car or house to make sure it is locked? If so, you have been affected by crime. The main point to realize right now, and what we will emphasize throughout this book, is that *crime can be prevented*. This is very good news!

Also encouraging is that, in the past 30 years, major advances have been made in crime prevention. Since the mid-1990s, the national crime rate in the United States (USA) has declined and it is generally believed that the development of better crime prevention programs played a role in facilitating this decline. We now know a lot more than we used to about the many causes of crime, how to change many of these factors and conditions, and how to design and test different types of preventive interventions. We have also learned a lot about what works and what does not work to prevent crime, how to increase the use of effective prevention strategies, and how to ensure that these programs and practices are well implemented. This body of knowledge is what the emerging

field of study called **prevention science**, which is described in more detail in Chapter 3, is all about, and our textbook will show how this information is being used in crime prevention efforts today.

So that you can properly appreciate the need for crime prevention, we will first describe the financial and emotional impact that crime has on society. We then discuss how crime is measured, an important component of prevention given that successful crime prevention efforts must show that crime has actually been reduced. While this seems obvious, prevention strategies may claim to be effective but may not actually measure or have any impact on rates of crime. For example, various prevention strategies may increase citizen satisfaction with police or reduce fear of crime, but if rates of illegal behavior are not affected, we would not classify them as effective crime prevention strategies.

> *New York City paid $167,732 to feed, house and guard each inmate in its jails in 2012.*
>
> Marc Santora (2013), reporter, *The New York Times*

The Financial Costs of Crime

Estimating the costs of crime is a complex task and different economists include different figures in their estimations, making it difficult to precisely determine the cost of illegal behavior (for a discussion, see: McCollister, French, and Fang, 2010). For example, in the early 1990s, the total costs of crime in the USA were estimated to range from $425 billion (Mandel and Magnusson, 1993) to $1.7 trillion per year (Anderson, 1999). The trillion dollar figure included $603 billion in losses to the economy from fraud and unpaid taxes; $450 billion in medical bills, lost earnings, and lost quality of life; $45 billion in insurance payments to crime victims; and $15 billion in stolen property. Overall, the average cost per person in the USA was estimated to be $4,118. More recent estimates indicate a cost of $312 billion for the most serious index offenses alone, representing about 2% of the US Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2012. The majority of this cost, $250 billion, was for violent offenses, primarily murder and aggravated assault (Chalfin, 2015). In the United Kingdom (UK), violent crime was estimated to cost £124 billion in 2012, an amount which equates to €4,700 per household and 7.7% of the country's GDP (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2013).

Although there is variation in how costs are estimated, most studies will consider: (i) costs associated with the operation of the criminal justice system, such as costs of police, courts, and prisons; (ii) costs experienced by victims including medical expenses, lost productivity, and loss of property; (iii) costs that occur because individuals have chosen to commit crimes rather than work in legitimate occupations; and (iv) intangible costs such as those related to the pain and suffering of victims or the fear of crime experienced by the public when crimes occur (McCollister *et al.*, 2010). You will not be surprised to learn that the costs included under the first category are staggering. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5049), it cost the USA $270 billion dollars in 2010 to operate correctional facilities such as jails, prisons, and detention centers. The Pew Charitable Trusts (2008) estimates that states spend roughly about the same amount of money on corrections as they do on higher education. In addition, the amount of money spent on corrections is increasing rapidly, in part due to the escalating costs of providing health care to a

growing population of elderly prisoners (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2013). With limited budgets, spending more on offenders means spending less on education and other public services.

In addition to estimating the total costs of crime, some studies have reported costs associated with particular offenses and/or particular types of offenders. Figure 1.1 displays the costs of various violent and property offenses committed in the USA. Again, these figures show that violent crimes result in the largest costs to society, with the average, estimated cost of each murder being nearly $9 million (in 2008 dollars), each rape or sexual assault costing $241,000, each aggravated assault costing over $100,000, and each robbery costing about $42,000 (McCollister *et al.*, 2010). The **tangible costs** included in these figures are those that we commonly think about: the costs to victims related to medical bills and lost productivity at work, costs for police and court processing, and the expenses of incarcerating offenders in jails, prisons, and detention centers. **Intangible costs** may be less familiar, but these make up the majority of the total costs of violent crimes. Intangible costs are related the physical and emotional pain and suffering of victims and, although this type of cost can be difficult to quantify, they are often estimated by considering how juries might award compensation to victims.

A study based on following individuals from Philadelphia, PA from birth to age 26 also found that serious, violent offenses accounted for most of the total costs of crime (Cohen, Piquero, and Jennings, 2010). This study reported that a small proportion of individuals, those committing the most serious crimes, generate substantial costs to society. More specifically, the authors found that about 3% of all

Total (tangible plus intangible) per-offense cost for different crimes in 2008 dollars.

