

Risk and Needs Assessment Tools:
Reducing Recidivism among Dual Status Youth

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Reducing Recidivism among Dual Status Youth

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Shena J. Kohler

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I.INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Juveniles with a history of contact between both the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system are classified as “dual status youth” due to their dual system involvement (JJIE, 2016). Dual status juveniles may not have involvement in both systems at the same time, yet various terms are used to identify the different levels of involvement a juvenile has in each system. They may exclusively be in the juvenile justice system but have a history of involvement in the child welfare system, be involved in both systems simultaneously, or adjudicated in both systems as a dependent adolescent and a juvenile delinquent (JJIE, 2016). While an adolescent may be involved in both systems, the two systems are not necessarily working together on case management and treatment. Often times, they face other problems, including poverty and mental illness, which are serviced by separate resources that do not coordinate efforts (Ross, Conger, & Armstrong, 2001, p. 472).

Adolescents become involved in the child welfare system when they have an open child welfare case due to problems at home, including abuse, neglect, or the lack of an adequate home and family system. Some parents lose custody of their children due to a history of substance abuse, poor living conditions, and the inability to provide.

Juveniles are entered into the juvenile court system when they are arrested for a violation of the law, which may lead to fines, penalties, juvenile referrals, and possible placement in a correctional setting depending upon the severity of the crime and the alternatives available for custody of the child, including parental cooperation and foster care accessibility. Nationwide, the juvenile courts processed more than 1.5 million cases involving juveniles in 2004, while another 9,400 juvenile cases were upgraded to adult court (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 8). While

juvenile crime has decreased since 2000, 2009 records estimate juveniles were still responsible for 15 percent of violent crime and 24 percent of property crimes in the United States in a given year (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013).

Dual status youth make up almost half of the adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system at any time, where two-thirds of the juveniles have a history of involvement in the child welfare system even if not concomitantly (JJIE, 2016). According to the National Center for Juvenile Justice Arizona Dual Jurisdiction Study released in 2004, there is a strong correlation between child abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency, yet deficient research concerning how to address the challenges of cases which directly involve juvenile justice, child welfare, court services and mental health care (Halemba et al., 2004).

Research suggests that dual status youth are at a greater risk of recidivism, along with higher rates of substance abuse, mental health issues, and difficulties in school (JJIE, 2016). Studies have also attributed dual status involvement higher for youth with a history of abuse, with the impacts leading to earlier and longer involvement in the juvenile justice system (JJIE, 2016). Adolescents that are abused or neglected as children are 29 percent more likely to experience future juvenile delinquent behaviors and continue towards criminal activities as an adult (Widom & Maxfield, 2001, p. 1). They are 59 percent more likely to be arrested as a juvenile and 28 percent more likely to face arrest as an adult (Widom & Maxfield, 2001). They committed twice as many offenses as those not abused or neglected as children and they were more violent than those not involved in the child welfare system (Snyder, 2001, p. 40).

Childhood abuse extends beyond physical abuse. Abuse may include negligence, maltreatment, domestic violence, substance abuse, lack of supervision, excessive or severe punishments, mental illness in the home, or being witness to criminal activities and arrests

(Widom & Maxfield, 2001). Expanding the disparities between youth in each system, dual status youth that identify as minorities are disproportionately represented and have greater challenges within the juvenile justice system (JJIE, 2016).

While previous legislation authorized tougher penalties on crime, disparities exist in the child welfare system, particularly among minority juveniles and juveniles from impoverished environments (JJIE, 2016). As a result, more than half of the juveniles in the juvenile justice system are also participants in the child welfare system (JJIE, 2016). While the two systems are inadequately collaborating on the development of strategies for reducing recidivism, including standardized risk and needs assessments, they are congruently failing to meet their own system objectives within their individual systems. To reduce recidivism among dual status youth, risk assessments must be coordinated between both systems. When the systems work together, they become more aware of the impacts each have on the juvenile's risk of crime.

Methods of Approach

The primary method of approach involves a secondary data analysis of research relevant to the implementation of risk and needs assessment tools for juveniles of dual status. Information includes data and statistics about dual status youth and dual status involvement, pertinent federal and state legislature reform to the juvenile justice system and the resulting impact on the juvenile and child welfare systems, results from empirical studies conducted regarding dual status youth recidivism, reviews on case studies of jurisdictions that have implemented standardized tools for improving the outcomes for dual status youth, and best practices identified through secondary data analysis.

Research was obtained through various agencies involved in the advocacy of juvenile justice and child welfare reform, including the United State Department of Justice, the

MacArthur Foundation, the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the Robert F. Kennedy Children's National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the research of distinguished scholars including Dr. Gina M. Vincent.

The second method of approach introduces the theoretical framework that supports the correlations between the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. Theoretical framework identifies the impacts of the Social Bonding Theory, the General Strain Theory, the Differential Association Theory and the Deterrence Theory on these systems and the significance of mental health, substance abuse, poverty, and abuse on the development of adolescents.

