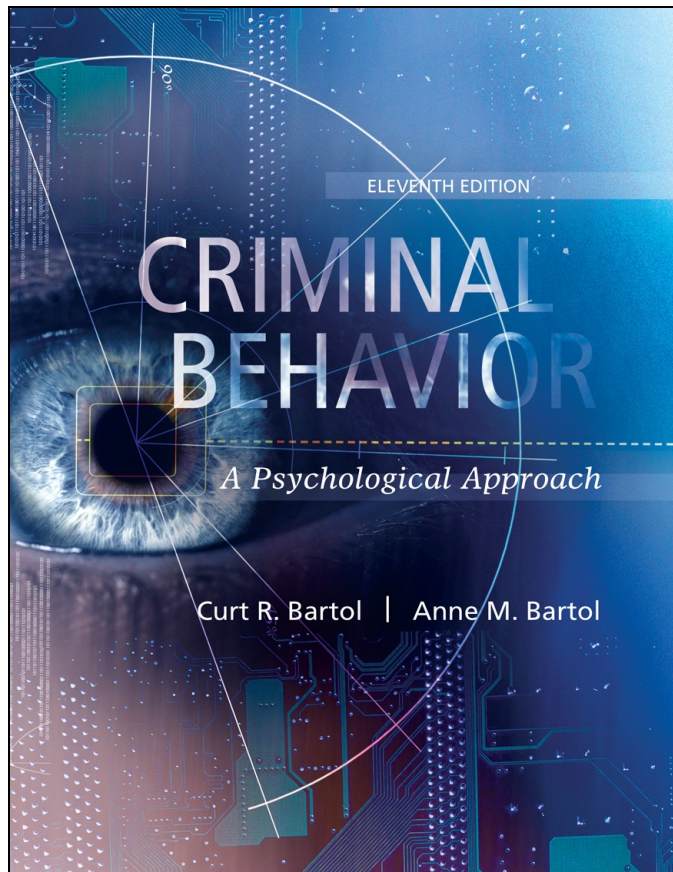


Criminal Behavior

A Psychological Approach

Eleventh Edition



CHAPTER 6

Juvenile Delinquency

Chapter Objectives

- Contrast legal, social, and psychological definitions of delinquency.
- Identify the categories and extent of juvenile offending, including status and serious offending.
- Describe Moffitt's developmental theory of delinquency.
- Describe the dual systems model of risk taking among adolescents.

Chapter Objectives

- Describe Patterson's coercion developmental theory.
- Introduce callous-unemotional traits as features of serious delinquency.
- Summarize features of effective programs for juvenile offenders.

Other Objectives

- NVCC has an entire course on Juvenile Delinquency
- This lecture will only look at the behavioral aspects of Delinquency
- Some definitions will be required

Definitions of Delinquency

- Legal definition
 - Behavior against the criminal code committed by an individual who has not reached adulthood, as defined by state or federal law
 - Status offenses
 - Criminal courts v. juvenile courts
 - Some crimes will automatically elevate to criminal court (murder)
 - Generally will not certify misdemeanors

Definitions of Delinquency

- Social definition
 - A wide variety of youthful behaviors considered inappropriate
 - Not all criminal
- Youthful Offenders
 - Generally includes young adults
 - Federal system goes to 25 years old
 - Not a separate court, just separate sentencing guidelines
 - Not used in Virginia
 - May factor in presentence report

Definitions of Delinquency

- Psychological definitions
 - Conduct disorder
 - Oppositional Defiant Disorder
 - Unlike conduct disorder, does not usually involve aggression, property destruction, animal cruelty, property damage or theft
 - Antisocial behavior

Definitions of Delinquency

- Age of criminal responsibility
 - Not in Virginia Code

The Nature and Extent of Juvenile Offending



Status Offenses



Status Offenses

- Status offenses
 - Acts that only juveniles can commit
 - Typically handled in juvenile or family court
 - National Center for Juvenile Justice
 - Running away
 - Truancy
 - Ungovernability

