

PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

A Key Component of the Community-Oriented Policing Strategy

POLICING STRATEGY

- It is important for a police department to fully commit to a coherent and modern policing strategy.
- This commitment helps the department to achieve long-term objectives, have a meaningful impact on problems in communities, and also plays an important role in officer morale and department culture.

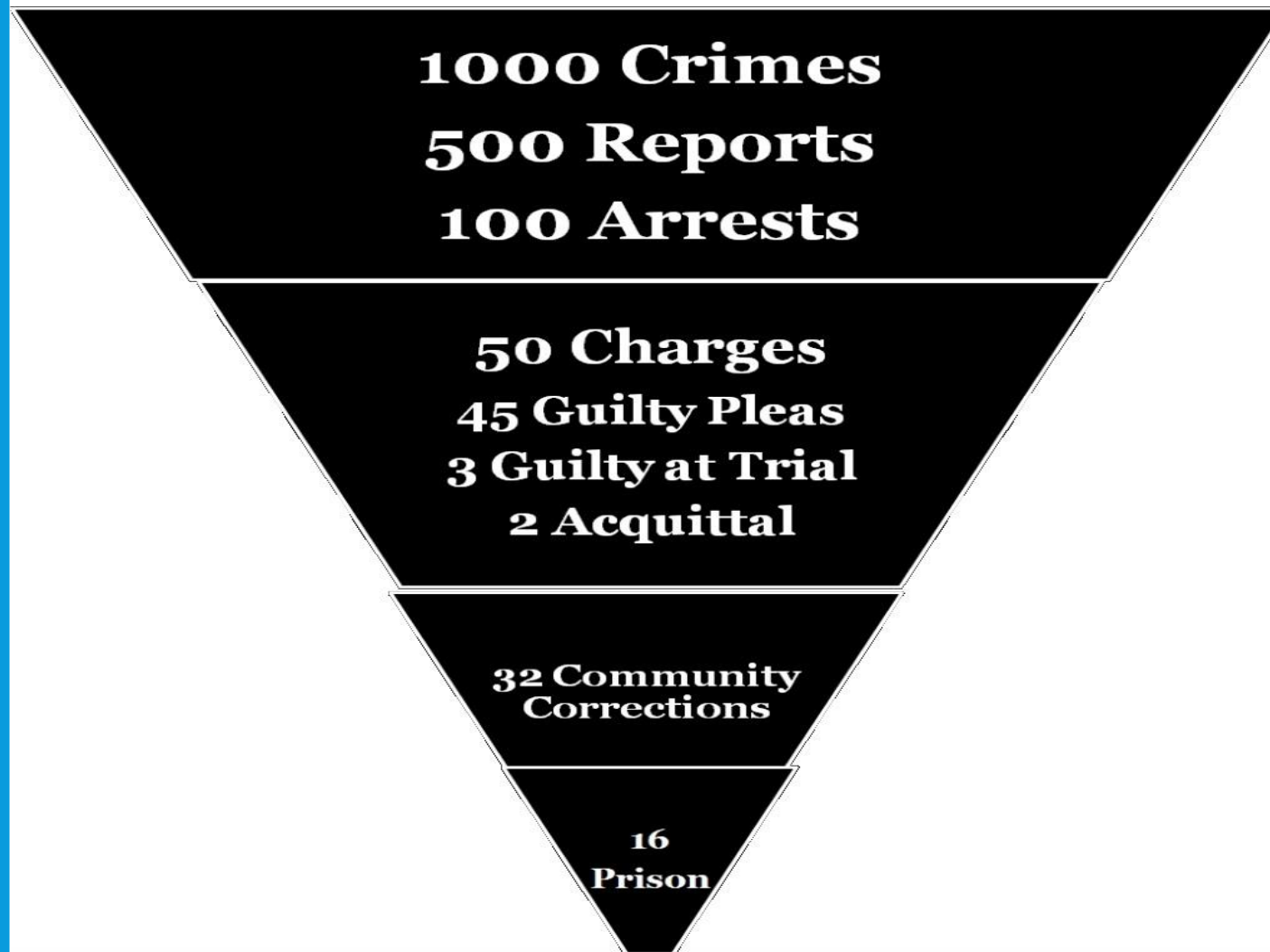
TRADITIONAL POLICING STRATEGIES

- Traditional policing strategies focus on each individual unit of police work, such as the “call for service” or the “case”.
- Officers focus on one call or case at a time, moving on from one to the next without any coherent view toward possible connections between incidents and the underlying issues that cause them.
- Traditional policing strategies are typically highly focused on the means of policing rather than on producing satisfactory ends.