Limitations

The study is limited by the deficient research concerning how to address the challenges of cases which directly involve juvenile justice, child welfare, court services and mental health care as identified by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (Halemba et al., 2004). Limitations to data regarding juvenile records regarding both systems, along with mental health records, and juvenile self-assessments apply. General statistical data is available for evaluation.

A data analysis provides direction on implementation of best practices that have worked in various environments, however limitations are recognized, where identifying who is at risk may be feasible while identifying strategies for change may be very different based on the individual and their personal history.

Significance and Purpose of Study

The Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice has developed risk and needs assessment tools within the Models for Change initiative that supports multi-system

interventions for dual status youth (Wiig et al., 2013). The reform efforts that the Model for Change Initiative supports nationwide provides recommendations for reducing recidivism among dual status youth.

The purpose for research is to define dual status youth and dual status involvement and the recognize the need for standardized risk and needs assessments within the juvenile justice system; identify federal and state legislature reform to the juvenile justice system and the resulting impact on the juvenile and child welfare systems; provide data based on other empirical studies conducted regarding dual status youth recidivism; introduce efforts of jurisdictions that have implemented standardized tools for improving the outcomes for dual status youth; identify challenges impeding efforts for reform to addressing dual status youth recidivism; and to make recommendations for jurisdictions implementing reform initiatives to improve the outcome for dual status youth, through the best practices identified implementing standardized risk and needs assessment tools.

This study identifies the costs and benefits of implementing various models of risk and needs assessments tools and the impact on juvenile recidivism. Following more than a century of national reform to the juvenile justice system in the United States, further efforts are still necessary to support juveniles of dual status. Standardized risk and needs assessment tools that aid in developing customized treatment plans for adolescents of dual status may assist in bridging the gap between these two systems, which directly impact one another.

This study provides the field of juvenile justice with a comprehensive report on recommendations for implementing a standardized risk and needs assessment program that promotes a coordinated, multi-system approach to intervention for dual status youth. Utilizing standardized risk and needs assessment tools, youth of dual status can receive individualized

treatment to improve their outcomes and reduce or even eliminate recidivism, despite their environment.

By implementing a standardized risk and needs assessment program that promotes a coordinated, multi-system approach to intervention, dual status youth can receive individualized treatment to improve their outcomes and reduce or even eliminate recidivism, despite their environment. The juvenile justice system and the child welfare system need to take the lead in collaborating; conducting joint screenings and assessments, with the support of mental health professionals and other human service and legal resources, coordinate their case management and develop best practices for streamlining risk and needs assessment tools to address the challenges of dual status delinquency. Further partnerships should focus on data collection and program analysis to continue improvements to the assessment programs. Using data collection and program reviews, the joint efforts of the systems are strengthened. The stronger systems result in greater efficiency by economically allocating available resources between the two.

Using the recommendations of this research, jurisdictions may articulate the need for local support in enhancing juvenile justice reform at their local level, with specific attention being placed on the development of standardized tools to mitigate further crime by dual status youth.

II.LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Juvenile Justice Reform in the United States

Early court systems punished juvenile offenders by institutional confinement because there were minimal options for punishment and a lack of understanding in juvenile punishment. The result of such confinement led to confined juveniles housing with adult criminals, including those with varying degrees of mental illness (CJCJ, 2017). This process was utilized even when

juveniles were incarcerated for minimal or noncriminal behaviors. Critics of the system called for reform against the housing of juveniles with adult offenders, seeking a system and location separate of the adult court system in an effort to improve the treatment and punishment of juvenile offenders (CJ CJ, 2017).

In 1825, the New York House of Refuge was opened to house troubled youth, following the recognized need for a facility to house delinquent and abandoned juveniles. By establishing the House of Refuge, the objective was to address the growing challenges of poverty and well as juvenile delinquency. The establishment of the New York House of Refuge led to the opening of several more across the country, which grew into the development of the juvenile justice system reform.

The juvenile justice system was initially developed in response to issues of child welfare and juvenile justice. Humanitarian efforts called for the protection of juveniles through a systemized network and the protection of a community by mitigating the creation of a younger group of criminals (Altschuler et al., 2009). As the system grew, deficiencies were identified and improved through social reform, including the need for separation of juveniles from adults.

The first juvenile court was created from the Illinois Juvenile Court Act of 1899. The Illinois Juvenile Court Act gained support across the United States by creating a separate system for juveniles. The Illinois Juvenile Court Act of 1899 requires the rehabilitation of juvenile youth instead of punishing them (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 16). The act also established requirements for maintaining separate court records for juveniles, separate from adult court records.

The Illinois Juvenile Court Act of 1899 also mandated the separation of juveniles from incarcerated adults and prohibited the detention of you children in jails (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 16). After the passing of the act, informal processes were utilized to provide intervention for juveniles, customized to the specific youth instead of to the offense (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 16).