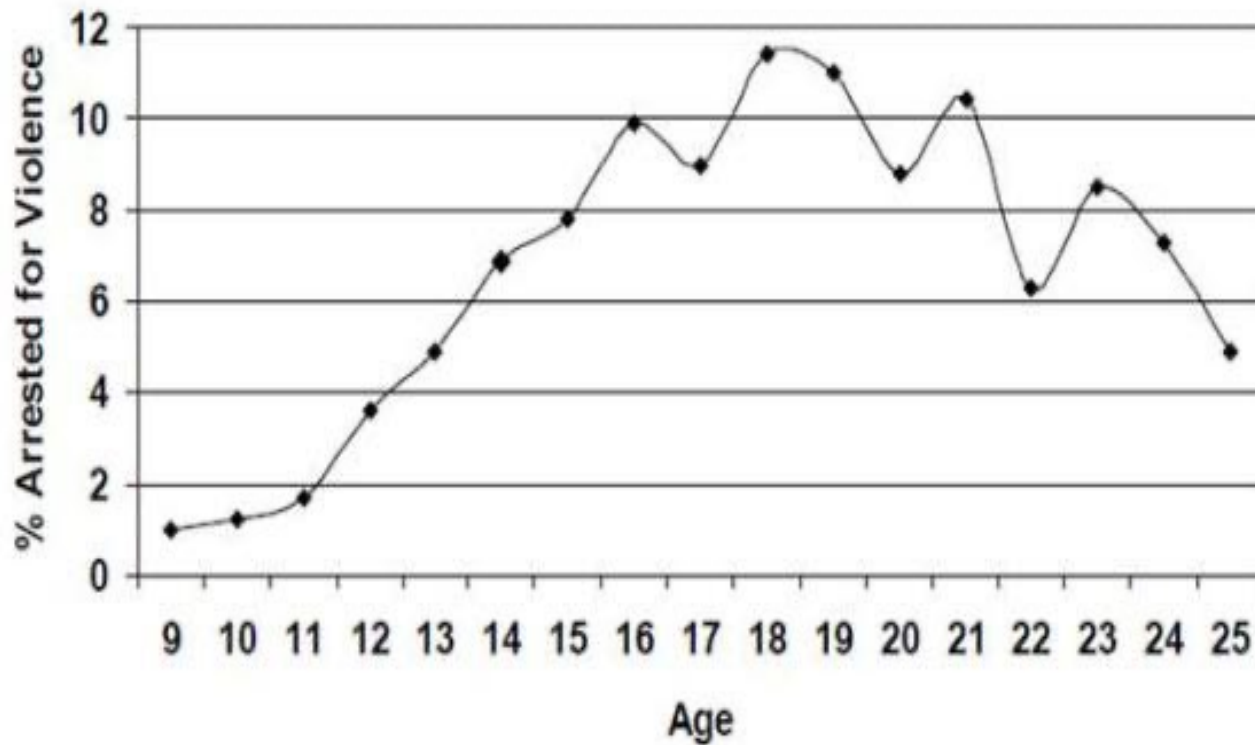
Status Offenses

- Status offenses
 - Underage liquor law violations: Is this really a status offense? Or is it a criminal violation?
 - According to Code of Virginia § 4.1-305(C), 16.1-278.9 and 16.1-278.8: **It is illegal for anyone under 21 to possess any alcoholic beverage.** Violators are guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor and face a fine of up to \$2,500 and/or a year in jail if convicted.

Status Offenses

- Status offenses
 - Similar to alcohol violations are tobacco violations, driver licensing laws that lead to unlicensed driving and fake ID's, all criminal violations.
 - If no status offender can be placed in detention, what does the court do with the habitual violator of acts that are not criminal such as truancy or running away from home?
 - Alternatives to detention for the habitual status offender, ideas?

