The Juvenile Delinquent

18

18.1 Introduction

Those who aspire to work in juvenile probation services must become familiar with the differences between the adult and juvenile systems. In the juvenile system, juveniles are never called "criminals," even when they commit acts defined as criminal. "Delinquent" acts are juvenile acts forbidden by law. The term *delinquent* comes from a Latin term meaning to "leave undone." The connotation is that the juvenile delinquent has not done something that he or she was supposed to (behave lawfully) rather than done something he or she was not supposed to do. The difference is subtle but reflects the rehabilitative rather than punitive thrust of American juvenile justice. In fact, in some states, juveniles are not put on probation but enrolled in aftercare, and their probation officer becomes their aftercare worker or counselor.

All actions of juvenile courts and their officers, at least in theory, are supposed to be "in the best interests of the child." Juvenile courts do not have trials; they have "adjudication hearings." The child does not plead guilty or not guilty; he or she "admits" or "denies" the charge. The court never finds the child "guilty" but rather makes "a finding of fact." The "finding of fact" can be that the child either is delinquent (i.e., in a condition requiring the intervention and care of the state) or is not delinquent. A presentence investigation report is not written, a "predisposition" or "social inquiry" report is. The courts never sentence the child; rather they "dispose" of the matter, and they seek rehabilitation rather than punishment. Despite all these euphemisms, however, you should still hold juveniles responsible for their conduct.

Juveniles enjoy—or, depending on your perspective, suffer—a special status in society and in its justice system. They cannot legally do a number of things adults have a right to do, such as smoke, drink, drive automobiles, leave home, and ignore

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the wishes of their parents. They also are expected to do a number of things that adults may ignore, such as attend school, obey curfews, and obey their parents. If juveniles violate any of these rules, they can be charged with a *status offense*—an act of commission or omission that is illegal only for juveniles (Whitehead & Lab, 2015). In 2016, juvenile courts in the United States handled almost 100,000 status offense cases (Hockenberry & Puzzanchera, 2018). Like crime in general, however, the number of status offenses has declined recently; juvenile courts disposed of an estimated 167,000 status offenses in 2005, a decrease of 43%.

The special status of juveniles in the juvenile justice system rests on a social welfare model and the concept of *parens patriae* (Gann, 2019). This term literally means "father of his country" and practically means that the state may take over the supervision of a child under legal disability and act as a substitute for his or her parents. Underlying this concept is the philosophy that if the child misbehaves, his or her parents are to blame. In such an event, the state may assume parental responsibility for the child, diagnose the problem, and take appropriate remedial action. This responsibility can be in the form of juvenile probation services, with the child remaining in the parental home, or a court order may be issued removing the child from the parental home and placing him or her in a state facility (training school, detention center, or group home).

Figure 18.1 shows the juvenile proportion of all arrests reported to the FBI in 2018. Juveniles accounted for 10% of all violent crime arrests and 11% of all property crime arrests. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), the percentage of the population between 10 and 17 years of age, inclusive, was about 10% in 2018. Juveniles are thus overrepresented in over half of the crime categories shown in Fig. 18.1 (note that juveniles have a particular propensity to engage in maliciously destructive behaviors such as arson and vandalism). Statistics such as these are troubling, but we should realize that while not welcome or excusable, antisocial behavior is normative for juveniles; juveniles who do *not* engage in it are statistically abnormal (Moffitt & Walsh, 2003). Adolescence is when youths are testing their limits and temporarily stressing parental bonds in their own personal declaration of independence.

18.1.1 Why Delinquency?

Though school shootings are relatively rare events in the United States, they garner a significant amount of media attention (Schildkraut, Elsass, & Stafford, 2015). Unusual incidents such as these tend to fuel our perceptions of juvenile offending and offenders. Due in part to incidents like these and the media coverage they accumulate, John DiIulio (1995) predicted that there would be thousands of juvenile "super-predators"—juveniles who commit heinous acts of violence for trivial reasons—roaming the streets at the start of the twenty-first century (Scott & Steinberg, 2008). Krisberg (2005) decried the media-induced notion of juvenile "super-predators," however, and argued that we have actually witnessed a steady decline in juvenile offending since 1994. Nevertheless, as made plain in Fig. 18.1, juveniles

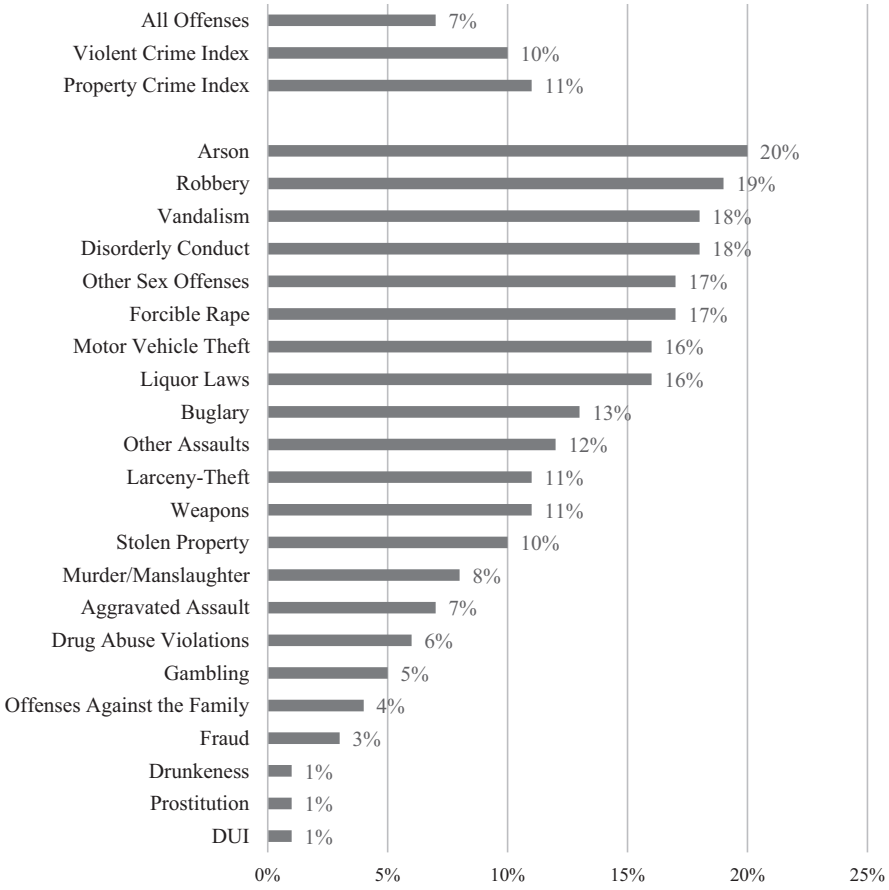

Fig. 18.1 Proportion of Juvenile Arrests by Offense Type, 2018. (Source: *Crime in the United States, 2018*. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice)

are still greatly overrepresented among those arrested for certain property and violent offenses.