The system was originally designed with five principles in mind. The state would serve as the higher guardian of children within the jurisdiction so while they may have parents, the state was the ultimate protector of their well-being. Following the core principles, the juvenile justice system in the United States expanded to reach beyond confinement for juvenile and dual-status youth, utilizing new methods to curb juvenile crime. The programs developed under the juvenile justice system found common ground in the establishment of the juvenile courts, where the judge determined the needs of the child and the best way to treat those needs (CJCJ, 2017).

Over the years, juvenile justice faced challenges including trending increases in crime, substance abuse, poverty, and criticisms to the legal system for disparities among juvenile cases and their treatment. When the United States utilized a tough on crime tactic, it spilled into juvenile law, increasing the punishments for juveniles that would be moved into the adult court system, depending on the severity of the crime they committed (Altschuler et al., 2009). Since 2000, justice officials have veered away from the “get tough on crime” approach and converged towards reform efforts similar to those seen in child welfare, recognizing common goals exist between the two systems (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 22).

Impact of Child Welfare on Juvenile Justice

Research suggests parental supervision is a strong indicator of an adolescent's risk of delinquency, exceeding the damages of family problems or the lack of one parent (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013, p. 455). Dual status youth are consequently scrutinized because of their involvement in both systems, which leads to a higher likeliness of getting in trouble for their behaviors (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013, p. 455). They have twice the supervision as someone only involved in a child welfare case or juvenile court case, and potentially four times the eyes on them compared to an adolescent that is not involved in either systems (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013).

Of the estimated 24 million youth in the United States, about one half million are living in foster care at any given time (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 7). The number of adolescents involved in the child welfare system, yet residing with their own families is much greater (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 7). Of those involved in the child welfare system, only 60 percent complete high school before they are 19, and only 3 percent will receive a college degree before their 25th birthday (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 7).

The life course perspective recognizes the impact of time and the events that happen within those periods of time, specifically how they influence the person's course of internal and external development. Early childhood experiences predict adult behavior. To address those issues, providers need to influence the child in the early years to provide positive enforcements or step back in time to address the negative life experiences that shaped the person as they became an adult. Negative life events increase the risk of abuse victimization or perpetration. By understanding the probability of abuse, victims can remove themselves from dangerous environments when conditions exist for them to do so.

Children stand a greater risk of being victimized simply by their age and inability to defend themselves or know the full parameters of rational thinking and right versus wrong. According to annual reports from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS), female children were at a slightly higher risk of abuse than boys, but again, only slightly (Karmen, 2016, p. 268). African American children were at a greater risk of maltreatment than Caucasian and Hispanics, and children living in poverty were also more likely to be victims of abuse (Karmen, 2016, p. 268).

Children living with a single parent were at greater risks than those living with two parents, and those living with any disabilities were at a greater risk of maltreatment (Karmen, 2016, p. 268). High risk experiences such as growing up in a violent home where domestic violence occurred has a significant impact on the risk of abuse towards a child.

Age determines how the victim processes what has occurred and how they will cope with traumatic experiences (Karmen, 2016). Children are at a greater risk of impairment due to the victimization. They are less likely to understand right versus wrong and unable to process how to handle their emotions, including the onset of fear, depression, anxiety, aggression disorders, PTSD, or other issues that will arise. If they experience abuse, witness domestic violence, observe their parents using drugs and alcohol or committing crimes, they are likely to accept and model these behaviors over time.

The Efforts of Reform – 2005 to Present

In a 2014 speech, the Chief Judge in New York, Judge Jonathan Lippman examined the needs for juvenile justice system reform, particularly impacting teenagers sixteen and seventeen

years old (2014). Lippman (2014) explained that New York was working with an outdated juvenile justice system that continued to treat juveniles as adults for all crimes, specifically nonviolent crimes.

New York was one of two states in the United States that continued to treat these juveniles as adults when they are charged with crimes of a nonviolent nature (Lippman, p. 1022, 2014). Furthermore, states that are historically known as states that deliver severe punishments for crimes, including Texas and Georgia, were no longer prosecuting juveniles as adults for nonviolent crimes. Meanwhile in New York, more than 45,000 sixteen and seventeen year old juveniles are charged as adults each year, with many being for nonviolent or minor offenses (Lippman, p. 1022, 2014).

Lippman (2014) believed there was a significantly outdated juvenile system responsible for the evident lack of necessary services being provided to juveniles and the consequential likelihood of continued criminal activity as an adult. Lippman believed that it was necessary to charge juveniles as adults for appropriate crimes, specifically violent crimes yet by not allowing juveniles the services deserved to them and authorized in most other states for nonviolent crimes, New York was harming the juveniles, the state of New York, and society as a whole.