The Nature and Extent of Juvenile Offending



Violent crime trend by age: National Institute of Justice

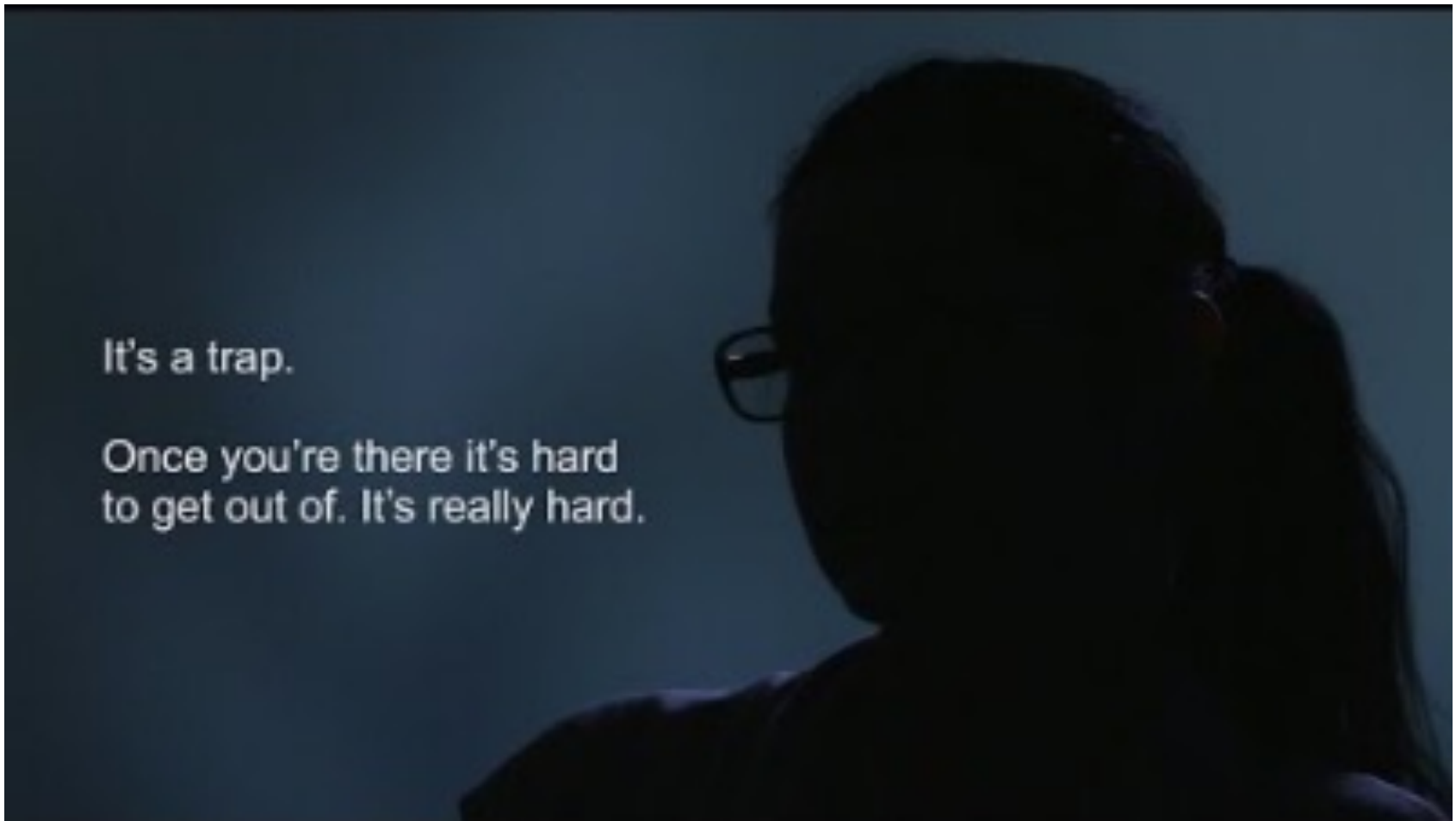
The Nature and Extent of Juvenile Offending

- The serious delinquent
 - Often escape detection
 - A lot of juvenile facilities are not secure.
 - Trying to build trust
 - High in recidivism
 - Wide variety of offenses
 - Behaviors begin at early age

The Nature and Extent of Juvenile Offending

- Gender differences
 - Boys outnumber girls in violent offending 72% vs 18%.
 - Closest spread between genders is for theft 55% Males, 45% females. This is also true for adults.
 - Running away and prostitution
 - Prostitution is an issue for both genders
 - Maybe the only way to support themselves
 - Human trafficking
 - History of violent victimization for girls leads them to run away

Juvenile Human Trafficking (4:29)



The Nature and Extent of Juvenile Offending

- Gender differences
 - The Girls Study Group (GSG). Risk factors for girls developing violent behaviors. Similar to boys:
 - Peer violence
 - Violence within schools/school quality
 - Family dynamics
 - Supervision
 - Family criminality
 - Sexual or physical abuse

