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Environmental Factors that Affect Juvenile Delinquency

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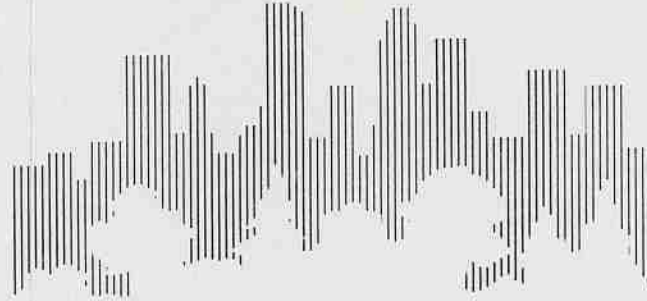
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**MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK
THESIS**

Helen Marie Lewis

**Environmental Factors that Affect
Juvenile Delinquency**

2000

**MSW
Thesis**

Thesis
Lewis

Environmental Factors that Affect Juvenile Delinquency

Helen Marie Lewis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of
Master of Social Work

AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

2000

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

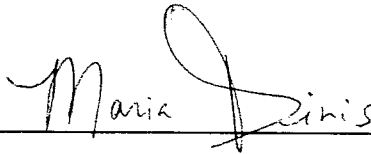
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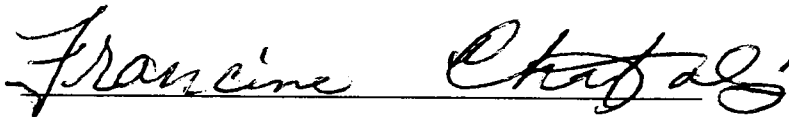
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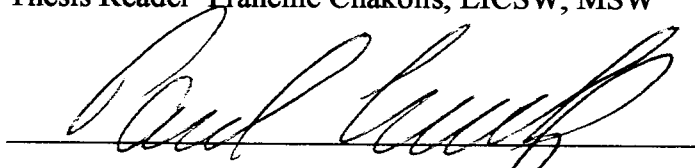
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DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to

Descendants of Africa

My dearly beloved father, Mr. Harrison Lewis, Sr.

And

My belated sister, Mary Ann Kelley

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God, the head of my life for guiding me through everyday and this experience. At the end of this very long journey, I would like to acknowledge a special thank you to my family for their love, patience, support and encouragement.

I am extremely grateful to my son, Orlando (O.V.), my daughter, Chandra, granddaughter, Natasha, grandsons, Harrison and Hamilton, my special friend, Austin, my siblings: Catherine (Tootsie), Wilmore (Bob), Vivian, Joyce, Harrison, Jr., Audray and Eric for their understanding and support, especially when I wasn't so pleasant. I especially want to thank my mother, Mrs. Helen White Lewis, who instilled in me the desire to be successful, and who has supported me through every rough road I have encountered in my life and for whom I have the utmost respect and love.

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ABSTRACT

Environmental Factors that Affect Juvenile Delinquency

Qualitative Study

Helen Marie Lewis

June 2000

This qualitative study explored the environmental factors that affect juvenile delinquency. One of the most important family life factor that places children at risk for delinquency is inadequate supervision. Findings suggest that there is a strong commonality between truancy and corrections. Five Juvenile Probation Officers and five Children and Family Social Workers were interviewed using open-ended questions. The interviews focused on the services provided to the adolescents and their families by each professional. Results indicate the importance of prevention and intervention at the micro and macro level. Implications for social work practice is also discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter has four sections. The chapter begins with background information followed by the purpose and significance of the study. The research question is discussed next and the chapter ends with a summary.

Background of the Problem

We are continuously alarmed by the cost implications of policies developed to incarcerate juvenile delinquents, yet we are more concerned with outcomes of those policies that have little effect on improving public safety as well as improving the well-being of adolescents.

In 1960, for the 12th consecutive year, delinquency cases increased over the previous year. The increase was 6% while the child population, aged ten through seventeen, increased by only 2%. Over this period, the increase in delinquency cases exceeded the increase in the child population (U.S. Children's Bureau, 1960).

Violence has had a devastating impact on our entire society and on adolescents in particular. Crime in the United States is too high. According to Jones and Krisberg (1994), America's youth are being killed in record numbers. Teenaged boys, in all racial and ethnic groups, are more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from all natural deaths combined. They contend that homicide is the second leading cause of death among teens, after suicide, and in 8 states, firearms surpassed automobiles as the leading injury-related killers of both adults and children.

Research conducted by the Department of Justice over the last 30 years showed that the average cost of incarcerating juveniles for one year is approximately \$54,000 (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 1995). Criminologist James Fox, of Northeastern University, predicts that crimes committed by teenagers will skyrocket as the 39 million children now under age 10 swell the ranks of teenagers by 20% in the first decade of the 21st century.

While many lament the crisis of violence and juvenile crime, a close review

indicates that early prevention programs and well-structured community-based programs are effective as a reduction strategy (Jones & Krisberg, 1994).

Purpose of Proposed Research

The purpose of this study is to provide a picture of the unique problems faced by juveniles. It will address what services are effective with juvenile delinquents? Through this study, one can look at the differences and similarities of services provided by juvenile probation officers and social workers.

