

Prevention of drug related crimes

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



In the United States, illegal drugs are related to crime in numerous ways. Most directly it is a crime to use, possess, manufacture, or distribute drugs classified as having a potential for abuse such as cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Drugs are also related to crime as drug trafficking and drug production and distribution are often controlled by drug cartels, organized crime, and gangs. Drugs are not only an issue for law enforcement officials; drug use affects families and communities as a whole. Drug addictions cause people to do things that they normally would not do such as stealing and even murder. The use of illegal drugs has become a huge problem in the United States and it has become a top priority of law enforcement officials to stop the production and manufacturing of drugs at all costs. In examining crime in the United States, correlations are often established between drug abuse and criminal activities. The violence created by chronic, hardcore drug use is the most tenacious and damaging aspect of America's drug problem. The sale and use of drugs have continued to plague our communities and nation, and a research continues to indicate the drug use fuels the criminal activity in our country. " According to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, an estimated 14. 8 million Americans were current drug users, meaning that they had used an illicit drug in the month prior to the survey. " (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2000) The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse asks individuals in American households about their drug and alcohol use and also about their involvement in acts that could get them in trouble with the police. Research shows the illicit drug

users are sixteen times more likely than nonusers to report being arrested and booked for theft and are nine times more likely to be arrested on an assault charge. The term drug related crimes has been the subject of much criticism as it does not clearly define the specific nature or range of the crimes. The drug/crime relationship is difficult to distinguish because most crimes result from a variety of factors such as personal, situational, cultural, and economical factors; even when drugs are a cause, they are likely to be the only one factor among many. What is meant by drug related crimes varies with each study; some studies interpret the mere presence of drugs as having relevance to the crime where other studies interpret the relationship more closely. Reports by offenders about their drug use may be exaggerated or minimize the relevance of drugs; drug use measures, such as urinalysis tests, are limited in most cases. Crimes that occur as a result of a victim's or offender's drug use, crimes that transpire subsequent to the offender's need to support his or her drug habit, and crimes that occur as a result of drug trafficking and distribution are all considered drug related crimes. While most drug-related crimes are applicable to one of these categories, some may include more than one classification. Another aspect of drug related crime is committing an offense to obtain money to support drug use. Trafficking in illicit drugs also tends to be associated with the involvement of violent crimes because of the competition for drug markets and customers, disputes and rip-offs among individuals involved in the drug market, and the tendency toward violence of individuals who participate in drug trafficking. In addition, locations in which street drug markets are most common tend to be disadvantaged economically and socially; legal and social controls against

violence in these areas tend to be ineffective. The introduction of lethal weapons in recent years has also made drug violence more deadly. The illegal drug trade is a global black market, dedicated to cultivation, manufacturing, distribution, and sale of those substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. Most jurisdictions prohibit trade, except under license, of many types of drugs by drug prohibition laws. In many countries worldwide, the illegal drug trade is thought to be directly linked to violent crimes such as murder; this is especially true in third world countries, but is also an issue for many developed countries worldwide. In the late 1990s in the United States the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that 5% of murders were drug-related. After a crackdown by U. S. and Mexican authorities in the first decade of the 21st century as part of tightened border security in the wake of the September 11 attacks, border violence inside Mexico surged. The Mexican government estimates that 90% of the killings are drug-related. Evidence indicates that drug users are more likely than nonusers to commit crimes, that arrestees frequently were under the influence of a drug at the time they committed their offense, and that drugs generate violence. Assessing the nature and extent of the influence of drugs on crime requires reliable information about the offense and the offender may be available to give insight on their crimes. In the face of such problematic evidence, it is impossible to say definitely just how much drugs influence the occurrence of crime. “ Hard drug users were more frequently involved in drug law offenses and property crimes than were nonusers, while the latter were more likely than users to commit crimes of a violent nature. The number of offenses committed by users was significantly higher than

that for nonusers. Drug users involved in criminal activities before onset of hard drug use committed more crime after the onset of hard drug use committed more crime after the onset of drug use than beforehand. Users without criminal involvement before the onset of hard drug use committed approximately the same number of offenses after the onset of drug use as offenders with previous criminal records. Hard drug users are also more likely than nonusers to continue their criminal careers. Both drug use and criminal behavior are attributed to the frustrations of low-class, disadvantaged individuals whose ability to satisfy their needs for achievement and recognition is restricted by their position in life. Eventually they completely reject middle-class values and are likely to succumb to a lifestyle dominated by the need to maintain a regular supply of drugs, usually through illegal means. Progress of certain individuals to drug dependence may be the result of exposure to heroin at a susceptible developmental stage or of personal failure within the drug user's own subculture. " (NCJRS. 1979) We all know that the whenever the use of illegal drugs is involved in anyone's life the results are never good. Drug abuse causes people to act and participate in activities that they would have never thought they were capable of. Drugs have also become more prevalent among the youth of our society and it has been nationally recognized as a crisis. Experimentation with alcohol and drugs during adolescence is common. Unfortunately, teenagers often don't see the link between their actions today and the consequences tomorrow. They also have a tendency to feel indestructible and immune to the problems that others experience. Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age has negative health effects. While