The Nature and Extent of Juvenile Offending

- Gender differences affecting girls more than boys:
 - Depression
 - While this affects both genders, girls are much more likely to be diagnosed with depression.
 - Early puberty
 - Affects girls more than boys because it leads to association with older male peers
 - Romantic partners
 - For serious crimes, no gender difference. Girls more affected by romantic partners for minor offenses

The Nature and Extent of Juvenile Offending

- Violence within disadvantaged neighborhoods
- Girls in gangs
 - Girls' roles in gangs often not violent
 - Used as prostitutes to raise money
- Family violence

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Moffitt's developmental theory
 - Life-Course Persistent offenders (LCP)
 - Lifelong antisocial behavior across many conditions
 - Beginning early in life
 - Neurological problems during childhood
 - A small minority of children follow a high antisocial developmental trajectory.
 - Most difficult to treat
 - Personality disorder (after age 18)

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Moffitt's developmental theory
 - Adolescence-limited offenders
 - The majority of juvenile offenders
 - Begin offending during adolescence and stop around age 18
 - This was the original theory
 - Changed to include “Emerging Adulthood”
 - Too many juvenile offenders did not show any criminal abatement until mid to late 20’s
 - The reason for the Youthful Offender approaches to corrections

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- The frequency and violence level may be as high as that of the LCP youth.
 - But it is less ingrained into personality
 - More amenable to treatment
 - Still not a good prognosis

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Developmental gender differences for delinquency
 - An ongoing association with delinquent peers appears to be an important factor in the onset of delinquency among adolescent girls & boys.
 - An intimate relationship with a male delinquent is also closely connected to delinquency in adolescent girls.
 - Boyfriend for juvenile
 - Husband for Youthful Offender

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Steinberg's dual systems model
 - Adolescents, as a group, reach a peak of logical reasoning at approximately age 16, a time when their psychosocial maturity is far less developed.
 - The two paths do not merge until approximately age 25.

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Developmental theory
 - Poor (a) parental monitoring of child activities, (b) disruptive family transitions, and (c) inconsistent parental discipline are major psychosocial contributors to early-onset delinquency.
 - The key predictor of early-onset offending is the family environment.

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- **Coercion Developmental Theory** (Li)
 - Coercion Theory describes a process of how ineffective parenting in early childhood sets the stage for adolescent antisocial behavior later through association with deviant peers.
 - When a child disobeys the parent's directive or request, the misbehavior provokes anger and hostility in the parent. The parent then reacts punitively, which provokes the child's disruptive behavior, which raises the parent's angry response even more. As the exchanges continue, the level of coercion intensifies and escalates to result in a coercive cycle that goes on until someone "wins".

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- **Coercion Developmental Theory** (Li)
- If the parent disengages, the child “wins” reinforcing the aggressive behavior · The parent has been shaped to back down when the child’s behavior becomes even more aversive the next time the parent tries to discipline.
- A child only has to “win” once.
- Problem behaviors that have been formed at home are usually maintained at school by coercive exchanges with peers · Children with antisocial behavior and poor social skills are often rejected by their normal peers, leading them to drift to deviant peers who reinforce their conduct problems, and this leads to delinquency.

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Coercion Developmental Theory
 - Early onset
 - Begins in preschool
 - Inept parenting is more severe
 - High level of social incompetence
 - Across the life span
 - Affects who the peers are
 - By the time the person reaches adolescent, it may be too late to fix
 - Arrest likely as adult