PROBLEMS WITH A TRADITIONAL POLICING STRATEGY

- Traditional policing focuses officers' proactive efforts on criminal law enforcement (which is a small portion of the police function) and making a large number of stops and arrests with the hope of discovering contraband, such as illegal drugs and firearms.
- There are at least three major problems with this strategy:
 - First, it relies heavily on the police making a large number of random stops, which causes significant erosion in police-community relations.
 - Second, the strategy is not effective. No matter how many guns, drugs, and offenders are seized, there will always be others to take their place.
 - Third, it is dependent on the criminal legal system to produce any meaningful results.

INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM TO ADDRESS CRIME



PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING IS A KEY COMPONENT OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

- A 2009 report from the DOJ Office of Community Oriented Policing Services cites three pillars of a successful community-oriented policing strategy:
 1. A commitment to problem-oriented policing
 2. Community engagement to collaboratively identify community problems and solutions to those problems
 3. Organizational adaptation to support and motivate line officers to engage in these new strategies
- Thus, a problem-oriented focus is critical to a successful community-oriented policing strategy.

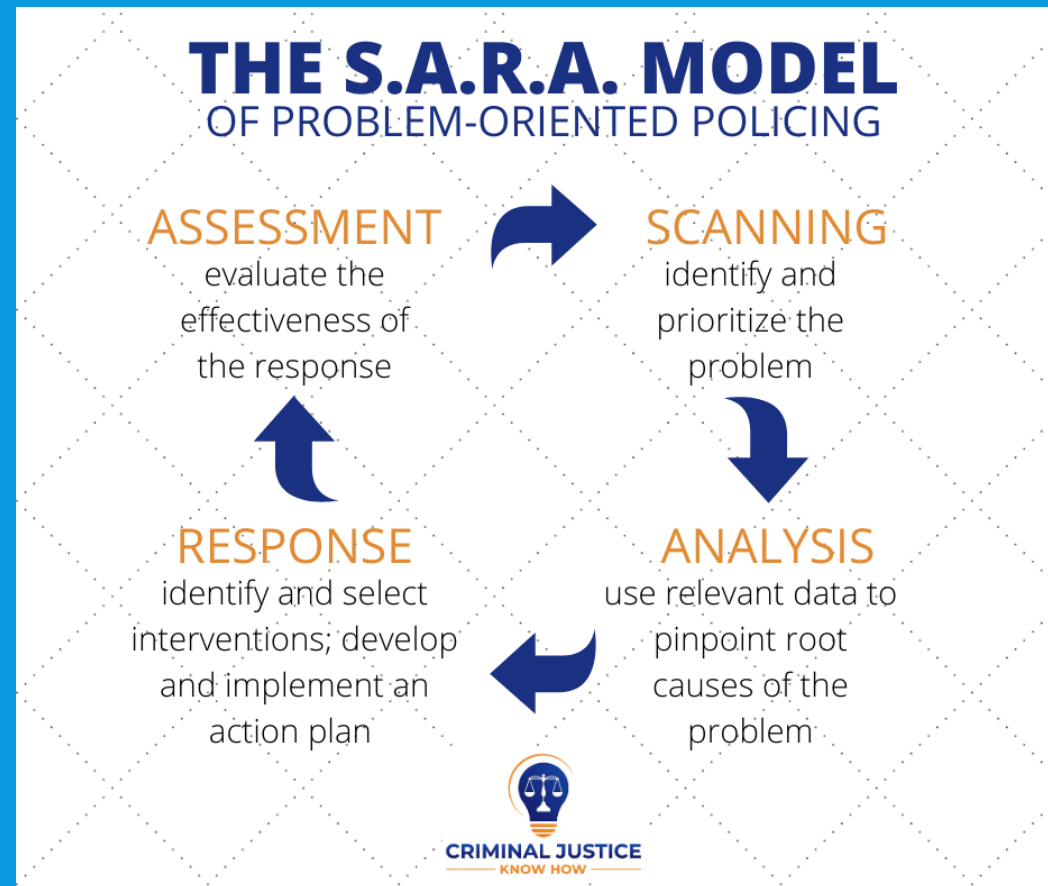
WHAT IS PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING?