A large surge in antisocial behavior of all sorts begins around puberty. This situation is not unique to the contemporary United States; juvenile misbehavior occurs everywhere, and everyone bemoans it. In *The Republic*, Plato soundly condemned the behavior of the youth of his time, and William Shakespeare puts the following words into the mouth of a shepherd in *The Winter's Tale*:

> I would there be no age between ten and three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest; for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting (Act III, Scene III).

However, these observations do not diminish the urgency of the problem in the contemporary United States. Whatever else they may have done, those ancient

Greek or Elizabethan English youngsters never ran around drugged to their eyeballs, wielding automatic weapons, and killing, raping, and robbing for fun.

Antisocial behavior is generated by the various factors discussed in previous chapters, so we will not be fishing in that pond again. Rather, in this chapter, we will explore certain factors unique to juvenile delinquency. A look at graphs depicting age-related crime rates from around the world, and as far back as such graphs have been drawn, show a dramatic surge in offending shortly after the average age of male puberty, a peak in late adolescence, and a slow, steady decline thereafter (Farrington, Loeber, & Howell, 2012). Fortunately, most juveniles involved in delinquency (about 85% of them) do not become adult criminals (Moffitt & Walsh, 2003), so there must be something special requiring its own explanations that is going on during the youthful period of life that dramatically, albeit temporarily, increases the probability of antisocial behavior.

18.2 Delinquency Risk Factors

Table 18.1 presents a number of risk and protective factors for delinquency compiled by researchers at the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States (2001). A risk factor is something in a person's individual traits or in his or her environment that increases the probability of offending. Protective factors are the complete opposite of risk factors; they are those traits or environmental elements that insulate people from criminal or delinquent behavior. Both risk and protective factors are dynamic in that their predictive value changes according to what stage of a person's development they occur in, the presence of other risk and protective factors, and the immediate social circumstances.

For instance, low socioeconomic status (SES) is a family risk factor, but a juvenile with a high IQ who enjoys a warm relationship with parents is "inoculated" against the risks low SES poses and will more than likely attain a higher SES position in adulthood. Similarly, low SES often exposes children to medical problems such as low birth weight and birth complications due to poor maternal health, maternal smoking, drinking, drug use, and so on. These problems can lead to low IQ, which leads to poor school performance, which can lead to offending. The Surgeon General's report (2001) indicates that a 10-year-old child with six or more risk factors is approximately ten times more likely than a 10-year-old child with only one risk factor to be violent by the age of 18. In the following sections, we examine those individual-level factors that have their onset early in life and become more salient in adolescence.

18.3 Causality: Biological Factors

It is impossible to begin to understand juvenile delinquency unless we understand what is going on biologically during the teenage years. Aaron White (2004, p. 4) sums up four key messages from the 2003 conference of the New York Academy of Sciences, which focused of the maturation of the adolescent brain:

Table 18.1 Delinquency risk factors by domain

Domain	Early onset (ages 6–11)	Late onset (ages 12–14)	Protective factors
Individual	Being male ADHD/impulsivity Medical, physical problems Aggression Low IQ General offenses Problem (antisocial) behavior Substance abuse Exposure to TV violence Antisocial attitudes, beliefs Dishonesty	Restlessness Difficulty concentrating[a] General offenses Risk taking Aggression[a] Being male Physical violence Antisocial attitudes, beliefs Crimes against persons Low IQ Substance abuse	Intolerant attitude toward deviance High IQ Being female Positive social orientation Perceived sanction for transgressions
Family	Low socioeconomic status Antisocial parents Poor parent/child relationship Harsh, lax, or inconsistent parenting Broken home Separation from parents Abusive parents Neglect	Poor parent/child relationship Low socioeconomic status Harsh, lax, or inconsistent parenting Poor monitoring, supervision Antisocial parents Broken home Abusive parents Family conflict[a]	Warm, supportive relationship with parents and other adults Parent's positive evaluation of child's peers Parental monitoring
School	Poor attitude and performance	Poor attitude and performance Academic failure	Commitment to school Recognition for involvement in conventional activities
Peer Group	Weak social ties Antisocial peers	Weak social ties Antisocial, delinquent peers Gang membership	Friends who engage in conventional behavior
Community		Neighborhood crime, drugs Neighborhood disorganization	Stable, organized neighborhood

Adapted from Office of the Surgeon General. (2001). *Youth violence: A report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
[a]Males only

1. Much of the behavior characterizing adolescence is rooted in biology intermingling with environmental influences to cause teens to have conflicts with their parents, take more risks, and experience wide swings in emotion.
2. The lack of synchrony between a physically mature body and a still maturing nervous system may explain these behaviors.

3. Adolescents' sensitivities to rewards appear to be different than that in adults, prompting them to seek higher levels of novelty and stimulation to achieve the same feeling of pleasure.
4. With the right dose of guidance and understanding, adolescence can be a relatively smooth transition.

The most obvious and dramatic event affecting behavior at this point in life is puberty, an event that marks the beginning of the rocky road from childhood to adulthood. Puberty does not just signal outward physical changes but also changes in the endocrine (hormonal) system and in the brain. There is a large increase of testosterone at puberty, particularly in males, who have about 20 times the female level of "free" testosterone. Scientists link testosterone to a variety of behaviors (sexual, aggressive, and competitive) that emerge most strongly in adolescence and which are related to offending (Ellis, 2003).

Testosterone, by itself, cannot explain adolescent offending since offending behavior declines rapidly in early adulthood without an accompanying decline in testosterone. There is another half of the biological equation, and that is the physical immaturity of the adolescent brain.

The pubertal hormonal surges prompt the increase of gene expression in the brain. This then plays its part in slowly refining the neural circuitry to its adult form (Walker, 2002). As Steinberg (2005, p. 70) explains: "Significant changes in multiple regions of the prefrontal cortex [occur] throughout the course of adolescence, especially with respect to the processes of myelination and synaptic pruning." Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies reveal that the prefrontal cortex undergoes a wave of synaptic overproduction just prior to puberty, which is followed by a period of pruning during adolescence and early adulthood (Giedd, 2004; Sowell, Thompson, & Toga, 2004). Thus, fMRI studies confirm what "nagging" parents have always known—adolescents are a couple of doughnuts shy of a dozen in the cognitive area. These studies show that the prefrontal cortex is the most immature area of a teen's brain.

The prefrontal cortex functions include such things as making reasoned judgments and modulating emotions arising from the limbic system. FMRI data show that this link between the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex is often tenuous among adolescents (Walker, 2002), which is probably why they rely more on raw emotions to evaluate situations than adults do. Perhaps it is no wonder that teens so often misinterpret the intentions of others and often seem to be moody. The adolescent brain is simply physically immature relative to the adult brain. This may facilitate a tendency to assign faulty attributions to situations superimposed on an unfamiliar and diffuse state of physiological arousal induced by the hormonal surges of puberty. A brain on "go slow" combined with physiology on "fast forward" may explain why many young persons find it difficult to accurately gauge the meanings and intentions of others and experience more stimuli as aversive during adolescence than they did as children or will do so again when they are adults.