To advocate for revisions to the Family Court Act of 1962, Lippman (2014) used considerations for significant advances in science over the past 50 years that suggested evidence that teenagers are very different from adults, especially around the ages of sixteen and seventeen. He explained that by treating juveniles as adults for criminal offenses while not allowing them the ability to vote, buy a house, or consent to their own marriage as adults magnified his concerns that the juvenile justice system is out of line.

Lippman (2014) contested that acknowledging teenagers are not mentally ready to make such life-impacting decisions supported his opinion that sixteen and seventeen-year-old teenagers are not fully capable of understanding risks of their behaviors and consequences for their actions. He believed there should be an opportunity for diverse sentencing guidelines for juveniles, focusing more on rehabilitation than punishment and a lifelong record for a crime that would disappear on their eighteenth birthday in other states. Lippman recognized the juvenile system required flexibility, with consideration of the many driving forces within a juvenile's life, some to no fault of their own.

Today: Integrating Risk and Needs Assessment Tools

Risk assessment tools can help decision-makers assess the likelihood of an individual juvenile's recidivism, determine the appropriate plan for intervention to mitigate recidivism, and provide data for analysis in improving the overall juvenile programs being used (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012). The Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDP) of 2002 encouraged agencies and jurisdictions to develop and utilize risk assessment tools to improve the programs specific to juveniles in the juvenile justice program with an end goal of reducing recidivism (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 17).

Risk assessment tools assist with determining the appropriate, individualize response to juvenile placement, whether inside or outside of a detention facility or medical facility. Risk assessment tools also provide guidance for professionals to determine what course will offer the best opportunity for the juvenile to remove themselves from a potential life of crime beyond their adolescence (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 18).

III.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical approaches to criminal behavior have changed over time for several reasons. The greatest challenge with identifying and maintaining theories is that there is always research seeking to challenge those theories in search of more reasons. Identifying the perfect theory has proven over time to be difficult because theory cannot provide absolutes and research tends to desire absolutes. Theoretical study can be altered, and every case can be a new challenge. Understanding criminal behaviors requires knowledge of the individual, including their history, the environment they are presently in, the environment they have been in, and the emotional support or lack thereof in their lives (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010). To add to the challenges with criminal theory, there are biological considerations to identify, specifically with respect for mental health.

The Social Bonding Theory

The Boys and Girls Clubs of America is a nonprofit organization that established operations in 1906, serving the youth of America through education, physical activities, and emotional guidance (Boys and Girls Clubs of America, 2014). The organization's mission is keeping youth involved in a wide variety of activities with other adolescents in a constructive environment, providing adult supervision when they are not in school. When the youth are not engaged in their school activities, the programs serve as support for their school day, extending beyond the 3:00 pm school bell. The hours following the school day are typically when juveniles are most susceptible to getting into trouble. According to the Boys and Girls Club statistics, the most significant time of increased juvenile crime is from immediately following the school bell until 7:00 pm (2014).

The Boys and Girls Club serves juveniles from various backgrounds, including those with involvement in the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. They are provided after school opportunities including health and physical fitness activities, educational and career development projects, leadership and character building events, art projects, and various sport programs (Boys and Girls Clubs of America, 2014). Often times, the youth may not have the opportunities at home for these projects and activities. The participants of the Boys and Girls Clubs also benefit because they avoid dangerous environments and threatening behaviors they may be exposed to on the streets after school if they were unsupervised. They are free from negativity and able to grow through educational support and positive reinforcements.

The success of the Boys and Girls Club is credited to the satisfaction of positive and strong social bonds recognized within the concepts of Travis Hirschi's model of social bonding theory, originating in 1969 (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 461). Hirschi explained that strengthening the social bonds between human beings showed a significant reduction in the likelihood of criminal engagement in the future (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 461).

The four elements of Hirschi's social bond theory include attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 461). The offerings of programs like the Boys and Girls Clubs support the four elements of Hirschi's social bond theory. By creating social bonds and attachment, the participants in the program are able to further develop a sense of belief, commitment, and involvement. The youth develop bonds and identify friends and mentors. These programs also lead to improvements in self-worth which may strengthen their ability to develop and maintain social bonds. In addition to providing a social bond through means of commitment, attachment, involvement and belief, the clubs were able to provide consistency, structure, and direct support to children from all environments.

As Hirschi explained, the most critical time for development of the elements of social bonding is during the adolescent period of one's life (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010). Programs such as the Boys and Girls Club reinforce these needs for adolescents by providing a commitment to their development in return for their commitment to be positive and well-behaved. The resulting positive social bonds lead them to avoid negative pressures and environments when they are most susceptible and most often unsupervised as they age through the teen years.

According to the American Youth Policy Forum, a significant amount of evidence supports the effectiveness of the mission set by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (2000). According to reports, social programs that offered drug prevention saw a decrease in drug activity and an increase in parental involvement while sites that did not offer such programs experienced the opposite effect (American Youth Policy Forum, 2000). Neighborhoods saw improvements in quality, fewer police reports were generated, school attendance rose, and grades improved (American Youth Policy Forum, 2000). According to the Boys and Girls Club research, 90% of their participants graduated from high school and 80% reported the experience positively impacted their life (2014).

