

Benefits of being active

Safer Streets

Opportunities exist for community organisations, with government support, to establish long-term viable programs that can deliver positive social outcomes.¹²

Through increased engagement in their local community, youth are less likely to resort to criminal behaviour.

Mind Matters

Participation in organised sport and recreation can protect against mental illness and promote positive mental health.

Researchers believe that participating in sport and recreation and group-based physical activities is the glue that binds people together.¹³

Connected Communities

Promoting the social, physical and mental wellbeing benefits of being active in a community helps create social cohesion, especially amongst disadvantaged groups.

People who belong to a team are generally happier¹⁴ and experience fewer psychological difficulties.¹⁵

Brain Boost

Research confirms being active in the playground, on the court and on the field helps learning in the classroom.

It points to more physically active children being smarter because exercise has positive biological, psychological and social benefits.

Be part of a club

“People are more likely to confide, ask small favours and obtain support from their sport and recreation clubs.”¹⁶

This sort of social interaction and support are brought about by a range of sources which can include:

Being a spectator or fan



Participating in sporting teams

Volunteering



To find a club in your local area, visit dsr.wa.gov.au/clubs

¹² Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008.
¹³ CSRR: Sport and Mental Health. March 2015
¹⁴ Donaldson & Ronan, 2006; Huang & Humphreys, 2012
¹⁵ Asztalos et al., 2012; Vella et al., 2014
¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010.



Department of
Local Government, Sport
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Conclusion — a safer community for all

With careful planning and implementation, sport and physical activity programs can make a significant contribution to reducing the risk of youth committing crimes, making streets safer in our local neighbourhood and the wider community.



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Our whole
community wins



Safer Streets

Building positive self-esteem in at-risk youth:
How sport and recreation can help reduce anti-social behaviour and prevent crime

With careful planning and implementation, sport and physical activity programs (for young people) can make a significant contribution to reducing and preventing crime.

Sport and physical activity can change the way young people think about themselves. Research shows that participating in sport and recreation can change a young person's perception of themselves and ultimately build greater self-confidence and reduce negative behaviours — which plays a part in preventing and reducing crime. It's been found that sport can help:



There are a number of barriers that contribute to reduced sport and recreation participation by young people in some communities. This potentially leads to increased levels of delinquency and disruptive behaviour in local streets.

Research indicates that youths perceived that when home or school failed to meet certain needs, they spent more time on the streets, leading to incarceration. These young people also described their homes, schools and neighbourhoods as chaotic and unsafe.²

There are a number of factors that contribute to this:

Affordability of sport

The cost of living often precludes youth from participating in sport and recreation activities, which can lead to boredom and too much free time, leaving young people to find other activities including those of a negative nature.



Family time versus peer time

Increased time spent with peers as opposed to with family, is a highly significant risk factor for behaviours such as: Alcohol, cigarette and illicit drug use, Delinquency and Sexual activity.

Researchers found that family time can serve as a protective factor against these problems.³

Values and integrity

The integrity of sport is experiencing increasing threats from adverse behaviours such as:

- Verbal and physical abuse
- Pressure to perform
- Poor role models
- Use of illicit substances



Building safer streets through sport

There is a growing body of evidence highlighting a positive relationship between sport and reducing/preventing crime.⁴

Delinquency and the role of organised sport

Past research⁵ suggests that sport programs are related to reduced delinquency in (particularly Aboriginal) youth. This specifically occurred during sport seasons and was characterised by a marked drop in delinquency in rural and remote communities.

Rehabilitation of young people through sport

Youth rehabilitation programs (including sport programs) are more effective when they:



Specifically suit individual needs



De-emphasise regulations and winning



Emphasise personal choices



Provide positive feedback⁶

School-based sport activities

Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies show sport at school and sport as an extra-curricular activity reduces violent victimisation of youth.⁷



Make success in sport, rather than incarceration, the path

Breaking cycles of juvenile incarceration will require that the public health community partner with legislators, educators, community leaders, and youths to determine how to make success, rather than incarceration, the easier path for disadvantaged adolescents.⁸

Other findings show intervention programs should challenge youth through sport in the following ways:

- Offer novel and challenging activities;
- Ensure activities are tailored to the target group;
- Provide a continuing contact point for youth;
- Provide leadership opportunities for young people in organising and deciding activities;
- Engage with young people as individuals and not simply on the basis of their behaviour.⁹

Participation builds self-confidence and leads to the acquisition of self-discipline, punctuality and healthy sportsmanship.¹⁰

By being more engaged in their local community, youth are less likely to resort to criminal behaviour which in turn creates a feeling of being safe in their own streets and creates more positive emotional and behavioural wellbeing.

Positive self-esteem and positive perceptions of quality of life are significantly more likely to reduce social risk factors for juvenile delinquency and serious antisocial behaviour in youth-at-risk.¹¹

¹ Williams et al., 2015.

² Barnert et al., 2015.

³ Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2007.

⁴ e.g. Lim, Mokhtar, & Balbir, 2012; Taheri & Welsh, 2015; Van Hout & Phelan, 2014; Williams et al., 2015.

⁵ Schwaiger (2007); Tatz (1994)

⁶ Andrews & Andrews, 2003.

⁷ Jiang & Peterson, 2012; Peguero, 2013.

⁸ Barnert et al. 2015

⁹ Morris, Sallybanks, Willis & Makkai, 2003

¹⁰ Jacobs, 2005.

¹¹ Lim et al. 2012.