Richard Restak (2001, p. 76) explains the relationship between brain and behavior: "The immaturity of the adolescent's behavior is perfectly mirrored by the immaturity of the adolescent's brain." It has long been known that early maturing

boys confronting their "raging hormones" with a less mature brain than their age mates do engage in more antisocial behavior than late maturing boys (Buchanan, Eccles, & Becker, 1993), and the same finding has also been reported for girls (Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, & Silva, 1993). Studies such as these suggest that the age effect on offending is a function of two biosocial processes on opposite trajectories, one of which (pubescent hormonal surges) holds temporary sway over the other (neurological maturity). Consistent with this suggestion, scientists found that testosterone levels at puberty do affect future problem behavior but only for boys entering puberty significantly earlier than is the norm (Drigotas & Udry, 1993).

Adolescence is a particularly stressful time because of the brain "resculpting" (the adding and eliminating of various neuronal pathways) that occurs during this period (Spear, 2000a). As noted in Chap. 16, these neurological changes may be what trigger "vulnerability genes" for a number of mental disorders that are first evidenced during adolescence such as schizophrenia and depression (Spear, 2000b). A generalized decrease in behavior-inhibiting serotonin and an increase in behavior-activating dopamine also occur during this period (Walker, 2002). We agree with Martin Daly (1996, p. 193) when he writes: "There are many reasons to think that we've been designed [by natural selection] to be maximally competitive and conflictual in young adulthood."

18.3.1 Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Among the many factors associated with delinquency discussed in this section and those that follow is attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Despite the tendency of some to dismiss ADHD as the medicalization of childish "high spirits," it is clearly identifiable as much more than that. In fact, brain-imaging studies find differences in brain anatomy and physiology between ADHD and non-ADHD children (Raz, 2004). Ellis and Walsh (2000) found 99 studies in which ADHD was positively related to delinquent and criminal behavior, and only one (for drug offenses) in which no significant relationship was reported.

Children affected by ADHD have extremely short attention spans and are prone to extreme boredom, are restless, have low levels of inhibitory control and great impulsiveness, have difficulties with peers, frequently exhibit disruptive behavior, and are academic underachievers. Although it is true that most children manifest some of these symptoms at one time or another, and it is probably true that ADHD is over diagnosed, the symptoms of children affected by ADHD amass to form a syndrome. Eight out of 14 symptoms are required for diagnosis, and their symptoms are chronic and more severe than are those of children who are simply high spirited (Restak, 2001).

ADHD affects somewhere between 2% and 6% of the childhood population and is four or five times more prevalent in males than in females (Raz, 2004). Although the precise cause of attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder is not known, 15 twin studies and 2 adoption studies show that genetics is a factor (Ellis & Walsh, 2000). The heritability estimate of ADHD is exceptionally high compared to other

behavioral disorders. It is reported to range between 0.75 and 0.91, and the findings are robust regardless of whether the disorder is considered to be a categorical (a discrete, either/or disorder) or continuous (a matter of degree) trait and regardless of the cutoff criteria applied (Levy, Hay, McStephen, Wood, & Waldman, 1997).

Some children diagnosed with ADHD show EEG patterns of underarousal (slow brain waves) similar to adult psychopaths (Lynam, 1996). Youth experience such a brain wave pattern subjectively as boredom, which motivates them to seek or create environments containing more excitement. ADHD symptoms can be normalized temporarily by methylphenidate (Ritalin), which is a mild stimulant drug, and non-stimulant drugs such as atomoxetine. Although stimulants have the effect of increasing activity for non-ADHD individuals, they have a calming or normalizing effect on suboptimally aroused individuals by raising the activity of the brain's sensory mechanisms to normal levels. This relieves boredom because the brain becomes more attentive to features of the child's environment previously ignored, and the child becomes less disruptive, less obnoxious to peers, and can focus more on schoolwork. Child delinquents affected by ADHD are more likely than delinquents not affected by it to persist in their antisocial ways as adults, but this probability rises dramatically for affected children also diagnosed with conduct disorder (CD). Conduct disorder is defined as "the persistent display of serious antisocial actions [assaulting, stealing, setting fires, behaving with cruelty toward animals] that are extreme given the child's developmental level and have a significant impact on the rights of others" (Lynam, 1996, p. 211). ADHD and CD occur together in 30–50% of cases. Lynam (1996) describes the trajectory from ADHD/CD to criminality, stating that the co-occurrence of ADHD and CD:

> May tax the skills of parents and lead to the adoption of coercive child rearing techniques, which in turn may enhance the risk of antisocial behavior. Entry into school may bring academic failure and increase the child's frustration, which may increase his or her level of aggressive behavior. Finally, the peer rejection associated with hyperactivity may lead to increased social isolation and conflict with peers. (p. 22)

ADHD does not represent some form of hopeless pathology that leads those with it down the road to inevitable criminality. Many ADHD individuals have very high IQs and are loving and creative. Perhaps, the symptoms of ADHD are only problematic in the modern context in which we expect children to sit still for long periods striving to learn subjects that they do not find interesting. ADHD-like symptoms may have even been adaptive in our evolutionary history when restless boldness and curiosity meant exploring beyond the boundaries of the taken for granted (Lakoff, 2000). Nevertheless, the symptoms of ADHD often do have negative consequences in the modern world, and thus the juvenile caseworker must be cognizant of the syndrome.

18.4 Causality: Psychological Factors

As we have seen, neurological and hormonal changes during adolescence often make the period between childhood and adulthood stressful and confusing for many teens. In the United States, where we keep individuals in the dependent role of childhood longer than any other nation, it is a particularly trying period. This strange and sometimes frightening stage of life we call "adolescence" has been considered everything from a normal developmental period accompanied by a few mild disturbances experienced by about half of all teenagers to a stage of life that is emotionally disturbing for just about all teenagers (Scott & Steinberg, 2008). From a review of the literature, Udry (1990) lists the following changes that typically occur among high school age adolescents:

> They complete puberty, [have] lower academic achievement values, increase values of independence, increase tolerance for violation of adult standards, decrease religiosity, decline in church attendance, increase reported alcohol and drug use, and increase sexual activity. (p. 2)

Except for the completion of puberty, parents and other authority figures are not likely to welcome these changes, and they certainly represent a gap between biological and social maturity that must be bridged.

In psychologist Erik Erickson's (1963) *Childhood and Society* model of human psychosocial development, he identifies eight stages in the human life cycle in which individuals are confronted with new challenges and interactions with themselves and with their environment. Each stage involves crises that can lead to opposite (positive or negative) personality outcomes depending on how we confront and resolve the crises. He identifies adolescence as the transition from childhood to adulthood (no longer a child, but not yet a man or woman) and a stage in which the two polar outcomes are identity versus role confusion. In reality, these outcomes are never either/or dichotomies. Most teenagers emerge from this stage situated somewhere on a shifting continuum.