- Problem-oriented policing (POP) was developed by University of Wisconsin Law School Professor Herman Goldstein in 1979.
- POP focuses on the ends of police work and is set up to evaluate how effective a particular police response is at actually solving and preventing the problems to which police are expected to respond.

HOW IS POP DIFFERENT?

- POP places a high value on new responses that are preventive in nature, that are not dependent on the use of the criminal justice system, and that engage other public agencies, the community, and the private sector when their involvement has the potential for contributing to the reduction of the problem.
- Policing strategies that remain intact under POP:
 - Rapid response to emergencies, fair & efficient handling of incidents, thorough investigation of serious crimes
- Policing strategies that are less compatible with POP:
 - Random, preventative patrol; reactive, deterrence-based tactics; strict command and control management

A PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS



MPD SOP 003-COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

General Order 2023-26	COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING	Page 3 of 4
-----------------------	-----------------------------	-------------

c. Private businesses

D. TRAINING AND POLICIES

The Milwaukee Police Department will ensure training and policies reflect community policing principles and provide members with the necessary resources to help foster community engagement and enhance problem solving.

E. PROBLEM SOLVING

1. Department members should collaboratively engage with the community to address public safety issues and identify solutions to neighborhood problems. Public safety issues typically revolve around factors that reflect broad underlying issues that contribute to crime, fear, and disorder. The department recognizes that it requires citizen participation to effectively address public safety concerns.
2. Department members should utilize the SARA (scanning, analysis, response, and assessment) model of problem-solving to help address neighborhood safety issues in collaboration with the community. Members shall notify a supervisor regarding recurring problems in a neighborhood that may require a more in-depth problem-oriented policing approach and may also work with their work location's Community Partnership Unit and/or Community Liaison Officer in developing a plan.
3. The SARA model incorporates the following principles:
 - a. Scanning

Members shall identify, prioritize, and select reoccurring problems in a specific area in collaboration with community input and data analysis. Members shall confirm the problem exists, identify the consequences of the problem, and determine the frequency.
 - b. Analysis

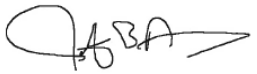
Members shall identify and analyze relevant data to learn more about the problem, including potentially narrowing its scope, and identify possible explanations as to why the problem is occurring, including understanding the underlying root cause(s) of the problem.
 - c. Response

Determine and implement a response that is contextual to the specific problem through problem solving and crime prevention techniques. Members shall work with community partners to select and implement the appropriate responses. Members may utilize the Problem Oriented Policing (POP) response guides located from the [Problem Oriented Policing Center](#) to assist in selecting the appropriate response(s).

General Order 2023-26	COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING	Page 4 of 4
-----------------------	-----------------------------	-------------

d. Assessment

Members shall evaluate if the responses were implemented in a way that was consistent with the response plan and whether the responses achieved their intended effects.


JEFFREY B. NORMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

JBN:mfk

SCANNING FOR PROBLEMS

- In the scanning phase, officers look to the discrete pieces of police business (the call for service or the case) with the aim of identifying clusters of similar incidents.
- Problems can be defined by:
 - Behavior (robbery, panhandling, drug dealing, etc.)
 - Persons (gangs, repeat offenders, repeat victims, etc.)
 - Location (neighborhood, house, bar, intersection, etc.)
 - Time (bar closing, annual festival, rush hour, etc.)

