

## PART IV

# SPECIAL TOPICS IN CRIME AND DEVIANCE

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In this section, we wanted to include topics that have generated much current interest and on which there have been significant theoretical and research advances. Surprisingly, after having identified the topics and the respective experts, we realized that many of them have been the subject of ongoing research interest and of concern among policy makers for a number of years. From the beginning of American criminology, gangs and peer relationships have been a central focus and certainly are an important area of study, as well as a key challenge for policy makers today. Similarly, the connections between drugs and violence and between gun use and violence continue to be major contributing factors to the crime problem in this country. Many of the theories that were addressed earlier in this book include the family arena as a key component of the explanation of crime and delinquency. The most dramatic issue in family relationships is violence within the family, including both domestic violence and child abuse. While criminologists have long recognized the importance of such behaviors on the cycle of violence, recent research on these issues has significantly advanced our understanding of why they have an impact. The two topics that seem to have more recently come into focus are research on hate crimes and cyber crime. Although behaviors that are consistent with hate crimes are certainly not new, the topic as a distinct area of study is new. What we now know as cyber crime is, of course, dependent on advancements in technology, but as is argued in the chapter included in this edition, the general behavior has been around for many years even though we have not understood it as such.

The first two chapters in this section deal with delinquent groups. Mark Warr has done some of the most insightful research on the impact that delinquent peers have on one's behavior. He opens the section by discussing the issues and controversies related to this area of research, including his own contributions that have served to clarify some of these issues. Gangs represent

an extreme form of peer association. Dana Peterson has been working with the G.R.E.A.T. project, combining a gang prevention program with an ambitious research program. Here she not only examines the contributions of the G.R.E.A.T. program but also focuses on the move to establish a research agenda to compare and contrast gangs in different countries.

Well known for their extensive and longitudinal work on delinquency, Helene Raskin White, Kristina Jackson, and Rolf Loeber exhaustively review the literature on substance use and violence. Then they use longitudinal data from the Pittsburgh Youth Study to estimate trajectories of drinking and violence between early adolescence and early adulthood showing when and how the two are related.

While there are large bodies of research on both legal and illegal gun ownership and use, the correlates and causes of the two rarely have been contrasted. Rik Legault and Alan Lizotte have made substantial contributions to this literature and continue to do so in their chapter that contrasts the causes and correlates of legal and illegal gun ownership and use.

Carolyn Smith and Timothy Ireland review and synthesize more than 30 years of the extensive literature on child abuse and domestic violence. They focus on the connection between the two and how they are linked to both later adolescent and adult offending.

Hate crime is an emerging area of research and as such, there is still much ambiguity in the legal status of such behavior, the definition and identification of hate crime, and the research issues that should be priorities for future research. Ryan King arguably has been making the most significant research contributions to this area and in his chapter focuses on both hate crime law and hate crime offending.

Graeme Newman has been a creative and frequent contributor of research on cyber crime. In this compelling chapter, he shows that cyber crime is nothing more than a new name for an ancient crime. These are crimes that change with the available technology. Understanding this demystifies cyber crime.