During adolescence, young people start asking—consciously or subconsciously—philosophical questions about themselves: "Who am I?" "What is my place, and where am I going?" These questions concern identity development and role confusion issues that need resolution for healthy development (Hall & Brassard, 2008; Scott & Steinberg, 2008). Teenagers also start to form opinions and theories and ask questions about many aspects of their environment that they formerly took for granted. Their surging hormones, abundant energies, and new questioning orientation make them impatient, action orientated, and imbued with an aura of omnipotence. If, thanks to loving parents, they were successful in navigating previous developmental states (trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus doubt, initiative versus guilt, and industry versus inferiority), they will emerge with a positive identity ("I'm OK, you're OK") and very little role confusion. If mistrust, doubt, guilt, and inferiority were previous outcomes, role confusion is the likely outcome of this stage.

In their book *Rethinking Juvenile Justice*, Scott and Steinberg (2008, pp. 56–57) argue that there are three conditions crucial to the development of psychosocial maturity in adolescence:

1. The presence of at least one adult—typically, but not necessarily, a parent—who is involved in the adolescent's life.
2. Membership in a peer group that models and values prosocial behavior and academic success.
3. Participation in activities that permit the adolescent to develop and practice autonomous decision-making and critical thinking, [such as] school, extracurricular activities, and work.

Although adolescents naturally turn more toward peer influences than parental influences, secure attachment to parents is vital to healthy identity formation (Hall & Brassard, 2008; Scott & Steinberg, 2008). Teens lacking such attachment will turn away from parents and toward others in the same sorry boat as themselves to sort out their identity. The old adage "Birds of a feather flock together" impeccably describes this situation (Sullivan, Childs, & Gann, 2018). Such a strategy is not a good one, however, because these groups come with negative identities such as "delinquent," "doper," and "punk." The trick is to find the right set of peers. Well-loved youths generally will be prosocial and will seek the company of others like themselves, but children who do not find love, support, and supervision at home may resort to groups outside the family, and these groups are often deviant (Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2000).

Freed from the apron strings of childhood but not yet bound to the necessities of adult commitments, adolescence is a wonderful time to experiment with all sorts of roles, fads, tastes, and attitudes. Unfortunately, some of these experiments include drugs, alcohol, gangs, unprotected and irresponsible sex, and delinquent behavior (Berzonsky, 2008). Even well-adjusted youths from well-adjusted homes often conform more to their peers' expectations than to their parents' during adolescence. This is a normal part of growing up and a vital aspect of identity formation (Scott & Steinberg, 2008).

We emphasize that the great majority of delinquents (adolescence limited) are "normal" youths whose offending reflects adaptive responses to conditions that have temporarily diverted them from their prosocial life trajectories (Matza, 1964). Unlike life-course-persistent offenders, they have built up enough "social capital" that they can cash in when they mature. It would seem that youths (particularly males) who abstain from delinquency altogether are less psychologically "healthy" than their more behaviorally obnoxious peers are. They tend to be extremely self-controlled, timid, fearful, socially inept, and latecomers to sexual experiences. However, they all tend to lead successful and satisfactory adult lives, are typically well educated, and tend to hold high-status jobs (reviewed in Moffitt & Walsh, 2003). We mention delinquency abstainers only to reinforce the point that the great majority of delinquents are healthy and normal individuals who will mature out of their youthful hijinks.

18.5 Causality: Environmental Factors

The list of environmental risk factors that influence juvenile delinquency is exceedingly long; too long to discuss all of them here. Instead, this section focuses on a few of the environmental risk factors that research shows have strong effects on juvenile delinquency: socioeconomic status, antisocial peers, and school performance. Though the parent-child relationship is arguably the most significant environmental risk factor, it has been discussed previously and thus will not be included here.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is an umbrella term that includes family income, parental education, and occupational prestige. Low SES has been associated with many negative outcomes such as limited opportunities for high-paying employment, poor mental health, chronic stress, residential mobility, and crime and delinquency (Bjerk, 2007; Santiago, Wadsworth, & Stump, 2011). According to Rekker and his colleagues (2015), low SES is one of the strongest and most well-documented risk factors for juvenile delinquency. For example, Piotrowska, Stride, Croft, and Rowe (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of 133 studies on the association between family SES and juvenile antisocial behavior and concluded that there was a significant negative relationship between the two. Juveniles from low SES families were considerably more likely to participate in antisocial behavior—including delinquency—compared to youths from higher SES families.

In some ways, the demands of the economy itself can have a direct effect on the probability of youthful offending. As Terrie Moffitt said: "adolescence-limited offending is a product of an interaction between age and historical period" (1993, p. 692). Moffitt means that there are two trajectories—one biological and one social-economic—operating in opposite directions. The first is the increasingly lower age at which youths enter puberty, which is largely a function of better health care and nutrition. The other is the increasingly complex nature of today's economy, which necessities longer periods of educational preparation to engage in it. Compulsory education and child labor laws kept our grandparents and great grandparents out of the labor market for a while, but because they entered puberty later and required less education to enter the job market, the gap between puberty and the acquisition of a socially responsible role was perhaps no more than 2 years. Today, this gap is upward of 10 years, and it is within this gap that so much adolescence-limited offending grows.

Thus, just when we need to exercise more control over our young, we seem to have delegated much of the responsibility for socializing them to peer groups, which often represent immature and antisocial visions of reality. Groups have a morality and direction of their own that is often radically different from the sum of their individual parts. Already unsure of identity and direction, being juiced up on hormones and having a brain undergoing a major overhaul, juveniles in peer groups defer to the collective judgment (Sullivan et al., 2018). With internalized standards submerged in groups, and with responsibility diffused among them, sometimes we see horrible manifestations of antisocial "group think" such as "gang banging" and "wilding."

Socializing with antisocial peers is one of the strongest predictors of juvenile delinquency, though there is still debate as to which "causes" the other (Sullivan et al., 2018; Warr, 2002). Do antisocial children seek out and associate with other antisocial children (peer selection), or does hanging out with antisocial peers cause children to become antisocial themselves (peer socialization)? No matter which side "wins" this debate, the irrefutable fact remains that associating with delinquent peers significantly increases the probability of juvenile delinquency.

Finally, researchers have long known that school performance and commitment are strongly associated with delinquency (Hirschi, 1969). In his book *Causes of Delinquency*, Travis Hirschi (1969) outlined his social control theory. Among the four "bonds" included in the theory is *commitment* to conventional behaviors. When a person invests time, energy, and resources in a certain activity—like getting an education—they are less likely to engage in criminal or delinquent activity due to the risk of squandering their investment if caught. Thus, youths who are committed to their education are less inclined to commit delinquent acts. Similarly, a large body of research has shown that juveniles who perform well in school (good grades and test scores) are less likely to engage in delinquency (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; Maguin & Loeber, 1996). As such, a primary goal of juvenile probation officers should be to demonstrate to their charges the negative consequences of associating with antisocial peers and the positive long-term effects of commitment to education.

18.6 Effective Supervision of the Juvenile Delinquent

A child's psychosocial development must involve at least the nine requirements outlined below. Love is essential, of course, but it is not enough. Although the primary responsibility for meeting these requirements rests with the parents, when a child is placed in the care of the state, responsibility partly rests on the juvenile probation officer and sometimes the detention officer, group home counselor, or care worker. The requirements presented below should serve juvenile correctional workers as a minimal working model for understanding their juvenile offenders and for meeting their needs. "Child" is the usual term in juvenile probation for an offender of any age who has not reached the age of majority.