ANALYZING THE PROBLEM

- Once a recurring problem is identified, it is subjected to careful examination with the goal of figuring out its root causes and developing a more effective response for dealing with it.
- Objectives of the analysis are to:
 - Confirm the nature of the problem
 - Develop a theory of why the problem is occurring
 - Accumulate evidence about the problem

ANALYZING THE PROBLEM



Solving for any of these six variables will help reduce or solve the problem

RESPONDING TO THE PROBLEM

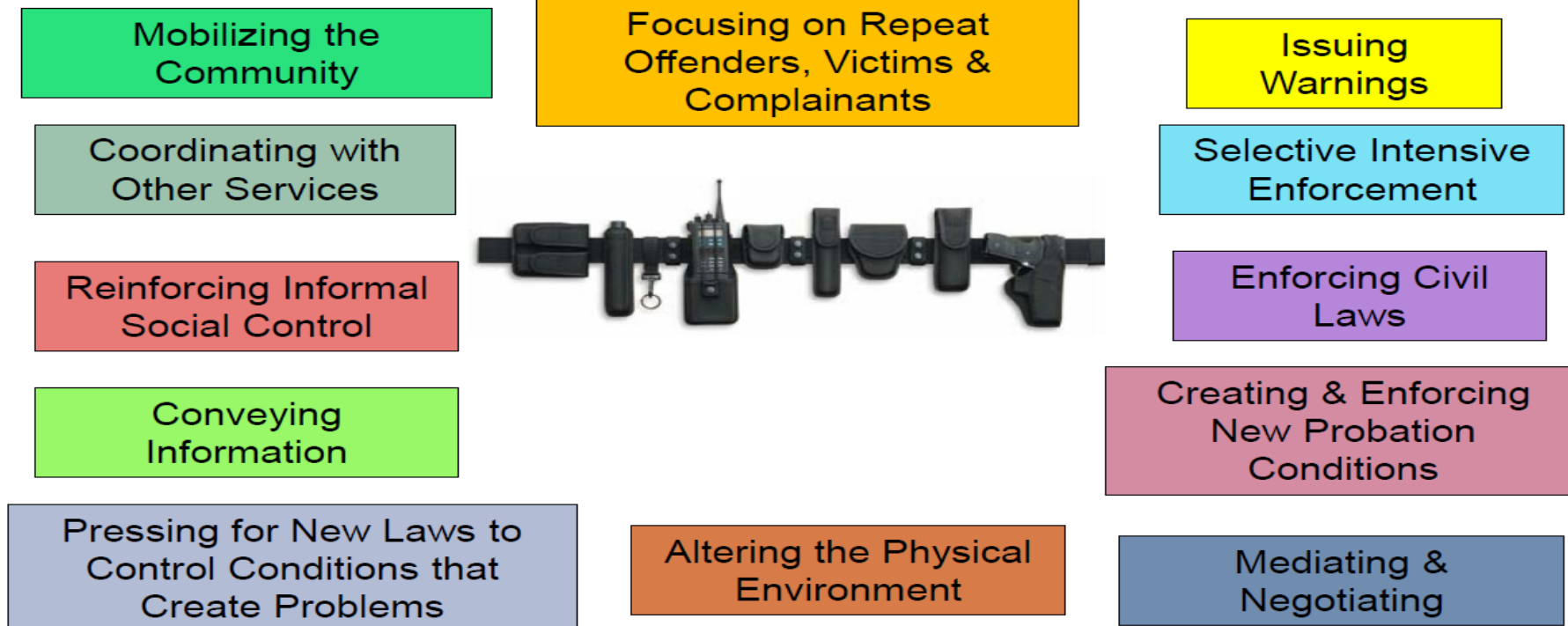
- After thoroughly analyzing the problem and the factors contributing to it, a response is developed, usually targeting one or more of the six factors in the problem triangle.
- The response typically emphasizes prevention and is not necessarily dependent on the criminal justice system for results.
- In developing and implementing a response, police will engage other public agencies, the community, and the private sector whenever feasible.