Type of offense	Tangible cost	Intangible cost	Total cost[a]
Murder	$1,285,146	$8,442,000	$8,982,907
Rape/sexual assault	$41,252	$199,642	$240,776
Aggravated assault	$19,472	$95,023	$107,020
Robbery	$21,373	$22,575	$42,310
Arson	$16,429	$5,133	$21,103
Motor vehicle theft	$10,534	$262	$10,772
Stolen property	$7,974	N/A	$7,974
Household burglary	$6,169	$321	$6,462
Embezzlement	$5,480	N/A	$5,480
Forgery and counterfeiting	$5,265	N/A	$5,265
Fraud	$5,032	N/A	$5,032
Vandalism	$4,860	N/A	$4,860
Larceny/theft	$3,523	$10	$3,532

N/A: not available or not applicable.

[a] Total per-offense cost calculated as the sum of tangible cost (excluding the uncorrected risk-of-homicide cost from crime victim cost, when applicable) and intangible cost.

Figure 1.1 Costs of crime in the United States. Source: McCollister *et al.*, 2010. Reproduced with permission of Elsevier.

individuals followed in the study were "high-rate, chronic offenders" who steadily committed crimes from adolescence to early adulthood. As a whole, this group accounted for 40% of all estimated costs, and each individual in the group was estimated to cost society about $1 million!

Recent research has begun to focus on the costs of **cyber crime**, or crimes committed via the Internet such as theft of intellectual property; virus attacks that insert malicious code into computers to disrupt work and destroy documents; theft of funds from bank accounts; and posting of fraudulent information. Based on reports from 56 companies across the USA, the Ponemon Institute (2012) estimated that cyber crimes cost companies an average of almost $9 million per year. Such crimes are becoming commonplace, with businesses reporting an average of 94 successful attacks per year in 2012. In December, 2013, a particularly devastating notable cyber crime occurred in the USA, with "malware" leading to a security breach that compromised the credit cards of over 110 million shoppers at the Target and Neiman Marcus stores.

Some international research indicates that US companies may be victimized more often, suffer more costly forms of attacks, and lose more money overall to cyber crime compared to other countries. The overall costs of cyber crime in the USA and in six other industrialized countries are shown in Figure 1.2. Costs in the USA are about double those in Germany, Japan, and the UK, at over 15 million dollars, four times higher than those in Brazil and Australia, and seven times as large as Russia's (Ponemon Institute, 2015).

It is important to be aware that drug use and abuse also have significant financial costs to society, especially when taking into account the number of crimes committed by those under the influence of both legal and illegal substances. One report estimated that drug use and drug-related crimes cost American taxpayers $193 billion in 2007 due to lost productivity, health care and criminal justice

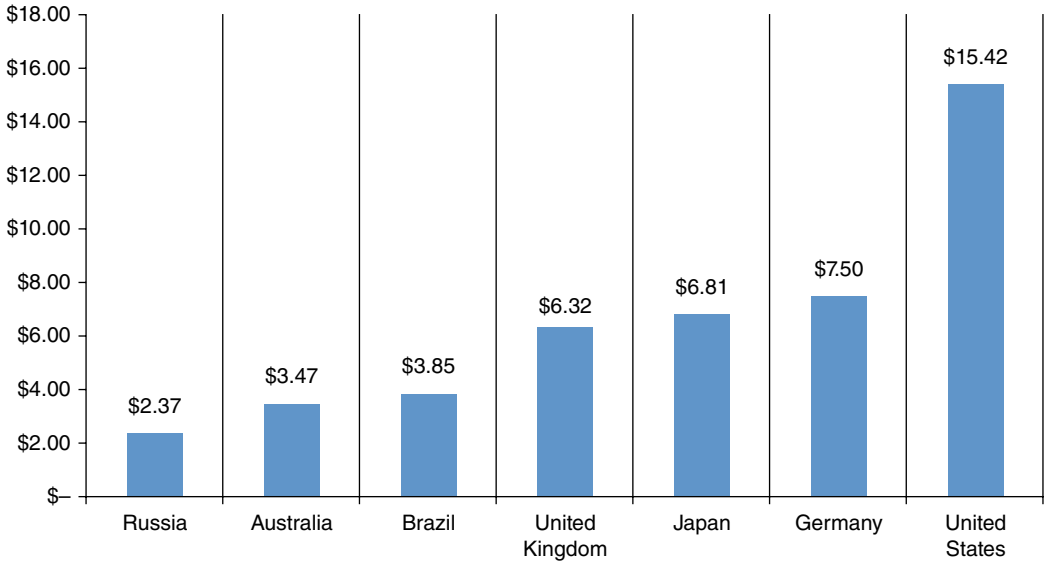

Figure 1.2 Costs of cyber crime in seven countries, in millions of US dollars. Source: Ponemon Institute, 2015. Reproduced with permission of Ponemon Institute.

costs (https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/04/10/president-s-fy-2014-budget-supporting-21st-century-drug-policy).