18.6.1 Children Need Discipline

The cornerstone of raising children to healthy and responsible adulthood is discipline. An undisciplined child is either (1) smothered with unconditional love, making the child a spoiled brat who makes excuses for everything or (2) is an unloved child, an unruly child who probably will grow up to be an unconscionable adult. The authors consider discipline to be *applied* love (or "tough love," if you prefer).

Although there are components of punishment in discipline, the two terms are not synonymous. Juvenile delinquents have suffered far more than their share of

punishment but have received little discipline. Forcing children to follow rules by inflicting pain, hitting, punching, yelling, screaming, and other forms of humiliation is punishment. Looking into the family histories of delinquents, you will find many arbitrary rules have been applied inconsistently. If mom or dad feels good on Friday (payday), the violation of rule X perhaps is overlooked. If they feel bad on "blue" Monday, the same violation is severely punished. In this situation, it is no surprise that the child is confused and comes to view punishment more as a function of parental mood than of rule violation. Children soon learn that being caught rather than breaking rules is the thing to be avoided.

On the other hand, discipline "always starts with trying to teach children to follow reasonable rules through negotiation… Discipline involves the sanctions of the loss of either freedom or privileges until the child is willing to negotiate" (Glasser, 1984, p. 197). Children must know the rules, what is expected of them, and the guidelines they must follow.

This does not imply that the household should be democratic in that the child's wishes are given equal status to those of the parents. Children lack the maturity to receive such privileges. Rather, it should be a benevolent dictatorship in which the best interests of the child are given every consideration. Few children would not benefit from increased expectations such as doing chores around the house, having more common courtesy, and participating in family functions. Living up to reasonable expectations gives children a sense of participation in common goals, a sense of accomplishment, a sense of being needed, and the beginnings of a success identity.

If children violate any of these expectations, they must be allowed to suffer the natural consequences. Although these sanctions should not be severe or designed to humiliate, they should be applied swiftly and with absolute certainty. Of course, the imposed sanctions are punitive in the sense that children do not welcome them. However, since both the rules and the consequences of violating them are agreed to before the violation occurs, children retain feelings of control over their life that are absent in households that alternate arbitrarily between permissiveness and punishment. If delinquents lack this sense of control, Glasser (1984, p. 198) asserts that they should be "treated with strict but creative probation where they would learn to regain control of their lives."

18.6.2 Children Must Learn To Understand and Accept Themselves

The development of a realistic and positive self-concept (identity) is necessary for all of us and is the goal of all counseling. It is the juvenile probation officer's role, in corroboration with children's families, teachers, and other interested parties, to help them accomplish this. These efforts should be coordinated by the juvenile probation officer, with special attention to assure that individual efforts are not working at cross-purposes. Consistent discipline related to reasonable rules gives children structure, predictability, and the ability to think about an outcome in the abstract and

then to select a behavior that will achieve it. This is self-discipline. The sooner this structure and predictability is in place, the sooner the children can build their self-concept around it.

18.6.3 Children Must Become Aware of and Understand Their Emotions and Feelings

The ability to select the appropriate response to a feeling from a number of possibilities is part of the process of acquiring a realistic sense of the self. When children are aware of their feelings and understand them for what they are, they can respond to them more appropriately. For instance, a frustrated adolescent may respond with terms such as "I hate you" or "I could kill you." They pluck these immature labels from their immature brain and place them on feelings they do not understand well. We hope what they mean is that "I don't like what you've done," rather than "I hate you," and "I would very much like you to stop," rather than "I could kill you." Whenever children inappropriately label their emotions and feelings, you should help them explore these feelings in a patient, caring, and nonauthoritarian fashion. Even more than an adult offender, juveniles will "shut down" if they perceive an attitude of "I know best." In reality, you do "know best," but children must come to this conclusion themselves. The better children relate to you, the sooner this will happen.

18.6.4 Children Must Understand the Feelings and Emotions of Others

This involves the ability to empathize with the feelings and concerns of others. Several studies have shown that the lack of empathy is strongly related to criminal and delinquent behavior (Jolliffe & Murray, 2012; Posick, Rocque, & Rafter, 2014). As Granello and Hanna (2003, p. 14) put it: "Empathy is the intrinsic enemy of the criminal. If one were to feel a victim's pain, it would surely hinder the performance of criminal acts."

Inappropriately socialized children live only in their own emotionally egocentric worlds, and they blame other people or circumstances for their antisocial behavior. If such children constantly feel angry, hostile, mean, and uncaring, they will assume that it is natural to feel that way and thus will think everyone else feels that way, too. With the realization that this is not so, the children perceive alternatives and pay attention to positive role models who can exchange their caring, compassion, and understanding for the children's anger and hostility.

All children know when they have been hurt, and they all know that they do not like it. They must learn that other people have feelings too, and that these feeling must be respected. Sometimes their lack of maturity does not allow them to realize that they may deeply hurt their parents by their troublesome behavior. This is more often the ignorance of immaturity than the "I don't care" of malice. Empathy

training in group sessions may lead them to this realization. Getting a child enrolled in team sports or an organization such as scouts or Big Brother/Big Sister goes a long way to show them that many people do care (Sullivan et al., 2018).

All communities contain their share of physically and mentally disadvantaged youths. Something that would be advantageous to both these youths and to delinquents is a program, supervised by a probation officer, in which delinquents are assigned to help handicapped youths. This could involve everything from wheeling chair-bound youths around the local shopping mall to teaching them to read. Handicapped youths obviously would benefit and so would their delinquent helpers. They would gain a measure of empathy with the truly disadvantaged, a feeling of accomplishment, community involvement, and enhanced self-esteem. As a lot of us know, it is often much more rewarding to give than to receive, and research supports the notion that empathy training is useful in reducing aggressive behavior (Sahin, 2012; Spinrad & Eisenberg, 2009).

18.6.5 Children Must Learn to Establish Positive Interpersonal Relationships

Parents often blame "bad companions" for their children's problematic behavior (of course, to other parents their children are the bad companions). The obvious answer to this is to forbid juvenile delinquents from associating with other juvenile delinquents. However, like so many other things, this is much easier said than done. As with adolescent romantic relationships, to forbid is to drive the parties further into each other's arms (the "Romeo and Juliet" effect). Birds of a feather flock together, and if we want to stop the flocking, we have to clip some feathers. We have to teach children and provide them with positive prosocial alternatives to the birds with whom they are currently flying. We have to discover their prosocial interests and make them as exciting as antisocial behavior. They have to learn to relate to more mature peers, to cooperate through teamwork, and learn how to settle conflicts peacefully.

Organized sports, such as those offered at Police Athletic Leagues and at various probation departments, are an excellent vehicle for teaching children teamwork, competence, and self-esteem through positive and constructive endeavors. Bill Wakefield (1991) discussed a low-cost athletic program for delinquents that significantly increased these positive attributes among participants. He organized a running program staffed by volunteer coaches and with running gear donated by local athletic stores (you will be surprised how generous businesses can be when asked for a good cause). He reports increased pride in the youths, both in terms of achievement and body image, as they covered increasing distances, a greater sense of group cohesion, and less "acting out." Successfully completing a run of some distance garners the all-important approval of their peers for socially acceptable behavior, and, at the same time, the approval of authority figures. Wakefield's study shows that "treating" troubled children means more than just sitting in an office trying to reason with them.

