

Pros

- ❖ Scared Straight documentary (based in New Jersey) showed a 94% success rate
- ❖ Programs were created in 30 other jurisdictions and they showed a 80% - 90% success rate
- ❖ Participants' testimonies
- ❖ Informal comments from teachers, parents, police officers, jail/prison wardens, guidance counselors, Arnold Shapiro, school principals
- ❖ Inmates counsel youths through group discussions and one-on-one interactions
- ❖ Inmates get to mentor teens and attempt to deter them from a life of crime
- ❖ The program runs no longer than 1 day for each teen
- ❖ Program costs are minimal since inmates volunteer their time for no form of compensation whatsoever
- ❖ Helps reduce dropout rates and increase school attendance rates
- ❖ While both tactics, confrontational and non-confrontational work, non-confrontational is more effective
- ❖ Inmates feel useful which can help improve their self-esteem and self-concept
- ❖ The public likes the fact that blame and responsibility to change is put on the individual (troubled teen) instead of the family or environment

Cons

- ❖ No effect on criminal activity among those who went through the program compared to those who did not
- ❖ Those who went through the program were more likely to get arrested
- ❖ The program increases delinquency
- ❖ Those who went through the program have a higher recidivism rate than those who did not go through the program
- ❖ Delinquent youths who feel alienated may see prison as a place they will fit in
- ❖ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) refuses to fund such programs
- ❖ Delinquent teens may turn to idolize the "lifers"
- ❖ Intimidation tactics may actually encourage the teens to prove themselves to others that they are in fact tough and hard to "scare straight"
- ❖ "Anticipatory socialization" – after being introduced to a certain situation (being in prison), a person modifies their behaviors to adapt to that culture
- ❖ Teens may become desensitized to prison life which will eliminate element of deterrence
- ❖ Damaging to youth – emotionally, mentally, etc
- ❖ Detrimental to society – victimization increases
- ❖ Punishment needs to be swift, certain and severe but program only focuses on severity of punishment
- ❖ "Panacea Phenomenon" – people seek simple solutions to complex problems – 1 day visit is not going to affect complex underlying issues within the teen
- ❖ **Programs may violate federal laws - The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJPA) prohibits court-involved youth from being detained, confined or otherwise having contact with adult inmates in jails and prisons**