some teens will experiment and stop, or continue to use occasionally, without significant problems. Others will develop a dependency, moving on to more dangerous drugs and causing significant harm to themselves and possibly others. It is difficult to know which teens will experiment and stop and which will develop serious problems. Teenagers abuse a variety of drugs, both legal and illegal. Legally available drugs include alcohol, prescribed medications, inhalants (fumes from glues, aerosols, and solvents) and over-the-counter cough, cold, sleep, and diet medications. The most commonly used illegal drugs are marijuana (pot), stimulants (cocaine, crack, and speed), LSD, PCP, opiates, heroin, and designer drugs (Ecstasy). The use of illegal drugs is increasing, especially among young teens. The average age of first marijuana use is 14, and alcohol use can start before age 12. The use of marijuana and alcohol in high school has become common. It is more important than ever to get involved in the prevention of drug abuse among the youth of our nation and one program that has done just that is the Drug Abuse Resistance Education or D. A. R. E. D. A. R. E was founded in 1983 in Los Angeles and is a police officer led series of classroom lessons that teaches children from kindergarten to 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence free lives. “ D. A. R. E.'s primary mission is to provide children with the information and skills they need to live drug-and-violence-free lives. The mission is to equip kids with the tools that will enable them to avoid negative influences and instead, allow them to focus on their strengths and potential. And, that's exactly what D. A. R. E. is designed to do. Additionally, it establishes positive relationships between students and law enforcement, teachers, parents, and other community

leaders. Every youngster should have the opportunity to grow-up healthy, safe, secure, and equipped with the skills needed to succeed in life. Contemporary America, however, is rampant with challenges that could keep children from a positive life path. " (D. A. R. E America. 2012) Drug Abuse Resistance Education, better known as D. A. R. E, is an international education program that seeks to prevent use of controlled drugs, membership in gangs, and violent behavior. D. A. R. E., which has expanded globally since its founding in 1983, is a demand-side drug control strategy of the U. S. War on Drugs. Founded by Daryl F. Gates, Students who enter the program sign a pledge not to use drugs or join gangs and are taught by local law enforcement about the dangers of drug use in an interactive in-school curriculum which lasts ten weeks. D. A. R. E. America has its headquarters in Inglewood, California. The instructors of the D. A. R. E. curriculum are local police officers who must undergo 80 hours of special training in areas such as child development, classroom management, teaching techniques, and communication skills. For high school instructors, 40 hours of additional training are prescribed. Police officers are invited by the local school districts to speak and work with students. Police officers are permitted to work in the classroom by the school district and do not need to be licensed teachers. There are programs for different age levels. Working with the classroom teachers, the officers lead students over a number of sessions on workbooks and interactive discussions. The D. A. R. E. program enables students to interact with police officers or sheriffs in a controlled, safe, classroom environment. This helps students and officers meet and understand each other in a friendly manner, instead of having to meet when a student

commits a crime, or when officers must intervene in domestic disputes and severe family problems. The Surgeon General reports that positive effects have been demonstrated regarding attitudes towards the police. According to the D. A. R. E. website, 36 million children around the world, 26 million in the U. S., are part of the program. The program is implemented in 75% of the nation's school districts, and 43 countries around the world. D. A. R. E. was one of the first national programs promoting zero tolerance. The D. A. R. E. program has received numerous accolades and awards for delivering the message to keep " kids off drugs and remains widely popular. As of 2009, despite deep Homeland Security budget cuts at state and federal law enforcement levels, DARE continues to graduate 20 million children worldwide annually. Its websites www.dare.com and www.dare.org receive 12 million hits every month and is a resource for parents, teachers, children and community members. D. A. R. E. America is funded largely as a crime prevention program working through education within schools. It receives funding from the U. S. Department of Justice, U. S. Department of Defense, U. S. Department of State, U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration, U. S. Bureau of Justice Administration, U. S. Office of Justice and Delinquency Prevention, corporations, foundations, individuals and other sources. In addition, state training and local programs typically receive funding from state legislature appropriations, state agencies, counties, cities, school districts, police agencies, individuals, and community fund raisers and other sources. The D. A. R. E. program is consistent with the " zero-tolerance orthodoxy of current U. S. drug control policy." According to researcher Dr. D. M. Gorman of the Rutgers University Center of Alcohol Studies, it supports

the ideology and the "prevailing wisdom that exists among policy makers and politicians." It also meets the needs of stake holders such as school districts, parents, and law enforcement agencies." D. A. R. E. America also has been very successful in marketing its program to the news media through a carefully orchestrated public relations campaign that highlights its popularity while downplaying criticism." Psychologists at the University of Kentucky concluded that "continued enthusiasm [for D. A. R. E.] shows Americans' stubborn resistance to apply science to drug policy." Marsha Rosenbaum, who headed the West Coast office of the Lindesmith Center, a drug policy reform organization, provided an opinion for a 1999 Village Voice article, "In D. A. R. E.'s worldview, Marlboro Light cigarettes, Bacardi rum, and a drag from a joint are all equally dangerous. For that matter, so is snorting a few lines of cocaine." D. A. R. E. "isn't really education. It's indoctrination." Rosenbaum also stated, "Part of what makes D. A. R. E. so popular is that participants get lots of freebies. There are fluorescent yellow pens with the D. A. R. E. logo, tiny D. A. R. E. dolls, bumper stickers, graduation certificates, D. A. R. E. banners for school auditoriums, D. A. R. E. rulers, pennants, D. A. R. E. coloring books, and T-shirts for all D. A. R. E. graduates." References Barry, Ellen. Study adds to doubts on D. A. R. E. program. Boston Globe, 8/2/99, p. A01 D. A. R. E America. 2012. Dare. com Gonnerman, Jennifer - Truth or D. A. R. E.: The Dubious Drug-Education Program Takes New York. Village Voice, April 7, 1999. Gorman, D. M. Irrelevance of evidence in the development of school-based drug prevention policy. Evaluation Review, 1998, 22(1), 118-146. National Criminal Justice

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