18.6.6 Children Must Understand the Processes Involved in Making Choices and Decisions and in Solving Problems

We are all constantly making choices and decisions; delinquents just make too many bad ones. Making positive choices depends on (1) the knowledge we have of the consequences of these decisions (the remote as well as the immediate consequences) and (2) on the control we feel that we have over our lives that allows us to make relatively independent choices.

As we have pointed out, an unloved and undisciplined child will turn to peer groups for connections and attention. The members of these groups have had similar experiences and will likewise lack the ability to make positive decisions. Choices and decisions within such a peer group will be made under antisocial pressure and based on gut emotions unburdened by thoughts of remote consequences. Children must be taught to make their own decisions. The task of parents and probation officers is to seek and achieve a sound balance between supporting the child's decision and making sure these decisions are responsible ones.

18.6.7 Children Need Positive Values and Ideals with Which to Guide Their Lives

Values are the vital core of society; the cement that holds it together, without which social life would be literally meaningless. Values have to be taught. Children need to know what goals are worth striving for, what ideas are worthy of being preserved, what is important in life, and how they should lead a good life. Some people view values such as the golden rule, honor, and personal integrity as hopelessly old fashioned and restrictive of personal liberty. On the contrary, values set us free by anchoring our lives in a meaningful sense of community and provide us with guidelines for social living. Children who never learn the importance of values trudge through life caring for little else other than the immediate gratification of their selfish impulses.

Juvenile probation officers should serve as role models for their offenders by emphasizing in word and deed that prosocial values are indispensable. You should never adopt offenders' mannerisms and speech in an effort to "identify" with them. This does not mean that you always look cold and professional and use language that smells of old books. A little contemporary vernacular is fine but stay away from delinquent slang that expresses antisocial values such as "rat," "narc," and "pigs." The use of such language by the correctional worker gives it an aura of legitimacy. This might be "identifying" with juveniles, but the point of the whole process is to get them to identify with you and the prosocial values you are supposed to embody.

18.6.8 Children Must Learn to Appreciate the Value of Education and Work

We all know the tremendous value of education and work, but we will never convey the message to delinquents (who are convinced otherwise) by preaching to them. They have heard it all before and rejected it, so they are not likely to buy it from you. We tend to reject and belittle things we feel that we do not understand or that we cannot master. This happens even in college, where students presumably do have a belief in the value of education.

Although many delinquents have attention deficit disorders and other learning disabilities, there are few reasons why healthy children should not be able to master the typical American high school curriculum. However, students need to know and understand why education is important and what it can do for them. For example, a 1999 television news item reported that youths who dropout of school in Virginia cannot obtain a driver's license. Given the importance of driving for teenagers, it is not difficult to guess what has happened to Virginia's dropout rate (it declined substantially). Yes, it is coercion (discipline), but we are all coerced to some extent. How many of you reading this are in college for no other reason than being possessed of an insatiable desire to acquire knowledge for its own sake? You are probably in college because you have made a contract with yourself to forego immediate gratification in favor of the greater rewards that education yields. You have learned this lesson; others can too.

We often think of police officers as "bustin' 'em" and probation officers as "trustin' 'em." Yet, police officers and probation officers can work in conjunction with school authorities as a three-pronged team to help troubled children. An innovative program implemented by the Boise (Idaho) Police Department has been in operation for more than 25 years in various Boise elementary and high schools. Plainclothes Boise police officers are assigned to schools as school resource officers. These officers, because of the authority inherent in the police role, often can be more effective than school authorities in dealing with hostile and uncooperative youths and parents because they cannot be intimidated by them in a way that teachers and school counselors can.

School resource officers are effective in not only detecting and deterring school crime but also in counseling and helping many troubled youths (Theriot & Orme, 2016). As for the attitude of the youth toward the police in these schools, interviews with students revealed a positive humanistic view of police and their role in society. They showed a high degree of trust in the resource officer and a clear indication that many students have altered their attitudes concerning wrongdoing as well as how they think about the functions and motives of the police.

This is an encouraging attitude from teenagers, many of whom have had little contact with caring police officers, whose attitudes toward the police are usually ones of fear, contempt, and disrespect. Turning kids' heads around about the most visible symbols of authority goes a long way to turning their heads around about all reasonable authority. If your city has such a program, as a juvenile probation officer, you should find out all you can about it and use this valuable resource to its fullest.

18.6.9 Children Need a Sense of Responsibility for Their Actions and Lives

This whole book is more or less about the development of a sense of responsibility. *Responsibility* means disciplined action such as doing chores around the house, doing your schoolwork, occupying your time with meaningful activities, giving to others, and so on. It means having a positive self-concept around which you can organize your life and pursue meaningful and socially useful goals. It also means having the maturity to know when you are wrong and being willing to accept the consequences for your actions. Even some law-abiding adults have problems with this, so be patient with your young delinquent charges.

Imposition of community service and restitution orders goes a long way to help juvenile offenders develop a sense of responsibility. Repaying the community through putting in useful work hours with a nonprofit organization can give children a sense of usefulness as contributing members to the community they have offended. It also places children in the company of prosocial others from whom they may learn valuable lesson.

Both community service and restitution are integral components of the restorative justice philosophy. Restorative justice principles mandate that monetary restitution in the amount the child usurped also should be assessed. Restitution is reparation ("repairing" damage done) performed for justice's sake and for teaching juveniles moral values (Bartollas & Miller, 2005). In other words, in addition to being simple justice for the victim, the child learns that you cannot get something for nothing. Sometimes the payment of restitution presents a problem for a child who is below the age requirement for legal employment. If children cannot pay restitution themselves, the court may order the parents or guardians to do so because they are financially and legally responsible for their children. Research indicates that relatively mature offenders view restitution as right and proper and see its reparative and rehabilitative intent, while immature offenders tend to see it as punitive (Gladfelter, Lantz, & Ruback, 2018). Your task is to convince all offenders ordered to pay restitution of the morality and responsibility of such an order.

18.7 Different Strokes for Different Folks

No treatment modality or counseling technique works uniformly for everyone. This is particularly true of juveniles who come to you in various stages of maturity and from various backgrounds. You need to treat subcultural delinquents who view the gang as an extension of the family differently from neurotic delinquents, who may be from fairly functional families. In turn, both these types of delinquents have to be treated differently from sociopathic delinquents. From the well-established finding that delinquents who begin offending before puberty become the most frequent and serious offenders (Gann, Sullivan, & Ilchi, 2015), you should certainly be aware that these children need very special attention.