RESPONDING TO THE PROBLEM

- Even in larger American cities like Milwaukee, the majority of police calls for service do not involve crime. Thus, focusing on arrests and criminal process as a measure of police success is not helpful.
- The truth is that police respond to many different types of incidents and POP gives them better tools to address these varied problems, focusing on preventing future similar incidents.

RESPONDING TO THE PROBLEM

Alternative Responses



ASSESSING THE RESULTS

- Once a response to a problem has been implemented, the police then start rigorously assessing the efficacy of the response.
- This process helps to identify weaknesses in the original response and whether adjustments need to be made.

ASSESSING THE RESULTS

Defining Success

- Eliminate the problem
- Reduce the volume of incidents
- Reduce the harm from incidents
- Shift responsibility to those better able to address it
- More humane and fair responses



ASSESSING THE RESULTS

- Thus, built into the POP framework are the tools for measuring success and to discover if the strategies that are implemented are working. This is useful for MPD to self-assess and for oversight to measure the success of the department and the Chief.
- If assessment reveals that a particular response is not working, or simply displacing the behavior from one location to another, then the SARA process starts over and new responses are formulated and assessed.

WHY POP?

- Promotes sustainable reductions in public safety problems
- Builds community credibility and trust
- More cost-effective than a conventional policing approach
- Police won't bear the lone responsibility for addressing all public safety problems
- Draws upon good practice from other communities that have dealt with similar problems
- Reduces repeat calls and officer workload
- Empowers meaningful decision making
- Adds variety and purpose to each shift
- Greater job satisfaction and improves officer wellness and morale
- Above benefits have potential to boost new officer recruitment and retention

2025 VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION PLAN

MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT 2025 VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION PLAN

The Milwaukee Police Department 2025 Violent Crime Reduction Plan is an updated strategy to address violent crime in Milwaukee. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and human trafficking as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting program. While the focus of this plan is violent crime, MPD does not discount the importance of strategies for other categories, such as domestic violence, sexual assaults, the illegal drug trade, and any other illegal activities impacting Milwaukeeans every day. Nor do we discount other societal challenges like overdoses, mental health issues, and homelessness. To varying levels, MPD plays a role in these areas as well. While these areas are just as important, they are not addressed in the Crime Plan.

Crime is complex. *While measurement is a key to accountability and evaluating success, the focus is on impact and not arbitrary percentage changes. There are a myriad of factors that impact human behavior, including income, education, access to food and transportation, access to healthcare, housing stability, family structure and various other inequities. Crime numbers are often driven by factors the police have very little, if any, impact on.*

POP IN MADISON

- Madison, WI
 - Problem (Scanning) – majority of local homicides (~10 total annually) are a result of DV and increasing
 - Analysis – victims are not offered adequate ongoing support – they are given forms and left. Detectives have other cases to work on.
 - Response –
 - MPD partnered with local DV shelters to increase support to victims
 - Mobile “panic alarms” provided to victims to use if the offender returned, immediately provides dispatch with information
 - 2 new detectives assigned full time exclusively for DV cases, new officer trainings for DV response
 - Result – 1 year after implementation, DV homicides fell to **zero**

POP IN NEW ZEALAND (NOV '18-JUN '25)

- Wellington, New Zealand (POP 2025 winner)
- Problem (scanning) – One park in community that is driving rates of crime up, disproportionate to its size. Calls are increasing annually.
- Analysis – Calls for service are highest when local social services building closes (afternoon) and after bar close (night). Park is next to Social Service building, liquor store, and a night club.