It is obvious from this information that even a modest reduction in the level of crime can have a significant effect on the public's health and welfare and strongly benefit the economy. As we will show in later chapters, prevention science has demonstrated that prevention programs can be effective, can achieve significant reductions in criminal behavior, and can reduce the costs of crime.

Fear of Crime

As we mentioned earlier, in addition to economic costs, there are intangible and difficult to quantify costs associated with crime. For example, the **fear of crime** is a psychological and emotional cost brought about when you worry that you or someone you care about might become a victim of crime. Many criminological studies have investigated fear of crime, including who is most likely to fear crime, how fear relates to the chances of actually being victimized, and the consequences of being fearful on one's lifestyle and activities, physical health and emotional well-being. We summarize this research in this section of the chapter and discuss how fear of crime is related to crime prevention.

> *Lethal violence is the most frightening threat in every modern industrial nation.*
>
> Zimring and Hawkins, 1997: 9

How widespread is fear of crime? Such fears likely affect most people in society in some way or another. Just consider the number of times you may have experienced some fear or anxiety about potential victimization, such as worrying about being attacked, that your new smart phone might be stolen, or that your car or home might be broken into. Surveys of the public have shown that, when specifically asked to report their fear of crime, about 40% to 50% of individuals express a general worry that they may be victimized in some way. On average, about 40% of participants in such surveys indicate that there are neighborhoods or places near their homes where they would be afraid to walk at night (Saad, 2010). In some countries, rates are even higher. Over 50% of respondents in 31 of 135 countries polled by Gallup in 2012 and about 75% of adult residents in Venezuela and South Africa reported being afraid to walk alone at night (Crabtree, 2013). This particular concern represents a significant impact of crime on people's lifestyle choices and behavior patterns.

Although we might think that violent crimes generate the most fear, in fact, property crimes may produce more worry. The greatest worry, reported by two-thirds of respondents in a 2009 Gallup poll (Saad, 2009), was being a victim of identity theft, while slightly less than half worried about auto theft and burglary (see Figure 1.3). Of the violent crimes, being the victim of terrorism was the most feared, reported by 35% of the sample. Less than one in five people worried about being sexually assaulted, murdered, or being the target of a hate crime.

Crimes are likely to generate fear and anger among victims, but such feelings can extend to victims' family members and acquaintances, as well as to neighborhood residents and even the larger community (Brunton-Smith and Jackson, 2012). Research shows that even those who do not know a victim but hear about a crime perpetrated against someone else will often experience some personal

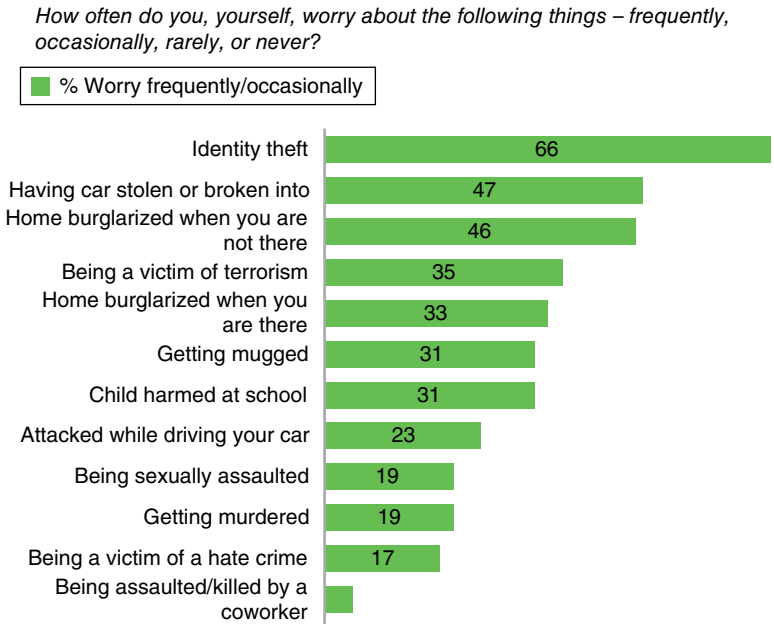

Figure 1.3 Fear of crime in the United States. Source: Saad, 2009.