Delinquents may be classified for treatment purposes in many ways, far too many, in fact, for an attempt at any exhaustive coverage here. Unless your department has routine testing of its children by psychologists, and unless you are well versed in interpreting these tests and translating the information imparted into treatment action, you may be in the self-defeating position of treating all juveniles alike. It is useful, however, to know something about offenders' treatment potential and how they might differ among themselves vis-à-vis this potential. For instance, take the differences between extroverts (people whose attention and interests are directed predominantly toward what is outside the self) and introverts (people who are predominantly inward looking and introspective). Extroverts condition less well than introverts because typically the former are suboptimally aroused. For this same reason, extroverts do less well in school and are more likely to be delinquent than introverts (Moore, 2011; Scarpa & Raine, 2003). Just in terms of the extroversion/introversion dimension, then, you would expect different treatment strategies to follow.

Yet, how do you know at what level of maturity offenders are, or if they are introverts or extroverts? You could learn the dynamics of I-level interviewing as described by Ruth Masters (1994) if you have the time, or you could read a few books or articles on the subject to sensitize yourself to this system. In addition, various scales in the literature tap the concepts of sensation seeking and introversion/extroversion. However, unless your department allows for time and funds to pursue these strategies, you are on your own. This is not as bad as it sounds. After two or three sessions with offenders, you should have a good idea about their maturity levels and how they are situated along the introversion/extroversion continuum. Additionally, you usually will have access to a piece of information that may serve as an adequate proxy for these intellectual and personality attributes.

As discussed in previous chapters, one of the most readily available tests for correctional workers is the Wechsler performance/verbal IQ profile, which correlates with the I-level classification system (Masters, 1994). Although the verbal (V) > performance (P) intellectual profile (high maturity level/introvert) is rare among delinquent and criminal populations, if a child with such a profile becomes seriously delinquent, he or she may be more psychologically disturbed than other delinquents. Walsh, Petee, and Beyer (1987) found that V > P children who do become delinquent are more seriously involved in it than are intellectually balanced (P = V) children but less so than P > V children. The implication is that while subcultural delinquents may be "normal" children reacting to criminogenic environments, the delinquency of V > P children may have its origins in some psychological disturbance rather than in outside factors. You should have children with a significant V > P profile psychologically tested by a competent psychologist. If the examining mental health professional uncovers some disturbance, they will be the one to treat it. You also need to get their input on how you should handle the child.

However, the Wechsler test is not a classification panacea. Interpret it with caution and only if the subscale scores are significantly discrepant (12–15 points or higher). Even then, the discrepancy is only meaningful in terms of predicting antisocial behavior if we have a fairly normal PIQ combined with a significantly below

normal VIQ. With so many factors to consider, you can see why prediction and classification are such a tricky business, specifically among juveniles.

18.8 Family Counseling

An added dimension of difficulty in juvenile probation work not encountered in adult correctional work is the necessity of dealing with the children's parents, who can be more difficult to handle than their children. As a juvenile probation officer/caseworker, you may receive resistance and hostility from the child but also from the child's parents. If the child comes from a negative family situation in which there is parental criminality and substance abuse, you are not likely to receive voluntary cooperation. If the parents care little or not at all for the child or his or her future, such children are not likely to understand why you should, and if they come to believe that you do, they may consider you a "sucker." Your home visits and telephone calls may be considered just another hassle they have to endure. They also may be concerned that you might uncover many negative aspects of the family's lifestyle (such as drug dealing or physical and sexual abuse) that may further incur the wrath of the adult authorities.

You may experience some parental hostility and resistance even if the child comes from a relatively healthy family. Parents may feel threatened by your probing of the family dynamics. They may feel it an unwarranted intrusion into their private lives and perhaps as an effort to pin the blame for their child's predicament on them. They also may seek to protect the child from you, believing that he or she is a blameless victim of circumstances or the bad influence of friends (it is always someone else's kid who causes the trouble). This is particularly devastating to your efforts to help the child who may come to view the relationship as "us against them" (he or she and the parents against you and probation services, in general). This reinforces any feeling that the child has that he or she is being picked on. After all, "mom and dad think so." Such parents are enabling their children's delinquent behavior.

Nevertheless, the juvenile probation officer needs, and should insist on, parental support in working with children. Your task is to help parents understand that their role and responsibility is not diminished when their children are placed on probation. On the contrary, parental supervision is even more critical during this period. It is the parents, not the probation officer, who handle routine day-to-day discipline in the home. Parents have to realize that their cooperation during this period is of the utmost importance, and you should supply them with general guidelines relating to the direction that this cooperation should take. It includes such things as attending appointments with the juvenile probation officer when requested, arranging transportation for their child's appointments, reporting violations of probation rules, enforcing consistent discipline, and working with their child on the conditions of probation, including family counseling.

Experts believe the involvement of the family in the rehabilitative effort is necessary (Bleckman & Vryan, 2000). The child is embedded in a family, so if the family system is dysfunctional, it is of little use concentrating on the individual child, who

is only a minor part of the whole. If the juvenile court is to function "in the best interests of the child," it must have jurisdiction over the family so that it can enforce its decisions. The juvenile court has authority to order parents, under pain of contempt of court, to receive counseling. This could take the form of simple Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) in which parents receive schooling in the art of parenting, or it could explore, in conjunction with their child, the family dynamics contributing to the child's misbehavior. Bartollas and Miller (2005, p. 384) conclude that: "Family therapy appears more likely to be successful when it is focused on teaching parents communication, problem solving, and discipline skills."

Because the family is an interlocking system containing a number of complicated relationships, effective family counseling is more difficult than individual counseling. The maximum number of paired relationships in any family can be obtained by total pairs = $[N\,(N-1)]/2$, where N is the number of people in the family. If the Evans family consists of mom, dad, and five children, the total number of possible paired relationships existing in that family is $[(7)(6)]/2 = 21$. This is 21 interacting pairs! That is just the beginning; there are many other combinations consisting of groups greater than two. These relationships may include everything from genuine love to genuine hatred, all existing within a single household. Therefore, you can see why family counseling is a specialty that only those with training in this field should employ. Any attempt to engage in it on the part of a correctional worker unschooled in its techniques may do more harm than good.

Some well-funded jurisdictions have family crisis units directly responsible to the juvenile court, but if your department lacks such a luxury, you must be aware of counselors in the community to whom you can refer the family. Even short-term family counseling—focusing on clarity of family communication, limit setting, contract negotiation, conflict resolution, and the presentation of alternative problem-solving strategies—show progress in decreasing delinquent behavior (Robins & Szapocznik, 2000). These same types of programs also have positive effects on the prevention of younger sibling delinquency. In other words, an improvement in family dynamics spills over to prevent delinquency in younger children who, while not delinquent at the time that the counseling took place, are at risk of becoming so. The (relatively) short-term Prosocial Family Therapy System described by Bleckman and Vryan (2000) is a comprehensive system with very encouraging results. However, it works on a family-by-family basis and requires master's level counselors. The great majority of juvenile probation departments have neither the time for such individualized counseling nor the appropriate treatment staff. As frequently stressed, if the child's family is in need of such counseling, refer, refer, refer!

