

# Introduction to criminal justice

Law



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Specific deterrence is an objective punishment aimed at discouraging repeated offenders. The main difference between general and specific deterrence is that general deterrence focuses on society while specific deterrence focuses on individuals. In particular, specific deterrence deals with actual offenders while general deterrence discourages would-be offenders from committing a crime. Thus, specific deterrence can be viewed as actual punishment while general deterrence remains a threat from punishment (Siegel, & Worrall, 2011). The impact of punishment on individual offenders diminishes as an offender becomes used to the punishment. Research studies show that punishment has a diminishing specific deterrent effect.

In particular, the incapacitation of criminals through imprisonment does not eliminate criminals from society. Unlike individual offenders, public offenders rely on collective action. Mob psychology theories suggest that, although crowds have extended the ability to commit the crime, individuals within the crowd are concerned about their own welfare. Thus, punishment is more effective in general deterrence than in specific deterrence. Finally, specific deterrence cannot be applied on passion crimes or crimes committed under the influence of drugs and alcohol. This is because individuals who commit such crimes anticipate more than just the supposed economic or social gain.