The General Strain Theory

According to supporters of the General Strain Theory, strain affects all social classes and the daily rigors of life including stress and strain affect all members of society in different ways (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010). Robert Agnew developed the General Strain Theory in the 1980's, at a time when there was a twenty year increase in crime throughout the nation. Agnew recognized that while crime was impacted by one's internal strain of not fulfilling positive goals that are socially recognizable, negative things in one's life and the loss of positives were equally threatening to one's demeanor and resulting behavior (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010). Agnew

indicated that losing the positive forces in one's life would likely increase their negative behaviors as a result. The resulting stress from the strains and anger would require appropriate coping mechanisms that some could not achieve, therefore leading to negative behaviors and crime (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010).

Agnew emphasized that the most critical component would be the ability to handle the angers and frustrations in a way that they would better themselves. Agnew indicated that in those that could not do this, they would be more likely to turn to violence, defiance, drug and alcohol abuse, and other negative coping measures.

Similar to a domino effect, negative life events including divorce, mental illness, medical concerns, personal injury and loss, job loss or instability, financial burdens, and other straining events lead to anger and frustration. The anger and frustration lead to events identified as criminal including domestic violence, suicide attempts, overdoses, drug addictions, intoxicated driving, alcohol abuse, theft, burglary and other criminal acts.

Agnew looked at the individual's own life situation and their ability to handle the stress these situations cause in their life. Agnew recognized the impact of the mental health of an individual and their own responses to negative stimuli, with consideration for situations that range from minor dilemma to major devastation. Situations considered minor to one person potentially transitioned into major devastation to another. Agnew introduced perception into identifying what causes criminal behavior by leaving room for consideration of each individual's own reactions, instead of only identifying the environment that caused the behavior.

Agnew's theory could not account for what specific types of strain would most likely to lead to crime (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 371). With countless types of strain, it was difficult

to explain which strains could impact criminal behaviors more than others. Agnew suggested that strain found to be “unjust” could invoke a negative response involving criminal actions (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010, p. 371). Overall, Agnew studied the combination of one’s environment and their ability to handle that environment.

Watts and McNulty (2013) reviewed the effects of childhood abuse on criminal behavior as a means of testing the concepts of General Strain Theory (GST) in regards to the direct relationship between the two. Their results found that strain that is very difficult to handle, causing the greatest of strain, leads to the development of anger, depression, fear and anxiety (Watts & McNulty, 2013). Their research confirmed that depression and negative emotions that are a direct result of significant strain lead to diagnosed depression, drug abuse, substance abuse, and likelihood of a criminal record. Yet, they wanted to build upon the prior research and develop separate calculations regarding the GST with consideration for gender differences and the ability to cope, which can be critical to alleviating strain. The researchers wanted to change the research subjects used and build upon a broader group as they felt too often studies only looked at those incarcerated in jails, prisons, or other correctional facilities. Using national data, and considerations for the GST, they concluded that childhood abuse will impact the tendency for crime later in life and the sexual abuse effect for leading to teen deviance was more prevalent in male subjects than female subjects.

Supporters of the General Strain Theory recognize that there is more to increased risks of deviancy than one’s internal strain of not attaining positive, recognized goals, including the impact of negative experiences in one’s life and the loss of positive motivations and driving forces. The impact of these stressors can lead to negative coping mechanisms when achievements are not attainable. Those unable to cope with the stressors of life would be more likely to turn to deviant

behaviors, following feelings of failure, anger, and frustration. The resulting emotions lead to events identified as criminal including domestic violence, suicide attempts, overdoses, drug addictions, intoxicated driving, alcohol abuse, theft, burglary and other criminal acts.

Strains in the current job market, the struggles for healthcare, a lack of mental health services, juvenile crimes, social upbringing, generation differences, and the overall struggles faced due to society, family, self, and peers cause an increase in criminal trends. Several factors increase these strains through the ease of accessibility to negative measures such as drugs and alcohol and a lack of positive corrections including mental health services, government services, and sustainable, livable household incomes for those near the poverty level.

The Differential Association Theory

The Differential Association Theory suggests that criminal behavior is learned through social interactions with others (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010). The theory provides that through interactions with peers in school, families at home, positive and negative relationships, and other individuals, criminal behavior is learned and defiance is developed. Learned behaviors are most commonly explained by criminals because they believe that they had justification in their behaviors or there was a means of coping because of the experiences they had learned from. Juveniles in particular, will model the behaviors of their peers. These peers are sometimes behaving based on what they have learned, while others are reflecting defiance due to their own strains, as identified through the General Strain Theory.