When all is said and done, how successful is family counseling? One study comparing recidivism rates among first-time juvenile offenders on probation found that juveniles placed in a family-group-intervention program were an astonishing 9.3 times less like to reoffend than other first-time youth placed on probation without family counseling (Quinn & Van Dyke, 2004). Even youths whose families initially enrolled in the program but subsequently dropped out were 4.4 times less likely to reoffend. Since families could dropout of the program, there is an obvious self-selection factor involved here.

Nevertheless, the family is a natural resource and buffer against the stresses of the world, and if the relationships that exist within the family are healthy, family counseling will be a very useful tool and clearly a very valuable part of delinquency prevention and treatment. It is more realistic than individual counseling in a juvenile setting because it takes place in a context in which children are fully immersed and because it enlists the treatment aid of (hopefully) more mature adults who are in full legal control of the delinquent child. It often forces parents and children to engage in what they both want (parent/child reconnection) but lack the knowledge and insight to initiate themselves.

18.9 Assessing the Child's Needs

The first thing you have to do when you are presented with new juvenile offenders is to find out as much as you can about them. In addition to the information you may have at your disposal from various sources, such as school counselors, teachers, and parents, you need to get a "feel" for your offenders from an assessment interview. Table 18.2 provides a suggested interview guide by which you can learn something about the children, their family, and peers. We developed the interview topics around the nine components for healthy psychosocial development, previously addressed.

When you have learned something about the children's needs, you will have to obtain a commitment from the children and their family to cooperate with you in the rehabilitative effort. You then have to match the children's needs with the available resources in your community whose business is to address these needs, making very sure that you do not undertax or overtax the children's coping resources or those of the family. Treatment plans for juveniles then can be developed and implemented in a fashion similar to the process outlined in this chapter.

18.10 Summary

A correctional professional in juvenile services has perhaps the most demanding and important job in the criminal justice field. The juvenile officer gets individuals at a crucial juncture; the time before their criminal roots are too deeply embedded. If through your caring efforts you can wrench these roots from their criminogenic soil, you have performed a great service both to the child and to your community. Edwards and Nuckols (1991) provide us with a statement that all juvenile officers should stamp in their minds:

> Working with high risk children and adolescents is a long, long walk with many disappointments. It is important to know that no matter how horrible the environment, the fact remains that children respond to love, although it's a cliché, one person can make a difference in the life of a child. (p. 40)

Table 18.2 An assessment guide on juvenile delinquents and their needs, attitudes, and attributes

1. What is your perception of the child's self-worth?
2. Does the child frequently feel depressed, angry, or rejected?
3. Does the child lie and/or manipulate facts and situations?
4. Does the child accept the validity of society's value system?
5. Does the child express empathy toward others?
6. What are the child's full scale, verbal, and performance IQ scores, and is there a significant (12 or more points) discrepancy between his/her verbal and performance scores?
7. Does the child have any positive goals in life?

Behavior

8. Do the child's behavior patterns indicate an age-appropriate maturity and sense of responsibility?
9. Do the child's behavior patterns indicate extroversion/introversion?
10. Does the child show the ability to defer gratification and control impulses?
11. Does the child show appropriate remorse for delinquent acts?
12. Does the child abuse alcohol/drugs, and why (peer pressure, reduce inhibitions, kill emotional pain)?
13. What is the child's offense pattern (violent, sexual, stealing, related to substance abuse, status offenses) and does it evidence an increasing pattern of seriousness?
14. Does the child have any hobbies or engage in sports?
15. Is the child sexually active?

School behavior and attitudes

16. How does the child perform in school? Does the child live up to his/her potential as indicated by IQ scores and teachers' perceptions?
17. Does he/she put adequate effort into studies?
18. Does the child have a learning disability that contributes both to low self-esteem and school difficulties?
19. What is the child's attitude toward school and his/her teachers?
20. Does the child have frequent absences (excused or unexcused)?
21. Does the child sufficiently appreciate the value of education?

Family dynamics

22. Does the child feel attached to parents and siblings or does he/she feel rejected?
23. What is the attitude of parents toward the child?
24. Is there evidence of abuse and neglect in the family?
25. Do parents know the difference between punishment and discipline, and which do they use?
26. Does the child speak and behave very differently when in the company of parents from when he/she is not?
27. What family stresses (financial, occupational, legal, emotional, and so forth) exist, and how are they being dealt with?
28. Do parents and siblings model illegal and irresponsible behavior?
29. Do parents encourage, support, and reinforce desired behavior?
30. Do parents monitor school performance and take an active part in the child's school interests?
31. Do adequate communications skills exist in the family?
32. Do parents expect too little or too much from the child?

Peer groups

33. Does the child associate with delinquent peers?
34. Does the child have any nondelinquent friends?
35. Do the child's peers model illegal behavior?
36. How dependent on the peer group is the child for his/her feelings of support, attachment, acceptance, and direction.
37. Has there been a recent drastic change in the child's dress and appearance (tattoos, colors, hair style) suggesting a deepening integration into a gang subculture?
38. What are the peer group's typical nondelinquent activities, and are they constructive or destructive?
39. What was the peer influence (if any) on the current offense?

Working with juveniles presents some special problems (and opportunities) not found among adult criminal populations. Despite the sometimes overwhelming nature of working with juvenile delinquents, the official ideology of the juvenile court is rehabilitative and avoids many of the stigmatizing terms ("criminal," "defendant," "trial," "guilty," and so forth) used in the adult system.

With the realization that most delinquents do not become adult felons, we identified certain biological, psychological, and environmental factors as possible causal factors in delinquency. We described adolescence as a trying time for many youngsters, caught as they are in a "time warp" between childhood and adulthood. During this time, they are trying to distance themselves from the authority of their parents and to find their own identities. They make this attempt often under the influence of the peer group and the entertainment media, both of which often model antisocial attitudes and behaviors. We also cited the "hardening" of poverty, especially in our ghettoes, as a factor in many of the worst manifestations of modern American delinquency.

Then, we discussed the effective supervision of juveniles and placed emphasis on the essential requirements for the healthy psychosocial development of children. Loving discipline is the first essential requirement. Such discipline differs from punishment and lays a foundation for a responsible lifestyle. Other requirements addressed were the children's acceptance of themselves and of their emotions and feelings, their understanding of the feelings of others, and the process of making decisions, problem solving, and establishing positive interpersonal relationships. We also addressed values, education, and a responsible lifestyle. Then, we expanded on the idea of treating different individuals differently, addressed in earlier chapters, with emphasis on two dimensions: maturity level and extroversion/introversion and on the Wechsler P > V test to form a preliminary impression of where the child fits along these dimensions. We urged caution when making interpretations, noting that any interpretation should account for the environmental context.

Family counseling is the most important component of a delinquent's treatment. We cannot deal effectively with delinquency until we define and confront delinquency-generating factors in the family. Although many families are reluctant to get involved in counseling, they must be involved in it, and the juvenile probation officer/care worker's task is to make sure that they do become involved and come to appreciate its values. Many families and delinquents welcome the opportunity to learn how to communicate more effectively, and studies have shown that family counseling is useful and productive.

The chapter ended with a guide for a needs assessment interview to help correctional workers get a feel for offenders and their environmental situations. After making an assessment, the next step is to match the children's needs with available community resources to help them.

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