fear that it could happen to them or those they care about (Brunton-Smith and Jackson, 2012; Hough, 1995). Local crime events can even spark national and international anxiety and fear. For example, in a 2006 Gallup poll conducted shortly after an attack in the USA at a one-room Amish schoolhouse that killed six people including the shooter, 35% of parents reported they feared for their child's safety at school, an increase from 25% reported in the prior year (Jones, 2006). Likewise, following the murder of 20 children and six adults at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, in 2012, which dominated the news for weeks, parents across the nation worried about sending their children to school. Over half (52%) of American adults surveyed in a Gallup poll following this incident reported fearing that similar events could happen where they lived (Saad, 2012). This crime also sparked a contentious national debate over gun control, demands for better identification and services for the mentally ill (given that the shooter was known to have such problems), and calls for the placement of armed police officers and/or teachers in schools. Many schools reported lockdowns in response to reports of suspicious persons around their schools, and many brought in counselors to meet with children and staff to help them deal with their emotional responses to this event.

While some events can inspire widespread anxiety, it is also true that fear of crime varies by gender, age, income, race/ethnicity, and neighborhood/city. In a 2003 Gallup poll (Saad, 2003), women were eight times as likely as men to report anxiety over being a sexual assault victim (39% vs 5%). Women were also more likely than men to report worrying about other violent crimes such as muggings and terrorism and were much more likely to report being afraid to walk alone at night. This gender difference is found globally. Women around the world are nearly twice as likely as men to report being afraid to walk alone (Saad, 2010). Polls also show that fear of crime, specifically the

fear of walking alone at night, is more common among those over age 65 compared to younger individuals and is twice as likely among those earning low incomes compared to higher income earners (Saad, 2003). Fear of crime has also been shown to be higher among ethnic minorities than non-Hispanic Caucasians (Chiricos, Hogan, and Gertz, 1997). Finally, those who live in urban areas have been shown to be twice as likely as those living in rural areas to worry about safety in their neighborhoods (Chiricos *et al.*, 1997; Saad, 2003).

The relationship between fear of crime and rates of crime

Presumably, a major benefit of preventing or reducing crime is to lessen the public's fear of crime. But how closely connected are fear of crime and crime rates? Lab (2010: 17) claims that "… it would be naïve to claim that changes in the crime rate have no influence on reported fear." While this seems reasonable, the bulk of research indicates that fear of crime is not closely related to the actual probability of being a victim of crime. Instead, the relationship between levels of fear and officially reported levels of crime is weak and inconsistent (Rountree, 1998; Saad, 2003). For example, American's fear of crime remained fairly stable between 1989 and 2003, while violent and property crime rates reported by the FBI dropped by about 50% (Saad, 2003). As another example, elderly women have very low risks of victimization but studies show that they report very high levels of fear (LaGrange and Ferraro, 1989; Warr, 1984).

A number of explanations for the discrepancy between actual rates of crime and individuals' reported fear of crime have been proposed. *First*, as already mentioned, one does not have to actually experience a criminal event to fear the possibility of becoming a victim (Hough, 1995). The fact that a single crime can generate fear among a larger network of acquaintances, friends, and family members suggests that actual crime rates can be low, but fear of crime high. Relatedly, perceptions of the risk of victimization, and resulting fear of crime, are likely to be influenced by the mass media and its coverage of violent crimes (Williams and Dickinson, 1993). The news slogan "*if it bleeds, it leads*" indicates the priority given by the media to crime, and this attention may well distort perceptions about the actual levels of crime occurring locally or in other parts of the country (Warr, 2000). With the explosion of social media, such stories can easily "go viral," with images and stories spreading quickly across the world. Surveys have shown that levels of fear typically spike after major, dramatic events that are highly publicized, like the Columbine school shooting in 1999, the Washington DC-area sniper shootings in 2002 and the more recent Amish and Newtown Sandy Hook school shootings (Jones, 2006; Saad, 2006). It is also true, however, that research has not shown a consistent relationship between fear of crime and exposure to media reports of crime (Warr, 2000).

Second, as already noted, some groups are more likely to report fear of crime even if they do not have a strong likelihood of being victimized, which can also lead to a discrepancy between rates of fear and rates of crime. The perceived risk of victimization is influenced both by the anticipated level of harm associated with victimization and with the level of control over the conditions and situations that are related to victimization (Warr, 1984). For example, the elderly and many females are likely to face a physical disadvantage in violent encounters, which are often committed by young males, and this knowledge could cause these groups to fear the possibility of these interactions even if their actual risk of victimization is low (Bennett and Flavin, 1994; Smith and Torstensson, 1997).

For property crimes, the economic impact of burglary or theft is greater for the poor and for many elderly living on fixed incomes, which can affect their anticipated fear of crime (Warr, 1984). All in all, differences in reported fears may be due more to differences in one's vulnerability to potential victimization than to the actual chances of becoming a victim.