POP IN NEW ZEALAND (NOV '18-JUN '25)

- Response –
 - PD teamed up with city council and social services to create a task force.
 - Improved public space – increased lighting, removed liquor store, added social services patrols to help support homeless into transitional housing, retail crime prevention & de-escalation training to local businesses, added a youth hub and a community center nearby, added outdoor dining to local restaurants, held regular community events in park to create pride.
 - “Take 10” program – late night mobile vehicle used in entertainment district to help vulnerable populations. Provide water, charging stations, snacks, and resources.
- Assessment – Calls for service dropped drastically. Alcohol/disorder calls down 37%, youth incidents down 77%, ambulance calls down 52%, department saved \$260k in harm annually. Calls outside precinct also dropped 7% (crime was not just displaced)

POP IN CINCINNATI

- In 2023 Cincinnati experienced a record-breaking number of youth shooting victims and other juvenile-driven violence and disorder.
- CPD and partners learned that the problem was occurring at school dismissal and in the downtown area immediately following school dismissal.
- During the analysis phase, they were able to track the issue to school choice and bussing route changes that happened during the COVID pandemic. Essentially, the schools stopped using their own buses and relied on the city bus system to transport children to school. At the same time, the city bus routes were reduced during COVID and all buses were routed through a common transfer stop downtown. This meant that kids from lots of different schools and neighborhoods were congregating together downtown after school dismissal.

POP IN CINCINNATI

- After carefully scanning to define the problem and thoroughly analyzing it, CPD implemented a 4 phase response plan that included:
 - Changing the bus routes so not all buses ran through the downtown area.
 - Empowering trusted community members, supported by specialized police units, to help provide adult oversight in the areas of downtown with the highest levels of disorder.
 - The team sought to not only provide adult supervision, but also to address upstream issues that were causing the disorder in the first place by providing food and warm clothing to kids that needed it, providing support and mentorship to the kids, and connecting kids with resources when needed.
- In assessing the responses, downtown Cincinnati saw reduction in juvenile disorder, thefts from autos, but saw a slight increase in juvenile arrests. However, they also saw an increase in juvenile disorder and theft from autos in other areas of the city.
- CPD is now in the process of using the SARA model to address these issues in the areas of the city that saw increases in juvenile crime and disorder.

POP IN MILWAUKEE-LINDSAY HEIGHTS

- In 2024, MPD District 3 Captain Raymond Bratchett utilized POP methods to address a consistent violent crime hotspot in the Lindsay Heights neighborhood.
- The area was experiencing lots of mobile drug dealing, open drug use, firearm-related aggravated assaults, and non-fatal shootings.
- As a result, lots of businesses in the area closed, leaving behind vacant lots and neglected properties that further exacerbated the problems.
- The MPD team conducted thorough analysis of the problems and learned that all homicides for a two-year period and many of the non-fatal shootings happened between 11 p.m. and 3 a.m., and that there were two specific locations that were the source of most of the problems.

POP IN MILWAUKEE-LINDSAY HEIGHTS

- Captain Bratchett's team connected with neighborhood leaders to hear their concerns and ideas for improving the community.
- They also looked at MPD deployment and strategies to see what was working and what was not.
- The response included :
 - Building Future Foundations summer program for teens
 - Community/aldermanic walks
 - Deployment of CPTED principles
 - Cleaning up the vacant properties
 - More police visibility in the area
 - Targeted enforcement of drug offenders in the area
- As a result, the area saw meaningful reductions in most categories of crime.

