

Premier's Advisory Council on Crime and Community Safety

Discussion Guide

2015

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Message from the Chair

The Premier's Advisory Council on Crime and Community Safety was appointed on January 23, 2015. The Council has been given the mandate to *“examine all aspects of crime in Newfoundland and Labrador and recommend new strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity and enhance community safety in the province....Using information gathered through consultations with stakeholders, including the general public and recognized experts, as well as through the study of relevant literature and the assessment of innovative practices already used in other areas of Canada, the Advisory Council will make recommendations to Premier Davis.”* The Council will be looking at the underlying causes of crime in our society to come up with ways to better understand the needs of victims, offenders, their families and the general public.

This Discussion Guide is one piece of the Council's broader engagement process. It is intended to be used by any group who would like to hold a discussion about crime and community safety and send the results to the Premier's Advisory Council.

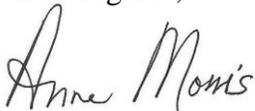
The Premier's Advisory Council began its engagement process in May 2015 with an in-person stakeholder session in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. A second in-person stakeholder session was held in St. John's in June 2015. Planning is ongoing for in-person stakeholder sessions in the central and western regions of the province. As well, the Council is assessing the feasibility of multi-site telephone discussions in other areas of the province.

In addition to in-person stakeholder sessions, citizens can provide their comments by email, phone, online or through regular mail.

Although Newfoundland and Labrador is one of the safest places to live in Canada, there is still cause for concern. Our economic situation has changed considerably in the last 10 years and prosperity attracts certain type of crimes. Crime affects us all whether we are victims, offenders, witnesses, or hear about crimes as “breaking news.” It makes us worry for our personal safety and that of the people around us. This often causes changes in our behaviors and can negatively affect quality of life.

On behalf of the Premier's Advisory Council, I would like to thank you for taking the time to share your views and information with us. Your feedback will be used to inform the final report submitted to the Honourable Paul Davis, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Best regards,



Anne Morris

Chair

Premier's Advisory Council on Crime and Community Safety

Introduction

This Discussion Guide has been developed as a tool for any group (formal or informal) who would like to hold their own discussion about crime and community safety and send the results to the Premier's Advisory Council on Crime and Community Safety.

This guide provides some statistical information about crime issues in Newfoundland and Labrador and identifies some of the current policing priorities. The questions that follow are the same questions that are used for the in-person sessions and are also available online for anyone who would like to submit their responses anonymously.

The Premier's Advisory Council on Crime and Community Safety recognizes that statistical information has significant value, however, data can lack contextual information that helps to identify how best to address the issues identified. Also, studies have shown that there is under-reporting of certain crimes, which means that available data can have gaps in information. Given this, the Premier's Advisory Council is asking for your assistance in identifying:

- aspects of crime which are most concerning for you and your community;
- interventions required to address and prevent criminal activity; and
- priorities, as you see them, in the area of crime and community safety.

There are already many individuals and groups engaged in activities aimed to address crime prevention and community safety locally, nationally and internationally. There are many successful programs and services, however, we also know that there are gaps. Please share your knowledge of successful programs and services, as well as any gaps you have identified.

You can submit the results of your discussions by emailing them to SaferCommunities@gov.nl.ca or sending them by mail to:

**Premier's Advisory Council on Crime and Community Safety
c/o Policy and Strategic Planning Division
Department of Justice and Public Safety
P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL A1B 4J6**

Other ways to contact the Premier's Advisory Council include:

- Toll free: **1-844-873-3372**
- Online: www.safercommunitiesnl.ca

Topic 1: Community Safety Issues

What is Community Safety?

There is no single definition of community safety. Some ideas of what community safety can mean include:

- A safe community is a place where all citizens regardless of gender, race, age, sexuality, language, income or ability can participate fully and freely in all aspects of community life.
- Community safety means making communities safer by addressing the root causes of crime, victimization, violence and fear that sometimes erode our sense of community.
- It means Communities working to reduce the risks of offending and address the vulnerability of individuals and neighborhoods.
- Ultimately - It is about delivering local solutions to local problems that have been identified by local people.

Risk Factors

Many studies have been done that identify some key risk factors that influence involvement in criminal behaviour. A combination of several of these factors means that there is a high probability of someone coming into contact with the law. Any one single factor does not work in isolation to cause crime.