Third, there is evidence that fear is linked to one's neighborhood. Anxiety and worry about crime tends to be highest in areas with high levels of social disorder or incivilities such as public drunkenness, panhandling/begging, homelessness, gangs, and drug sales, and in areas with physical disorder and deterioration like trash, graffiti, and rundown and abandoned buildings (LaGrange, Ferraro, and Supancic, 1992; McGarrell, Giacomazzi, and Thurman, 1997; Skogan, 1986). These neighborhood conditions are relatively stable over time and slower to change compared to actual crime rates. Such patterns account for at least some of the discrepancy between levels of fear and official levels of crime.

The personal consequences of fear of crime

Whether or not it is a true reflection of crime rates and the actual risk of victimization, fear of crime can have serious effects on personal well-being, health, and lifestyles. High levels of fear can restrict the number of places one is willing to travel to, the times of day one feels comfortable outside, and the number of people one trusts (Stafford, Chandola, and Marmot, 2007). The end result is often social isolation. Studies have also shown a relationship between fear of crime and poor mental health, reduced physical functioning and a lower quality of life (Jackson and Stafford, 2009; Stafford *et al.*, 2007). For example, a long-term study of British men and women (Stafford *et al.*, 2007) showed that those reporting greater fear were, on average, nearly twice as likely to be depressed and had worse mental health than respondents reporting lower levels of fear. Fear of crime was also related to exercising less frequently, visiting friends less often, and being involved in fewer social activities.

Although the exact relationship between fear of crime and rates of crime is difficult to determine, the prevention of property and violent crimes should result in numerous positive effects for society. If rates are reduced, fewer individuals will be victimized, neighborhoods should feel and look safer, and the financial burdens of crime will be lessened. In turn, fear of crime could be reduced. Of course, these benefits can only be realized if effective prevention programs are widely implemented. To that end, the goal of this text is to increase knowledge regarding effective crime prevention efforts and to greatly expand the use of these strategies.

Measuring Crime

The goal of crime prevention is to reduce crime rates, and documenting success in reaching this goal requires good measures of crime. Thus, good measurement is critical when planning and evaluating prevention programs. As we will discuss in this section, prevention researchers have a range of options for measuring crime. The three types of measures used most often to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention efforts are: (i) arrest records obtained from law enforcement agencies; (ii) victimization reports obtained from individuals; and (iii) offender reports obtained from individuals.[1] The first type of measure is referred to as an **official** measure, while the last two are often referred to as **self-report** measures of crime. Each of the three measures has advantages and limitations, and the preferred measure for assessing rates of crime

depends on the type of intervention being tested and the specific criminal behaviors of interest to the researcher. In this section, we will describe each of these types, summarize their accuracy and validity in measuring crime and provide some recommendations for appropriately using each type of measure. But first, let us actually define what we mean by **crime** and describe how particular offenses are typically categorized and classified by criminologists.

> *From the fight against polio to fixing education, what's missing is often good measurement and a commitment to follow the data.*
>
> Bill Gates (2013), Developer and CEO of Microsoft

What makes a crime a crime? This may seem like a lead-in to a bad joke, but determining what actually "counts" as a crime is very important … and rather challenging. For example, is smoking marijuana a criminal behavior? The answer to this question is not straightforward because whether or not marijuana use is illegal varies by country, state/region and, in some cases, according to an individual's medical history. In addition, not all harmful, immoral, or scandalous behaviors are crimes. Lying to your spouse or friend, cheating on an exam, and committing adultery may be "wrong," but they are not crimes. The most basic, and hopefully most simplistic, definition of a crime is *behavior that violates the criminal law*. In the USA, a criminal statute is a law passed by Congress, a state or a local legislative body. Statutes describe a specific behavior or class of behaviors that are prohibited, prescribe a specific punishment for the perpetration of these behaviors, and allow law enforcement to enforce these statutes and apply these penalties. In the USA we also make a distinction between **crime** and **delinquency**, the latter being behavior committed by minors (those less than age 18) that violates the law. For simplicity, in this textbook we will generally refer to illegal behaviors by adults and minors/juveniles as crime.

In a classic illustration of the problems of defining crime, the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas resulted in a "Texas standoff" between the US Secret Service and the Dallas police over who had jurisdiction over the murder. In 1963, there was no federal law prohibiting the killing of a US president. As a result, the murder of President Kennedy was not a federal crime. There was a Texas state law prohibiting murder, and this technically gave the Dallas police, not the Federal government, jurisdiction over the investigation of the assassination of the president.

