

# CRIME PREVENTION PROBLEM SOLVING

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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Slideshow presented at:

Delivering crime prevention : making the evidence work

Carlton Crest Hotel, Sydney

21-22 November 2005



**Australian Government**

**Australian Institute of Criminology**



**Crime Prevention Division**

**Attorney General's**

department of nsw

This conference was organised by the Australian Institute of Criminology in conjunction with the Crime Prevention Division of the New South Wales Attorney General's Department.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/2005-cp/>

# Crime Prevention Problem Solving: Essential Elements

Dr Adrian Cherney  
Criminology Program School of Social Science  
University of Queensland

*Delivering Crime Prevention: Making the Evidence Work*

Conference of the Australian Institute of Criminology &  
NSW Attorney Generals Department  
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# Making the Evidence Work?

dependant upon external validity of accumulated evidence



what are the implications for learning from crime prevention problem solving?



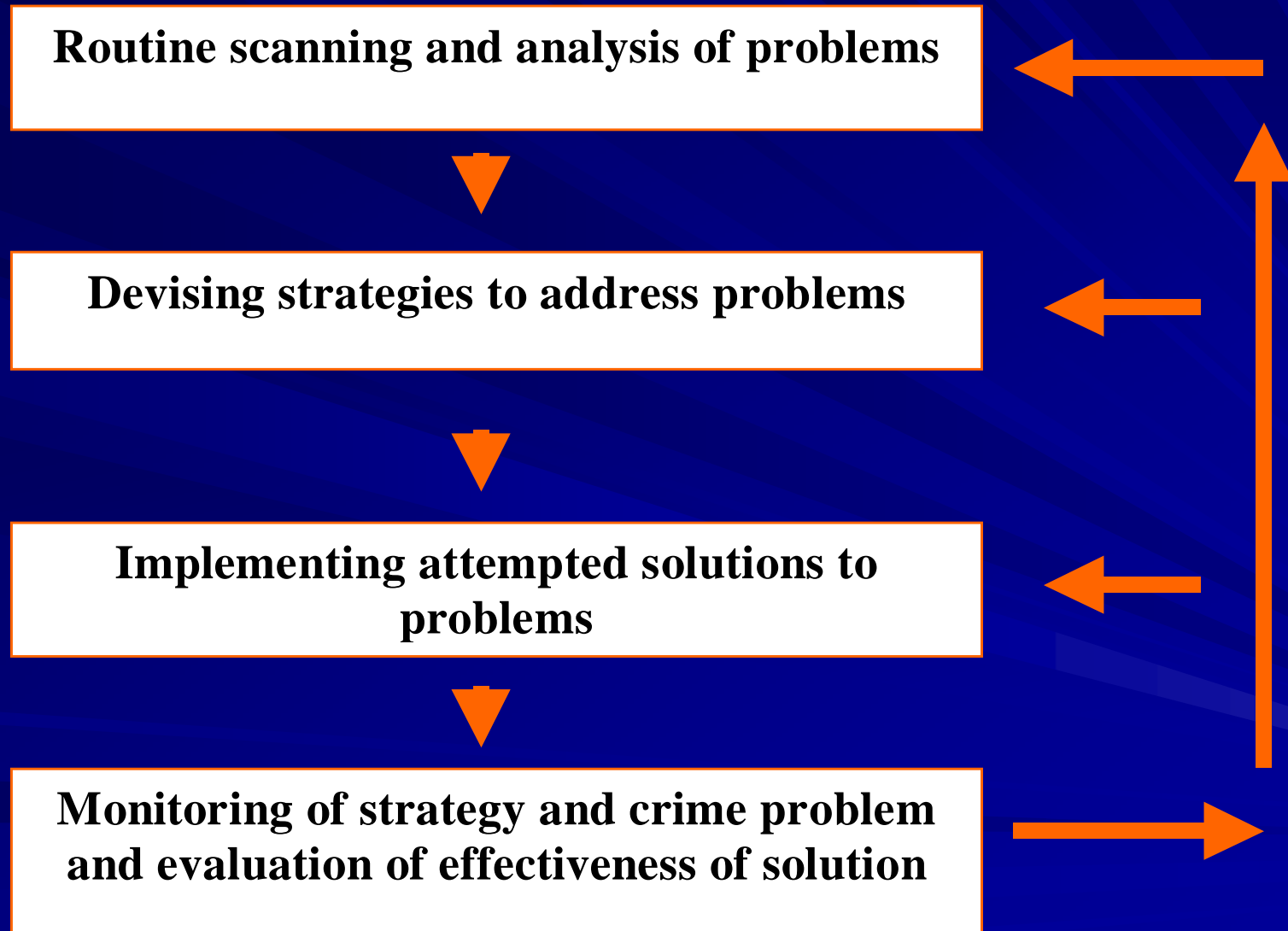
theory & context pivotal  
flexibility & reflexive judgements relevant

# Problem Solving Methodology: What does it look like?

**SARA model –Eck & Spelman**



**Problem Solving Process – see Hough & Tilley (1998: 7)**



# 5Is' Model – Ekblom

Intelligence



Intervention



Implementation



Involvement



Impact

# Problem Solving: Why So Important?

- Provides a methodology for planning.
- Ensures responses are evidence based.
- Responses matched to problems.

# Problem Solving: Core Essential Elements

- Being systematic (don't jump to a solution).
- Data / evidence driven (in-depth problem analysis & response).
- Evaluation (feedback into all steps).

# Problem Solving: Additional Essential Elements

- Theory informed problem solving.
- Context sensitive problem solving.
- Flexible problem solving.
- Reflexive problem solving.

# Theory Informed Problem Solving (1)

- Interventions selected need to be the logical extension of a sound theory.
- Key question – HOW WILL interventions reduce crime problem?
- Most crime prevention policy & practice concerned with “what will” questions: what interventions will prevent problem?

# Theory Informed Problem Solving (2)

- Theoretical roots of interventions important, not just outcomes.
- Theory helps to understand problem & interpret outcomes.
- Testing theory important for generalisation and learning.

# Context Sensitive Problem Solving

- Interventions (theory) mediated through settings.
- Contexts determine “what works”.
- Context relevant variables: target group, social, cultural & physical setting, political climate, knowledge & skill levels & agency participants.
- Understanding how contexts effect outcomes relevant to generalisation & lesson learning.

# Theory and Context

Key component of crime prevention best practice:

*“combining the best relevant theory with a deep understanding of local contexts”*

(John Eck 2002)

# Flexible Problem Solving

- Good problem solving involves more than appropriate technique (crime analysis & evidence based).
- Capacity for flexibility important:  
E.g. responding to contingencies.  
E.g. altering implementation plans.
- Flexibility essential to innovation (e.g. leveraging) and accumulation of evidence base about process (i.e. implementation).

# Reflexive Problem Solving

- Need to avoid unwanted outcomes.
- Is it just a quick fix to a one off problem?
- Does application of interventions exacerbate problem / promote exclusionary tendencies?
- Aim should be to build upon quality interventions & expand calibre of evidence.

# Conclusion

- Many different elements to crime prevention best practice.
- Rigorous problem solving: theory, context, flexible application & reflexive judgements.
- Making the evidence work influenced by variables that mediate lesson learning & generalisation.