The Deterrence Theory

High Point, North Carolina is a medium sized city with an approximate population of 104,000 residents (Corsaro et. al, 2012). In High Point, officials focused on one neighborhood at

a time and key offenders individually (Corsaro et. al., 2012). Corsaro et al. used data from 1998-2008, focusing on what strategies for reducing crime were previously successful (2012). Pulling levers in policing showed promise and was chosen to approach the crime rates in High Point. The purpose of the research was to determine the evidential success of pulling levers in policing and the effectiveness on lowering crime and drug activity in high crime neighborhoods (Corsaro et. al., 2012).

Drug market pulling levers policing is identified as a policing program where the policing efforts are focused on deterring crime and drug activity by focusing on high crime areas and key offenders (Corsaro et al, 2012). Law enforcement identify the problems and focus their approaches on them, utilizing elements of the deterrence theory to reduce crime and drug activity in an area.

Phase one of the program evaluation was the Identification Phase. The Identification Phase included mapping illegal activity including high drug arrests, calls for assistance and the use of law enforcement resources. The census blocks were chosen based on various considerations, utilizing the crime flow in identified city violence (Corsaro, 2012).

Implementing place-based pulling levers positively decreased criminal and drug activity in High Point and other areas that implemented pulling levers and proactive policing for crime prevention (Corsaro et. al., 2012). The deterrence theory suggests individuals will act rationally, considering the consequences of their actions, taking note of the certainty of punishment, and eventually refrain from criminal activity (Corsaro, 2012). When the criminal justice system reacts to criminal activity with significantly impacting penalties, offenders are more likely to take note and see the risk associated with their behaviors.

Corsaro et al. (2012) used historical research including data regarding the application of the deterrence theory in the prevention of crime. They also reviewed research that examined longitudinal changes in crime directly associated with proactive policing strategies (Corsaro et. al., 2012, p. 170). Other research over the decade supported their hypothesis that pulling levers was an effective strategy in decreasing crime and was found to be the key principle to the success of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a large scale program aimed at reducing violence in the United States (Corsaro et. al., 2012, p. 170).

IV. SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Standardized Risk and Needs Assessment Tools

A risk and needs assessment tool is an evaluation of an adolescent that identifies the risk level for their likelihood to be further involved in crime (Vincent, Terry & Maney, 2009, p. 3). Assessments typically place juveniles in categories of recidivism including high, moderate and low. The end goal of conducting a risk and needs assessment for juveniles is to identify those that need the most intervention and specialized resources to treat adequately and attempt to mitigate further criminal offenses (Vincent, Terry & Maney, 2009, p. 3). While experts believe that most adolescents will cease defiant behaviors with age, the assessment of age plays a critical role in the overall assessment of a juvenile. The younger a juvenile, the more likely they are to get into further trouble if they show early signs of deviance and criminality, including status offenses (Vincent, Terry & Manny, 2009, p. 3).

Dr. Gina M. Vincent and colleagues (2009) conducted reviews on several tools used by the National Youth Screening & Assessment Project (NYSAP), in collaboration with the Models for Change Initiative. They identified the most successful assessment tools as dynamic, flexible,

and evidence-based (2009, p. 3) Dynamic risk factors are not static, therefore the inclusion of dynamic risk factors that were measurable with consideration for change were favorable.

Dr. Gina M. Vincent and colleagues (2009) recommended risk assessment tools allow the ability to match the identified needs with resources and services available in the area.

Assessments were expected to provide for protective measures to ensure a safe environment for the juvenile. The risk assessment tools also required flexibility and discretion for use in special circumstances.

The all-encompassing goal of risk assessments was is to develop tools to best suit the juvenile's needs while reflecting the available programs and services for treatment. They need to be scientific, and provide evidence-based risk factors shown to signify risk of reoffending.

Models for Change Initiative

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Initiative began in 2005 as an effort for national reform to the juvenile justice system, in 16 pre-selected states (Vincent, Guy & Grisso, 2012, p. 5). Louisiana and Pennsylvania implemented two different risk assessment programs under the Models for Change Initiative, adapting their programs to the needs of their states. Louisiana implemented a statewide risk assessment tool where there was a state agency overseeing juvenile probation programs and Pennsylvania implemented a different statewide tool but did not have state oversight of the local county jurisdictions (Vincent, Guy & Grisso, 2012).

Key officials at the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Youth Services, and the Office of Juvenile Justice began discussions about the implementation of a risk assessment tool for probation cases in 2007, in an effort to assist with case planning and improve on an old system that lacked validity, manageability, and credibility (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso,

2012). By 2009, Louisiana selected the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) to conduct risk assessments. SAVRY is a comprehensive risk assessment instrument that assists with determining the risks of violent behaviors, monitoring progress, and identifying the intervention needs of juveniles within the juvenile justice system.

SAVRY was a preferred choice in Louisiana because SAVRY provided the validity, credibility and consistency they were lacking with previous assessment tools. SAVRY was based on empirical evidence of successful assessments of juveniles at risk for violence and criminality and was cost-effective for government budgets. The risk assessment tool required objective evaluations, which was emphasized during the training sessions.