So, only specific behaviors prohibited by the criminal law can be considered crimes. It is the prevention of these behaviors that concern us in this book. The prevention of other problem behaviors – for example, dropping out of school, teenage pregnancy, adult tobacco or alcohol use, obesity, chronic unemployment, depression and other mental health disorders – is worthwhile but outside the scope of this text. However, keep in mind that some crime prevention strategies have been shown to reduce some of these negative outcomes as well as illegal behavior, making crime prevention efforts all the more noteworthy.

Offense classifications

Felonies, misdemeanors, and infractions

Criminal law categorizes crimes into three general types depending on their seriousness: felonies, misdemeanors, and infractions. **Felonies** are the most serious crimes and carry a punishment of confinement for more than a year in a state or federal prison. Homicide, robbery, rape, burglary, and auto theft are examples of felony crimes. **Misdemeanors** are less serious and typically involve

sentences of up to a year in a county jail and/or monetary fines or community service. Examples include shoplifting, minor assault, and possession of an illicit drug. **Infractions** are less serious than misdemeanors and typically involve monetary fines. Violations of traffic laws are an example of an infraction. Those charged with infractions are not entitled to a jury trial or a public defender, while those charged with felonies and misdemeanors are entitled to both.

There is one other type of crime that may be familiar to you. **Ordinances** are laws passed by a particular city or county and identify behaviors that are illegal in that particular location; that is, these laws are limited in jurisdiction to the local area. Examples are laws prohibiting overnight parking or parking in a red zone, smoking in public buildings, and failing to have a leash on your dog. Like infractions, violation of an ordinance usually results in a monetary fine, and those charged with ordinance violations are not entitled to a jury trial or public defender.

Personal and property offenses

Criminal offenses are further classified as personal or property crimes. **Personal crimes** are offenses that involve physical or mental harm to an individual. Examples include homicide, assault, kidnapping, and sexual assault. **Property crimes** are those that interfere with another person's right to use or enjoy their property. They typically involve the theft, destruction or damage of another's property. More specific examples include larceny, burglary, and vandalism. Some personal and property offenses are felonies and others are misdemeanors, depending on their seriousness.

Official (law enforcement) measures

Official measures of crime, sometimes referred to as **law enforcement measures**, include crimes known to police, arrests, court convictions, and crimes that are cleared or "closed," either because an arrest has been made or some other event has occurred, such as the death of the suspect. Official measures also include court filings and dispositions, but such records are rarely used in evaluations of prevention programs and policies. National and state law enforcement agencies usually report statistics about crime as "rates" of the number of crimes per 100,000 persons in the population. Local city and county agencies may report the actual numbers of offenses committed or crime rates for different populations (e.g., for males and females).

The **Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)** is the best-known and most comprehensive official measure of crime in the USA (see: http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr). The UCR provide a count of crimes known to the police, crimes cleared (i.e., closed by arrest or other means), and arrest rates. Information on crime is provided voluntarily every year by over 18,000 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. As such, UCR statistics do not capture crimes that go unreported to the police and thus represent a lesser number of crimes than are actually committed. These data are reported as counts of the total number of offenses reported or as rates of crime per 100,000 persons in the nation. Crime rates can also be reported for smaller areas, like regions of the country, states, counties, cities, universities and colleges, and tribal areas.

Each year, UCR rates are made available in the publication: *Crime in the United States* (http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr-publications#Crime). The most comprehensive descriptions are reported for **Part I offenses** representing certain serious person and property offenses. For these

Table 1.1 Part I and Part II offenses in the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).

Part I Offenses	
1. Criminal Homicide	5. Burglary
2. Forcible Rape	6. Larceny-theft (except motor vehicle theft)
3. Robbery	7. Motor vehicle Theft
4. Aggravated Assault	8. Arson
Part II Offenses	
9. Other Assaults	20. Offenses Against the Family and Children
10. Forgery and Counterfeiting	21. Driving Under the Influence
11. Fraud	22. Liquor Laws
12. Embezzlement	23. Drunkenness
13. Buying or Receiving Stolen Property	24. Disorderly Conduct
14. Vandalism	25. Vagrancy (e.g. Homelessness)
15. Weapons Carrying or Possession	26. All Other Offenses
16. Prostitution and Commercialized Vice	27. Suspicion
17. Sex Offenses	28. Curfew and Loitering (for persons under 18)
18. Drug Abuse Violations	29. Runaways (persons under 18)
19. Gambling	

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations (2004), Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, US Department of Justice.

crimes, the FBI reports the number and rates of crimes known to the police, number of arrests and number of crimes that are cleared. In addition, information may be provided regarding the location of the offense, the time the crime occurred, whether or not and what type of weapon was used during the offense, and the type of value or property stolen if applicable. For homicide only, the age, sex and race/ethnicity of the victim and offender, the type of weapon used, the relationship between the offender and victim and information about the circumstances of the offense are all reported. **Part II** crimes include less serious crimes. Only arrest data are reported for these crimes. The types of offenses classified as Part I and Part II offenses are shown in Table 1.1.