POP IN MKE-OPERATION RED LIGHT

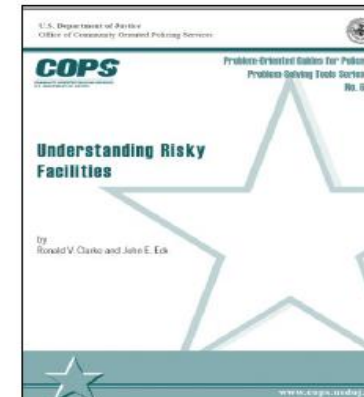
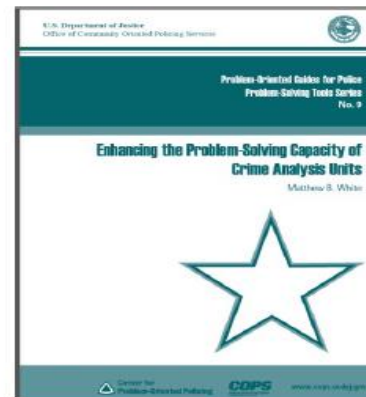
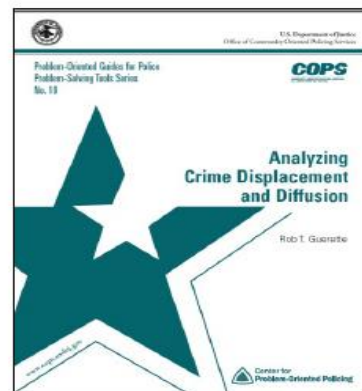
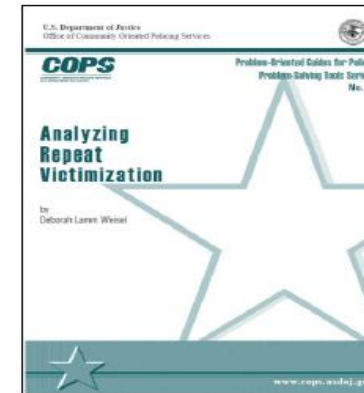
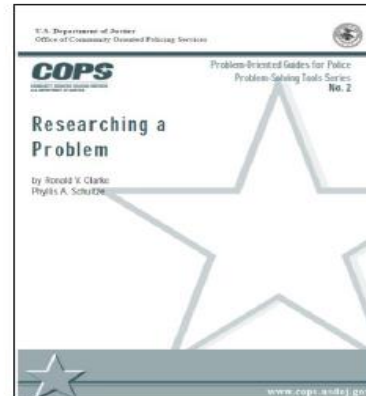
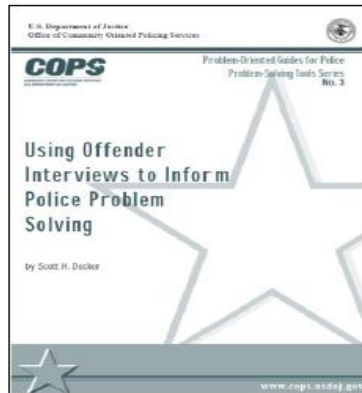
- In 2009 MPD District 3 Community Prosecution Unit deployed POP principles to address the issue of street prostitution.
- At the time there was a significant community concern around sex workers openly working in certain areas in District 3.
- Traditional law enforcement tactics were not effective at solving this problem because arrest stings require lots of police resources and were not resulting in any change in behavior due to the inadequacy of the traditional criminal legal system and the failure to address root causes and conditions around the sex workers' choices.
- Operation Red Light was a collaborative effort primarily between MPD, the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, and the Benedict Center, a local community non-profit that provides services to justice-involved women.

POP IN MKE-OPERATION RED LIGHT

- In the first phase of the project, officers would arrest sex workers and they would be charged with a criminal offense and offered a deferred prosecution agreement that required that they engage with the Benedict Center for 6 months to receive services such as AODA treatment, parenting classes, job skills training, CBT, education courses, and self-esteem courses.
- In the second phase of the project, offenders were not charged with a crime, but instead were issued a municipal citation and transported immediately to the Benedict Center to begin engagement with services. If the person successfully engaged in Benedict Center programming, the citation would be dismissed.
- A program for those seeking sex services was also developed and officers would also arrest, cite, and require those individuals to successfully receive services from the Benedict Center.
- This project resulted in a significant reduction in public sex work and led to meaningful harm reduction for sex workers and clients served by the Benedict Center.

LOTS OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Analysis Guides



IMPLEMENTATION OF POP

- The implementation of a community and problem-oriented policing strategy is not a quick fix. It requires sustained effort by the adopting agency to make organizational change necessary to support the strategy and to sell it to the front line supervisors and the rank and file officers, who are in charge of actually identify the problems, developing the solutions, implementing them and assessing their effectiveness.
- With a true commitment to this strategy and sustained effort, POP can help Milwaukee deliver better police service and quality of life to the residents of Milwaukee.