

# An overview and discussion of cpted essay



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An Overview and Discussion of CPTED Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), as defined by the International CPTED Association (n. d. ), has as its basic premise that “ the proper design and effective use of the physical environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime, thereby improving the quality of life” (p. 1).

Elizabeth Wood, in the 1960s, came up with ideas for dealing with issues in security. She focused her ideas on features that would lend themselves to be naturally monitored. Although her guidelines were never used, her work encouraged others to delve into CPTED (Crime prevention, p. 1). Using her ideas as a basis, criminologist C. Ray Jeffery developed the concept and phrase “ crime prevention through environmental design”, or CPTED.

A more limited model was developed at the same time by an architect named Oscar Newman. Newman (1972) gave priority to unambiguous design characteristics. His book, *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention Through Urban Design*, has many examples of crime in relation to actual residences based on information from New York City public housing and their crime documentation (p. 7). While it has been advised that the general public keep shrubs around homes trimmed, use outdoor lighting, and park in a well-lit area, it is my opinion that when crime occurs, people are more likely to help each other when people feel safe where he or she may work and play.

I have noted an increase in the amount of theft occurring at the fitness facility where I am an employee. This increase seems to be in direct proportion to the cleanliness of the facility (there have been some contract issues with the evening cleaning staff) and the number of members using

the facility. Since the facility is run by the town, they have the benefit of having the police do any criminal investigations involving the facility. The police now spend more time walking around, chatting with the members.

At times, the community police assist in providing security to the facility. These ideas seem to be at the heart of the implementation of CPTED as of 2004 (Crime prevention, p. 1). As stated previously, the CPTED theory seems to be a more residential idea. Wilson & Kelling (1982) contributed to the CPTED concept by proposing a “broken windows” theory that looked at the impact of “in your face” degradation in neighborhoods on peoples’ behavior. The idea of property maintenance was added CPTED at that time (p.

94). Brantingham & Brantingham (1981) observe that “a crime takes place when all of the essential elements are present.” They define these elements as “the four dimensions” to include a target, a law, an offender, and a place with environmental criminology looking at the target (p. 59). Mayhew & Clarke (1997) developed a “situational crime prevention” idea. This idea evolved into the reduction of the opportunity to commit crimes by improving management and design of the surrounding areas (p.

64). Robinson (1996) noted the following regarding Jeffery’s CPTED model: The environment never influences behavior directly, but only through the brain. Any model of crime prevention must include both the brain and the physical environment. Because the approach contained in Jeffery’s CPTED model is today based on many fields, including scientific knowledge of modern brain sciences, a focus on only external environmental crime

prevention is inadequate as it ignores another entire dimension of CPTED —  
i.

e. , the internal environment (p. 47). Tim Crowe, who wrote *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (2000), gave the movement a foundation on which CPTED could develop. CPTED seems to work on the idea that it will make a criminal stop and weigh the value add of risking getting caught over the possibility of getting away with the crime.

A couple of environmental suggestions are natural access control and natural surveillance (p. 37). Natural surveillance takes what is inherent to the current surroundings and uses that to the benefit of being able to see what is going on in that environment. This falls under leaving shades open so people can see in and perhaps see valuables.

Lighting and monitoring equipment would fall under this category as well. The opportunity for crime is reduced by clearly defining public and personal spaces (Crowe, 2000, p. 37). Natural access control may be facilitated by utilizing fencing, and entry ways that are able to limit flow.

While maintenance of CPTED was touched upon in the article *Crime prevention through environmental design*, it seemed to be treated separately because it is not regarded as an actual CPTED element. Maintenance includes ownership of property and keeping things in repair. I agree with the article's assertion that " In terms of effectiveness, a more accurate title for the strategy would be crime deterrence through environmental design"(Crime prevention, p. 1). It is my assertion, for example, that a burglar is going to look for the dark house with an open  
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window before they target a house with the lights on and the doors double bolted.

Conclusion After researching the CPTED, it is my observation that there exist a few obstacles with implementing CPTED concepts. For example, one issue is the tendency for people to resist change (Crime prevention, p. 1). People, being creatures of habit, are generally very set in their ways and resistant to change.

Another issue is that many buildings were not constructed with CPTED guidelines (Crime prevention, p. 1). It would be extremely difficult, both financially and logistically, to update existing buildings and other residential and business areas to incorporate CPTED. Thinking proactively could defiantly allow the incorporation of environmental designs into new surroundings and buildings. I live in Loudoun County, Virginia which has been known in the past for its accelerated growth. The housing market has slowed but the construction of office buildings is ongoing in this area.

If the builders took a proactive approach and were to discuss with the owners incorporating CPTED elements into the building's construction, a significant amount of money could be saved in the environmental design. I feel by creating these environmental designs people will become comfortable with the safety ideas behind their work environments. This would ease the "creature of habit" idea and most people's resistance to change. Therefore, they may want to bring those ideas into their residential areas, giving CPTED a fair opportunity to work as it was designed, to prevent crime. References Brantingham, P.

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