A second official measure of crime associated with the UCR and reported by local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies is the **National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)**. This is an incident-based reporting system, meaning that detailed information is recorded for every crime incident known to police, as well as on arrests for these incidents. Data are reported for 22 offense categories encompassing 46 specific crimes. For each offense, law enforcement agencies provide information about where and when the offense occurred, the type of weapon or force used, property lost, characteristics of the victim(s) like age, sex, race, injury, and relationship to offender as well as offender characteristics like age, sex, and race. Information about arrests only is reported for an additional 10 offenses. In 2012, 6,115 law enforcement agencies voluntarily submitted NIBRS data.

NIBRS differs from the UCR data reported in *Crime in the United States* in many ways. First, it provides information on *all* the offenses (up to 10) occurring during or related to a single criminal event, as well as details on the offenders and victims involved in those offenses. The UCR reports information only on the single most serious offense that occurred. For example, if during the commission of a bank robbery, the offenders also murdered the bank manager, stole property from three

bank customers, and kidnapped a family during the getaway, only detailed information regarding the murder would be published in the UCR, whereas details of the other offenses would be included in NIBRS. A second difference is that NIBRS provides added information about more crimes than the UCR. Third, NIBRS differentiates between crimes that were only attempted and those that were completed, while the UCR describes only the latter. Fourth, NIBRS involves an expanded definition of rape which includes male victims; in the UCR, sexual attacks on males are counted as aggravated assaults or sex offenses, not as rapes.

In addition to the NIBRS and *Crime in the United States* publications, as part of the UCR, the FBI publishes two other annual reports on crimes in the United States: *Law Enforcement Officers Killed or Assaulted* and *Hate Crime Statistics*. Data from these reports are rarely used in evaluations of crime prevention programs or policies. However, the data would be appropriate if one were evaluating an intervention designed to prevent these specific types of crimes; for example, programs designed to reduce violent crimes targeting police officers or hate crimes motivated by bias towards certain groups.

Official measures of crimes occurring in other countries, especially those in the United Nations, are also available. For example, the United Nations reports on crimes known to the police for selected years and offenses, primarily offenses similar to the UCR's Part I offenses (Harrendorf, Heiskanen, and Malby, 2010). The *European Crime Prevention Monitor* publishes a report on crime rates and trends for selected years for most of the UCR Part I offenses, with a special focus on the 27 European Union member states (Klima and Wijckmans, 2012). This is a new series and also includes rates of self-reported victimization and self-reported offending for selected years. These data sources could be useful when evaluating the effectiveness of interventions taking place outside of the USA.

Of the official measures described, arrest is the most frequently used to document the effectiveness of prevention programs. Evaluations of very large-scale programs or policies intended to affect large numbers of people could rely on annual arrest rates when determining the success of the intervention. For example, research investigating the impact of a new law restricting gun sales could assess the degree to which arrests for certain violent offenses were reduced following the legislation. Or, if all law enforcement agencies in a particular county began using **hot spots policing** to reduce crime (see Chapter 6 for more detail on this prevention practice), county-level arrest rates could be used to evaluate effectiveness. For smaller, more localized interventions, the UCR database could be searched to determine the arrest rates for individuals participating in evaluations. Since most local police agencies collect information on arrests for Part I and II offenses, evaluators can also request arrest data of adult participants from these agencies, rather than searching the UCR data. Individual arrest records of juveniles are confidential and require special permission to obtain, usually a court order or parent/guardian permission, but many local police departments provide anonymous information on numbers or rates of juvenile arrests upon request.

Self-reported victimization measures

Another crime measure involves asking persons in a written survey or in-person interview if they have been victims of specific crimes. These **self-reported measures** provide a more complete assessment of criminal behavior compared to arrest data, since not all crimes are detected by or

reported to the police, and not all crimes known to the police result in an arrest. Self-reports also avoid the potential **bias** associated with official arrest data. We know that particular types of crimes, like sexual assaults and child abuse, are under-reported to law enforcement, and that certain types of individuals may be subject to increased surveillance by law enforcement. For example, police officers may more closely monitor the behavior of individuals known to have extensive criminal histories and may more frequently patrol neighborhoods with high rates of crime. These practices can bias or distort crime statistics. Self-reported data from victims, or offenders, as discussed in the next section, should be subject to less bias, particularly when survey participants understand that the information they provide will be confidential and anonymous.