- Individual: Age, gender, addiction problems, low educational level, low sense of self-worth, mental health issues, racism/marginalization
- Family: Abuse or neglect, exposure to violence in the home, lack of parental supervision
- Social/Community: Isolation or exclusion, bullying, delinquent peer group, high crime area, few social services, norms supporting violence
- Economic: Inadequate housing, poverty, persistent unemployment or underemployment

Newfoundland and Labrador

In relation to the Atlantic Provinces, in 2013 NL had the highest rates per capita of:

- All Criminal Code violations
- Violent Criminal Code violations
- Assault
- Uttering Threats
- Breaking and entering
- Mischief
- Disturbing the Peace
- Impaired driving
- Other *Criminal Code* Violations

Recent Police Concerns in NL:

- Child pornography trending upward
- Impaired driving
- Offensive weapons trending upward – driven by reported of “careless use of firearms” and drug related activity (RCMP and RNC)
- There is a trend toward a preference for and availability of more potent and more addictive drugs in all areas of NL (RMCP)
- Domestic violence
- Unreported Crime

Discussion Question 1: *What do you think are the key issues affecting safety in your community? (15 minutes)*

Some things to consider:

- *Substance abuse*
- *Impaired driving*
- *Domestic violence*
- *Troubled youth*
- *Sex trade work*
- *Not enough police*
- *Lack of consequences for offenders*
- *Lack of notification of offender release into communities*
- *Lack of supervision of offenders in communities*
- *Lack of services for at risk individuals*
- *Poverty*
- *Gender inequality*
- *Mental health issues*
- *Homelessness*
- *Child pornography*

Notes:

Topic 2: Crime Prevention

What is Crime Prevention?

- **It involves community mobilization and strong partnerships to reduce crime**
- Crime Prevention refers to the development and implementation of strategies and programs that aim to reduce crime before it occurs.
- It is any initiative of policy that reduces or eliminates victimization by crime or violence
- It goes beyond law enforcement and courts to tackle the risk factors that cause crime
- It educates and assists community members to be more aware of their own safety
- It involves building strong, cohesive, localized community capacity to effectively prevent crime.
- It is not a static concept – the focus changes with need
- Focus mainly is on two broad categories of crime prevention strategies:
 - situational crime prevention: strategies that attempt to reduce the opportunities for crime and victimization;
 - crime prevention through social development: - strategies that attempt to focus on the root causes of crime and victimization

Policing Priorities

RNC Policing Priorities

- Improve Highway Safety
- Enhance Response to Domestic Violence
- Enhance Relationship with Community and Stakeholder Groups
- Enhance Response to Persons with Mental Illness
- Continue to Implement Intelligence Led Policing
- Promote Gender Equity and Diversity

RCMP – Provincial policing priorities (*Ministerial Approved Department of Justice and Public Safety*) :

- Traffic Safety
- Violence prevention
- Youth Crime Prevention

RCMP-National Priorities

- Serious and Organized Crime
- National Security
- Youth
- Aboriginal Communities
- Economic Integrity

Joint RNC-RCMP Initiatives

- Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit – Newfoundland and Labrador (CFSEU-NL)
- Fight child exploitation
- Fight illegal drugs
- Fight organized crime
- Intimate Partner Violence Initiative
- Collaborative justice effort enhancing responsiveness to intimate partner violence
- Police resources dedicated to enhance awareness, education, investigation, and social service follow-up, of intimate partner violence environments

Discussion Question 2: *Crime prevention requires strategies and programs that aim to reduce crime before it occurs. What kind of crime prevention services would work or are working in your community? (15 minutes)*

Things to consider:

- *What programs work well in your community?*
- *What do they do?*
- *Who do they target?*
- *Why do they work well?*

Notes:

Topic 3: Crime Prevention Challenges

Protective Factors

- Protective factors have been identified as key positive elements that can help individuals deal with the risk factors identified earlier as leading to criminal behavior.
- They can help to foster healthier individuals, families and communities thereby increasing the safety of the community.
 - Individual: strong attachments to supportive people – parents, teachers, coaches, counsellors, peer support; personal coping strategies; opportunities for success; self-esteem
 - Family/Peers: Parents involved in child’s life, good parental supervision, respectful atmosphere in home, non-violent means to solve problems
 - Community: adequate housing, cohesive communities, supportive schools, recreational and other social support facilities nearby, employment opportunities
 - Society: low tolerance of violence, respect for individual differences

Discussion Question 3: *What are the challenges to putting crime prevention programs in place for at risk or vulnerable individuals in your community? (15 minutes)*

Things to consider:

- *What have you seen that isn’t working?*
- *Why do you think these programs are not successful?*
- *What ways could programs be more effective?*
- *Do you know of other programs that could be useful for your community?*
- *Are there barriers to having successful programs in your community? What are they?*
- *Do you see ways that could be more effective?*

Notes:

Topic 4: Solutions, Services and Interventions

- We know there are good examples of crime prevention programs – many people here are involved in them
- We know that crime prevention programs save on social and economic costs
- We know there are competing priorities
- We know there are fiscal realities
- We know there are other barriers to putting programs in place
- We are asking you, from your knowledge, both professionally and as community members, to tell us what you feel will work in your community to reduce crime and improve community safety?
- Your information will help to inform the final report of the Premier’s Advisory Council.