Following the initial implementation, agents reported that the SAVRY assessment tool was helpful for identifying their high risk offenders, weeding them out from the low risk offenders, and recognizing which low risk juveniles were not in need of placement outside of their home (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012). Approximately two years after the initial implementation, SAVRY was accepted statewide utilized as an entry and exit tool for juvenile custody, citing placement rates were dropping and juveniles were receiving proper placement in over 85 percent of the assessments (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012).

SAVRY is a low cost, efficient and effective assessment tool (Vincent, Terry, & Maney, 2009, p. 9). The risk factors identified translate into needs that can be developed into a plan for treatment. Overall, SAVRY is flexible, reliable, and accurate in contrast with other risk assessments. Disadvantages were minimal. The most striking disadvantage was the inability to assess females differently from males, negating risks that are more recognized for female adolescents (Vincent, Terry, & Maney, 2009, p. 10).

Pennsylvania does not have statewide oversight on their 67 counties but the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission (JCJC) serves as an advisory board to juvenile justice in the state. When Pennsylvania was awarded a funding opportunity in 2005 for improvements to the juvenile justice system through the MacArthur Models for Change Initiative, the Executive Director of the JCJC was asked to identify counties that could participate in the pilot implementation of a new risk assessment tool (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 94). The pilot testing served to encourage future statewide implementation of a successful risk assessment tool for juveniles in Pennsylvania.

Similar to Louisiana, Pennsylvania needed a comprehensive risk assessment tool that could assist with case management and identify interventions to reduce recidivism. Pennsylvania recognized that interventions needed to be targeted towards the individual juvenile and reflective of what services were available to provide those interventions, dependent upon location. Following the recommendations of the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project (NYSAP), an Assessment Committee was established and key stakeholders selected the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) as the new risk assessment tool (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012).

The YLS/CMI included 42 assessment items with consideration for several categories, allowing for scores to summarize adolescent risk and needs, then provide for placement consideration (Vincent, Terry, & Maney, 2009, p. 12). Categories of assessment included the juvenile's history of offenses, substance abuse and alcohol use (Vincent, Terry, & Maney, 2009, p. 12). Juveniles were also assessed using their upbringing, choice of friends, educational background and employment history. A juvenile's behaviors, personality and attitudes were also considered.

Like SAVRY, the YLS/CMI was cost effective, credible, reliable and valid. Unlike SAVRY, YLS/CMI can be accessed by the front-line personnel working directly with the juveniles, including their probation officers (Vincent, Terry, & Maney, 2009, p. 12). Following the initial implementation, users reported the program was useful in case management but identified systems in place that needed work to integrate with the YLS/CMI tool effectively. Changes were made to language, policy and their electronic data management system, to allow for tracking juveniles and identifying outcomes and shortfalls requiring further attention by case workers. By 2012, 67 of the 69 counties in Pennsylvania were using the YLS/CMI (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012).

Case Studies: Dual Status Youth Treatment

Washington State uses a risk assessment in their Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA) to determine juvenile placement and a youth's risk of recidivism (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013, p. 457). The assessment is initiated when an adolescent enters the juvenile justice system for a new offense and requires participation from the family or guardians of the juvenile to complete the pre-screening. The welfare history and criminal records are also evaluated to determine an overall score that rates the level of risk for recidivism (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013, p. 457). The pre-screen is only one step in the process, and the entire assessment takes several evaluations to assess the static and dynamic factors affecting the juvenile.

Static factors that impact a juvenile can be assessed but cannot be manipulated. They are experiences, trials and tribulations that the juvenile has faced in the past, which could include abuse or neglect. Dynamic factors, however, can be assessed and manipulated. These factors include family, school, friends, drug and alcohol use, criminal behaviors, mental health, and juvenile attitudes and behaviors (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013, p. 457). The most recorded

dynamic factor impacting dual status youth recidivism was the lack of family support, which would be evident through the screening and assessment process. Research conducted from results found within the WSJCA suggested that dual status youth were at a greater risk of further crime, and they were often dual status youth because of a history of neglect or abuse (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013, p. 460).

V.RECOMMENDATIONS FOR JURISDICTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

The greatest hurdle to jurisdictional implementation is a lack of collaboration between the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system. The systems work with similar objectives, improving the lives of adolescents through the appropriate treatment and protective measures, but they do not work together for the shared end result. Shared programs implemented properly and funded accordingly can improve lives, deter crime, improve society, and offer the opportunity to remove oneself from criminal activities. These programs should be sustainable and supported by funding sources. The cost-benefit analyses should show greater cost effectiveness than the combined costs of crime, victimization, incarceration, treatment, court costs, and additional governmental services.

Evidence-based tools for risk assessment implementation affirm that while they work, they have to be implemented correctly and focus on individualized treatment plans, recognizing that all adolescents have their own individual stories (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p.22). Using the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) for assessment, key decision-makers have the ability to focus on the core principles of risks, needs and responsivity (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 22).

