Youth, Mental Health & The Justice System

Presented by
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Youth Criminal Justice Act

- Youth Criminal Justice Act, 2003
  - Protect Canadians
  - Prevent Crime
  - Promote Accountability, Responsibility & Respect
  - Ensure meaningful consequences for young people
Youth Criminal Justice Act

• FPF has provided Extrajudicial Measures for the last 6 years by way of:
  – Warnings
  – Cautions
  – Conferences

• Formal sanctions completed by other Public Safety Departments such as Probation Services
Strategic Changes

- 2006 FPF introduced a new Crime Reduction Strategy
- Proactive plan developed to engage police and community partners
- Service gap identified Youth at Risk whom were dealing either directly or indirectly with mental health issues
Youth @ Risk Coordinator

- Youth at Risk Intervention Strategy designed to provide comprehensive police services to Y@R
- Focus placed on education, prevention, intervention and reintegration
- Attention given to youth who have or are at risk of coming into contact with the law
Responsibilities Y@R Coordinator

• Become a critical link with youth
• Build community partnerships as a means to meet the needs of the youth with a focus on crime reduction
  – Community Youth Action Team (CYAT)
Youth @ Risk Coordinator

• June 2009 implemented a full time Youth@Risk Coordinator to ensure a consistent and collaborative approach in the community involving;
  – Individuals
  – Families
  – Professional and Community Partners
Risk & Protective Factors

• Action plans for intervention must consider the risk and protective factors
• Intervention strategies must be appropriate and relevant to the needs of the youth and society
Risk & Protective Factors

• Numerous factors can contribute and influence a range of behaviours defined as youth violence or anti-social
• Important to consider these factors to understand the nature of the problem
• Important to understand factors that build resiliency and potentially protect youth
Risk & Protective Factors

• A single risk factor does not by itself cause anti-social or violent behaviour
• Believed multiple factors combine to shape an adolescents behaviour
Risk & Protective Factors

• Studies suggest the confluence of certain “risk” factors contribute to violent or anti-social behaviour
• The existence of certain “protective factors” create resiliency
• Effective intervention should take these factors into account
Risk & Protective Factors

• Understanding the dynamic between risk and protective factors is to view them through a frame work

• Each person functions within a complex network that impacts their capacity to avoid risk

• Past practise was to focus on the individual not the relationship to their surroundings
The Fredericton Police Force has always supported good education as part of a prevention program.

The School Safety Program from K-5 is entrenched in our elementary local schools and our High School Resource Officers in each of our High Schools.
Education / Prevention

• Research and experience show that high risk and troubled youth often come to the attention of school officials, teachers and the police at a very young age.

• Youth ranging from middle school to age 17 tend to be offenders and or victims of crime at a higher rate than the average population.

• Risk is greater in First Nation’s Youth.
Community Youth Action Team

- FPF recognized a gap in service implementing intervention programs
- Intervention programs do exist with existing community partners
- CYAT formed to seek solutions and implement a multi-disciplinary solution that may involve the family, informal supports and the community
Questions?