Discussion Question 4: What recommendations would you suggest to improve community safety?

(15 minutes)

Things to consider:

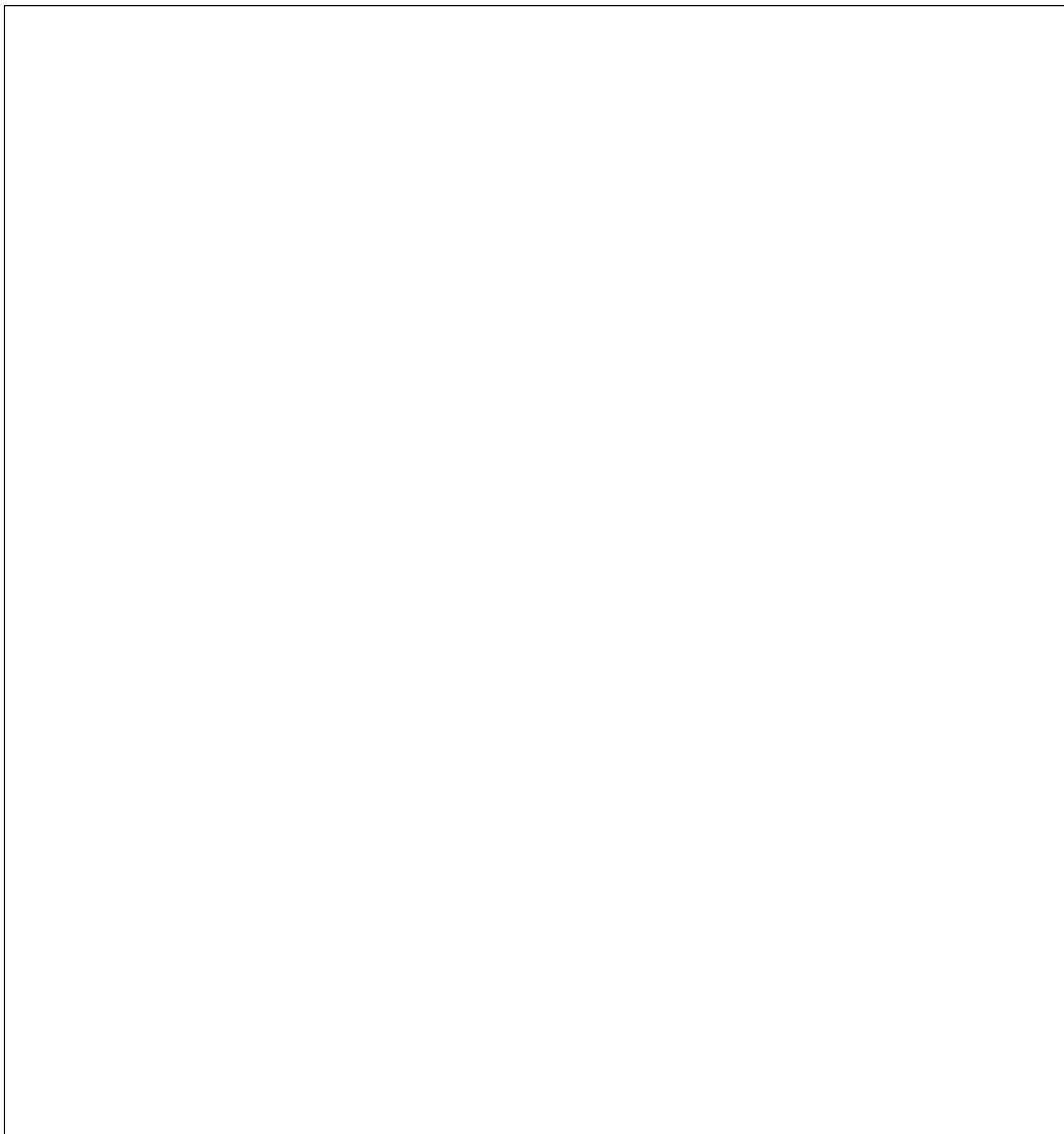
- *Who should be involved in improving community safety?*
- *Who should crime prevention programs target?*
- *How can we reach the people we want to target?*

Notes:

General Discussion

Discussion Question 5: Is there anything else you would like to add to today's discussions on Crime and Community Safety? (15 minutes)

Notes:



THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!

Premier's Advisory Council on Crime and Community Safety

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Department of Justice and Public Safety
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