There are a number of sources for obtaining self-reported measures of criminal victimization. The **National Crime Victimization Survey** (http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&iid=245) is the largest and probably best-known victimization survey in the USA. This survey has been administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and US Census Bureau every six months since 1973. These agencies collect data from over 100,000 individuals aged 10 and older living in 50,000 to 90,000 households across the USA. Even individuals living in dormitories and on cargo ships are included to ensure the sample represents American citizens as a whole. Participants are asked to report on most of the UCR Part I offenses, including assault, domestic violence, robbery, rape, burglary, auto theft, personal larceny (e.g., pickpocketing and purse snatching), and theft. Homicides are obviously excluded as it would be hard for the victim to report them.

NCVS surveys are conducted in-person and over the telephone. After collecting demographic characteristics of the participants such as sex, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, level of education, and income, trained interviewers ask a series of questions about crimes the respondent might have experienced in the past six months. For example, to measure violent assaults, the interviewer asks: "*Has anyone attacked or threatened you in any of these ways*"

1. *With any weapon, for instance, a gun or knife*
2. *By something thrown, such as a rock or bottle*
3. *With anything like a baseball bat, frying pan, scissors, or stick*
4. *By anything thrown, such as a rock or bottle*
5. *Any rape, attempted rape or other type of sexual attack*
6. *Any face-to-face threats*
7. *Any attack or threat or use of force by anyone at all*?

If the answer is yes to any of these crimes, respondents are asked, "*How many times*?" They are also asked to provide details of each incident, including the date and location of the event, damage or loss of property, injury from the assault, weapon used, characteristics of the offender, their relationship to the offender, and whether or not the crime was reported to the police. This information is then compiled to produce national, regional, and urban/suburban/rural rates of each of the specific crimes included in the survey.

The NCVS is the only regularly occurring, comprehensive and national victimization survey. The **Monitoring the Future (MTF)** study (www.monitoringthefuture.org) provides annual victimization data on a limited number of offenses (theft, assault, and property damage) reported by

8th, 10th, and 12th grade students, but it does not ask detailed information about each incident. A few other national-level victimization surveys provide data for specific years and specific age groups. For example, the **National Youth Survey** (Elliott, Huizinga, and Menard, 1989) asks adolescent and young adult participants to describe whether or not they experienced certain UCR Part I offenses and to provide detailed information about each victimization. The **National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence** (Finkelhor *et al.*, 2014) has been conducted in the USA in 2008 and 2011 to measure the degree to which youth aged 0–17 were violently victimized in their homes, schools, and/or neighborhoods in the past year and in their lifetime. It also asked respondents to provide some details about the offender, use of weapon, and injuries sustained. It is unclear if this survey will be repeated in future years. There are also many smaller scale victimization surveys that ask particular groups to report on their experiences as victims of crime.

Some international victimization surveys also use self-reported methodology for measuring crime. They include the **British Crime Survey** in the UK and the annual **Crime Victimization Survey** in Australia. Reports for countries in the European Union are also available for selected years between 1989 and 2010 from the European Crime Prevention Network (Klima and Wijckmans, 2012).

Self-reported offending measures

The other common self-reported measure asks respondents about criminal offending; that is, whether or not and how often they have committed certain criminal acts during the past year or some other designated period of time. As with victimization measures, **self-reported measures** of offending are intended to capture crimes unknown to the police as well as those that have been reported or detected. Because individuals are asked to incriminate themselves by admitting to illegal behaviors, respondents are almost always guaranteed anonymity and/or confidentiality when asked to participate in these types of surveys. Self-reported offending measures have been available for many decades, pre-dating victimization surveys, but early examples tended to focus heavily on the least serious types of criminal behaviors (Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis, 1979; Thornberry and Krohn, 2000). More recent measures assess a wider range of crimes and typically include most of the serious Part I and Part II offenses (Elliott and Ageton, 1980).

There is no ongoing, comprehensive, national effort to measure offending in the USA using self-reports comparable to the NCVS measure of victimization. Also, unlike the NCVS, most self-reported sources of offending behavior focus on youth populations; offender surveys of adults are relatively rare. One well-known youth survey is the **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** (**YRBS**) (https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/overview.htm), which has been conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) every two years since 1991. Students in Grades 9–12 in public and private schools across the USA are asked to report their participation in two types of offenses, carrying a gun or other weapon and participating in a physical fight, and to report use of various illegal substances.

The **Monitoring the Future (MTF)** study (www.monitoringthefuture.org) also provides ongoing, national self-reported offender rates, with a broader range of offenses than the YRBS. However, only high school seniors report on the full range of crimes, whereas 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students report on use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. The YRBS and MTF studies are