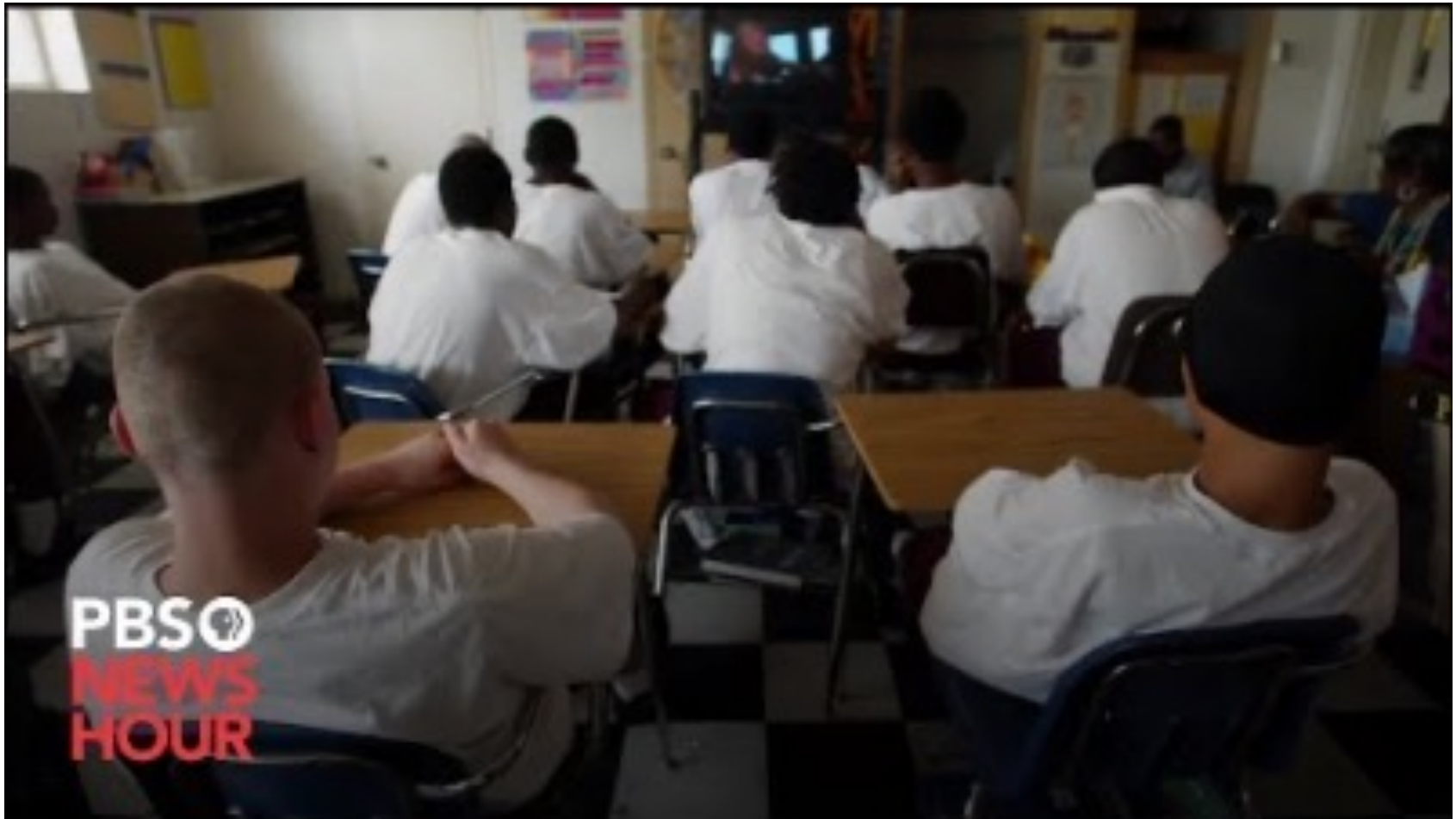
Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Coercion developmental theory
 - Late onset
 - Begins late adolescence
 - Inept parenting is less severe
 - Because in adolescence family has less of an influence
 - Social incompetence, but lower level
 - Desist in offending as adult
 - However, usually not until in 20's

Developmental Theories of Delinquency

- Coercion developmental theory
 - Gender differences
 - Gender differences in aggression are well in place by age five and persist throughout childhood and adolescence.
 - Aggressiveness in boys
 - Result of different environmental experiences and reinforcements
 - Peer socialization

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending^(6:25)



Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Questions from the video (introspective)
- Did they say these programs would work for all offenders?
- Did they work with all age groups?
- Did they address problems of social environment from which the offenders came?
 - If the environment is a factor, what happens to a rehabilitated person thrown back into it?
- They stated they selected the participants, did they indicate what criteria was used? Did they “cherry pick” only persons likely to succeed?

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Treatment and rehabilitation strategies
 - Mental health diagnoses
 - Focus on the individual
 - Substance abuse disorders
 - Focus on the individual
 - Few programs are effective regardless of how intensive they are
 - Why? Look at the above. Do they focus on the environment?