Using the “Risk” assessment of the RNR, decision-makers can prioritize the intensity of resource allocation towards juveniles with the highest risk of recidivism, requiring extra attention.

The “Need” assessment of the RNR focuses on targeted interventions, particular to the individual, identifying components of the juvenile’s life that need intervention. This could include their involvement in gang activity or residing in an unsafe, high-risk home (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 23). The “Responsivity” assessment of the RNR allows for an individualized approach that is specific to the juvenile’s knowledge, skills, and abilities (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 23).

Special consideration is necessary for an appropriate risk assessment. The RNR finalizes the assessment approach with a “professional discretion” (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 23). This requires decision-makers to look beyond the scores and the individualized assessment. Experts must evaluate the costs and benefits, resource and service availability, legal basis, and ethical appropriateness (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012, p. 23). Research following 300 studies of human services professionals showed an effective implementation of an RNR led to an average reduction in recidivism of 50% (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012).

In an attempt to develop strategies to reduce crime with consideration for the sustainability of appropriate social programs to satisfy the needs of the results within an RNR, one must consider the preventative measures and formal controls available. Utilizing social programs for reducing crime without first identifying what needs must be filled produces continued gaps in service. Determining the needs being provided within the selected programs will aid in developing an effective program where achievements can be bench marked.

Integrating the child welfare and juvenile system systems in the process of conducting risk assessments, resources can be utilized more efficiently and more expediently. The investment into systems that secure guidance, services, and resources for dual status youth as they become

adults can reduce rates of unemployment, government welfare, homelessness, child abuse, crime and victimization (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 10). This can lead to higher graduation rates and more successful transitions, ending a continuing cycle of family involvement in the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system.

By utilizing risk and needs assessment tools that provide suggestive crime indicators, early intervention programs are customized for the juvenile and highlight key areas to work with the child in order to prevent criminality later in life. The intervention must be prompt to break the cycle and to see the most benefit within these social programs. Research indicates a greater return on providing more resources to support dual status youth, particularly as they transition into adulthood, with a proposed cost-savings of more than \$5 billion annually (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 10).

Preventative interventions early in life targeting the most vulnerable have demonstrated positive returns across the life course (Manning, Smith & Homel, 2013). Well-delivered early prevention programs that are targeted to at-risk groups including dual status youth, can produce significantly higher positive returns over intervention programs focused on problem behaviors and learning deficiencies (Manning et. al., 2013). Acknowledging behaviors that can predict the risk of a child transitioning into an adult offender is critical.

Early disruptiveness is a predictor of antisocial behavior and is an important predictor of adult criminal behavior (Manning et. al., 2013). Lack of parental supervision can be linked to adolescent antisocial behaviors and can be used to predict later criminal behavior (Manning et. al., 2013). Also association with deviant peers can strengthen antisocial behaviors which can lead to criminality (Manning et. al., 2013). Finally, school involvement is correlated with adjustment and

can be another indicator of antisocial behaviors (Manning et. al., 2013). The more a student prepares and is successful in school the less likely they will be antisocial in adolescence and adulthood.

VI.CONCLUSION

As state and local agencies attempt to develop shared programs between child welfare and juvenile justice, agencies should recognize the gap in the knowledge base limits the ability to target interventions (Ryan, Williams & Courtney, 2013, p. 455). This gap in knowledge impacts intervention practices particularly where a lack of support exists in addressing the physical and emotional needs of dual status youth following experiences of maltreatment, abuse and neglect. Research suggests that one-third of juveniles entering the juvenile justice system have an active child welfare case ongoing at the time of their arrest, including cases of abuse and neglect (Ryan, Williams, & Courtney, 2013). Dual status youth were shown to be at a much greater risk of further criminal activity, even while being involved in both systems already. The correlations between these systems and the youth involved indicate that targeted interventions should include risk assessments and support models that focus on the individual's risk of offending and their ability to maintain resiliency (Ryan, Williams, & Courtney, 2013, p. 460).

Dual status youth require extra attention in areas including mentorships, educational guidance, and developmental advocates willing to assist them face the challenges they face, whether they are crossover youth or dual jurisdiction youth (Altschuler et al., 2009, p. 9). They require greater treatment needs, addressing a host of disparities they face, including mental health issues, family struggles, and economical challenges. Dual status youth transition into adulthood and immediately struggle to gain employment, maintain health care, or find a place to live.

Risk assessments that address these challenges facing dual status youth and provide for a customized treatment plan need to integrate the joint knowledge and resources within the child welfare system and the juvenile justice systems reduce the risks of recidivism (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012). Risk assessments should address the needs of dual status youth, utilizing the RNR approach because the tools provide an evidence-based, individualized approach at treatment for each adolescent. The return investment on system collaboration and the individualized assessments that take these systems into account will provide a greater opportunity for dual status youth to reduce their chances of ongoing delinquency and crime.

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