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Many juvenile offenders are not motivated to change
 - May like their deviant peers
 - May also be all they have as friends
- Many that are referred are only referred after 3 or 4 appearances in court
 - Treatment might their 4th or 5th chance
 - Behavior well ingrained by this time
- How do you fix the neighborhood?
- How far are they behind in academics?
 - Probably too far behind to catch up in a realistic period of time

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Characteristics of successful programs
 - They begin early.
 - They follow developmental principles.
 - They focus on multiple settings and systems.
 - Still only so much they can cover
 - They acknowledge and respect cultural backgrounds.
 - They focus on the family first.
 - Really cannot focus on fixing the neighborhood, the school, crime rate etc.
 - Have a lot of sessions/interactions
 - Expensive and can only serve a limited clientele
 - While more successful, how much more is debated

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Classification of prevention and treatment programs
 1. Primary prevention
 - a. Deal with overall community risks
 2. Selective prevention
 - b. Deal with specific individuals
 3. Treatment or intervention
 - c. After a conviction

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Primary prevention
 - Looks are reducing risk factors for all children in risk areas during their formative years
 - Poverty is a risk factor
 - High crime neighborhood
 - Rejection by peers
 - History of abuse
 - Loss of a parent
 - How would you fix those on a broad base?

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Also, looks at increasing protective factors
 - Improving parenting skills so parents show that they care
 - Eliminating illicit drug use
 - School or preschool performance
 - May result in change of peers
- Development of resilience
- Things found not to be protective factors:
 - Religiosity
 - Connected to school beyond school performance (just hanging out)

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Selective prevention
 - Secondary prevention
 - Targets specific children and adolescents who are at high risk.
 - Early detection and early intervention will prevent more serious, habitual offending.

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Prevention in general
 - Aim at more than one risk factor.
 - Implemented before adolescence
 - Fast Track
 - As a group, these programs do not reduce recidivism

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Treatment approaches
 - Self-regulation skills
 - Improving cognitions
 - Individual psychotherapy has not been effective when used in isolation
 - Inclusion of family, school, peers, and community
 - Since problems in any one of these by themselves could lead to delinquency
 - Getting rid of one problem and leaving the other intact not likely to work

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Treatment approaches
 - Residential treatment and incarceration are expensive and are not effective for serious offenders
 - Studies have even shown that these methods may actually increase recidivism
 - Who do they have as peers when in these facilities?
 - Family approach must give families the resources they need
 - Could be very costly

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Treatment approaches
 - Change to more socially acceptable peers
 - But what if the peers don't accept them?
 - Just because the delinquent's attitude toward others' changes does not mean that the other's attitudes will change toward them
 - Educational performance has been linked to the types of peers a person will have
 - Can a short-term treatment program significantly improve this?

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Treatment approaches
 - Many juveniles are sent to these programs only as “one last chance”
 - These juveniles have a long history of antisocial behavior that will be difficult to fix
 - Compare to personality disorders
 - Some delinquency is linked to substance abuse
 - In general, not a lot of success with these treatments

Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment of Juvenile Offending

- Treatment approaches
 - Expensive multi-systems treatment or functional family treatment have not been shown to be more effective than cheaper alternatives
 - Baglivio suggests “if roughly twice as many youth may be served by the equally effective, cheaper alternatives, one would have trouble not pursuing those paths”
 - One research caution. Just because a study shows that something is statistically significant does not mean that it is practically significant

Additional Resources

- Videos:
- Juvenile Delinquency: Two Types of Criminal Careers. (2018) Criminology Web. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9RwqR7FIjc>
- What is a Status Offense? (2016) Vera Institute for Justice. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isuEPzqxZak>
- The Juvenile Justice System is Broken: Here is What Actually Works. (2021) PBS News Hour. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1fsysGy_hM
- FBI. Survivor of Juvenile Sex Trafficking Shares Her Story (2016) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrgokIbGGNY>
- Text:
- Office of the Attorney General (Virginia). *Virginia Rules: Alcohol, Tobacco and Marijuana*. (2023). https://virginiarules.org/varules_topics/alcohol-tobacco-and-marijuana/
- Li, A. Patterson's Coercion Theory and Coercive Cycle. Parenting for Brain. (2022). <https://www.parentingforbrain.com/coercive-cycle/>