Significance of the Study

Since the founding of social work as a profession in 1898, social workers have been encouraged continually to assume a key role in shaping social welfare policy (Domanski, 1998). In the 1970s, Charles Levy recognized the complexity of influencing social policy but encouraged social workers to try to shape social policy through intensive efforts (Schneider & Netting, 1999).

This research study may be informative in guiding policymakers in choosing the most effective programs for adolescents, specifically juvenile delinquents.

Research Questions

Social workers and probation officers who work with adolescents have many different challenges that impact the delivery of services to the adolescents and their families. The objective of this study is to gather information regarding the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of adolescents who are delinquents?
2. What type of services or solutions do social workers and probation officers use with juvenile delinquents and their families?

Summary

This chapter discussed the background and stated the problems regarding juvenile delinquency. The purpose and significance of the study were also discussed and two research questions stated. The next chapter will address the literature review. Chapter 3

will discuss the conceptual framework on which the study is based. Chapter 4 will discuss the methodology. Chapter 5 will provide findings and results. The final chapter will discuss the findings, strengths and limitations of the study, and the implications for practice, policy and research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will examine the environmental factors that affect juvenile delinquency. The historical background of juvenile delinquency is presented along with a discussion on environmental factors. An examination of family influence and effective services are presented. Three grants supported programs (Ocean Tides, Project Turnaround and Delinquents under Ten) are discussed. Gaps in the literature are presented.

Historical Background

Juvenile delinquency is a legal term referring to illegal acts committed by individuals under the age of 18. Delinquents are children between 10 and 18 years old who commit acts, which would be unlawful if committed by an adult (Minnesota statues 260.015 and 260.111).

The treatment of the young delinquent is different now from that of a century and a half ago. At that time, policy was influenced considerably by the prevailing moral view that crime was not only an offense against society but also an offense against God (Boss, 1967).

In 1816, DuCane recorded that when the population of London, England was somewhat less than two and a half million, the prisons in the town held about 3,000 inmates under the age of 20 years. Half of these being under 17 and some as young as 9 or 10 (DuCane, 1885). Apparently imprisonment was the only way the State could think of how to deal with the rising numbers of delinquents. The State's approach was punishment for all offenders. If the young committed crimes, they would be punished, including incarceration.

In 1838, the British Parliament passed the Parkhurst Act (Boss, 1967). This provided for the Parkhurst prison to hold juveniles between the ages of 10 and 18 years, for 2 or 3 years, for the purpose of industrial training.

While the Parkhurst system came to be little more than a juvenile prison, in

principle, it had been conceived of as providing reformatory treatment (Boss, 1967). The actual reformatory movement got under way toward the middle of the century.

As early as 1840, with the Infant Felons Act, it was realized that the family life of children under the age of 21, was a contributing factor to their delinquency (Boss, 1967). The Infant Felons Act allowed for anyone willing to take charge of the adolescent to be able to do so once the adolescent had completed a term of imprisonment. This out of home placement quickly altered the attitudes toward juvenile delinquency. Instead of 3 years imprisonment, a child might be granted a pardon on the condition that he or she returned to the care of a willing adult (Boss, 1967).

Interest in juvenile delinquency declined in the late 19th century, and a less rigid attitude toward juveniles' misbehavior brought about a better understanding of the social problems. The Children's Act of 1908 empowered the courts to establish special courts to deal with all juveniles under the age of 16 years, at a different time or place from all other court settings. Restrictions were placed on persons who could attend court and parents could be required to attend with their children (Boss, 1967). This Act is a landmark in the history of the treatment of juvenile delinquency.

Edward H. Stullken organized Chicago's well-known Montefiore Special School to care for socially maladjusted children who had difficulty with the inflexible curriculum of the regular graded school (Stullken, 1962). This Special School was set up as a day school to which regular school transferred problem boys and girls. It was hoped that by concentrating special services in a special school, the number of children that had to be taken into Juvenile Court would be reduced.

Stullken's (1962) study revealed the importance of collaboration among services. The Montefiore Special School provides a clinical staff of dental and medical services, a psychiatrist, a teacher-nurse, two full-time psychologists, as well as seven full-time social workers. Full case histories of all its pupils are maintained by staff members, so that any worker, at any time, can get as complete a picture of the child and all of his or her

problems as it is possible to provide (Stullken, 1962). Recognizing that prevention requires collaboration at all governmental levels, the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency prevention, chaired by the Attorney General, is building upon these experiences (Bilchik, 1995).

Environmental Factors

According to Hawkins (1995), risks affecting children from conception through age 6 are related to the individual, the family, and the community. Increased exposure to more risk factors, especially in childhood, increases the risk of crime and violence exponentially. The earliest stage at which delinquency prevention can be effective is when a child is still in the womb (Bilchik, 1995).

There is no single risk factor for delinquency or for violent behavior; however, many risk factors have been identified, and can be grouped into four major categories: community, family, school, and individual/peer (Hawkins & Catalano, 1992). According to Hawkins and Catalano (1992), community-related risk factors are availability of drugs, availability of firearms, community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, firearms, and crime, media portrayals of violence, transitions and mobility, low neighborhood attachment, community disorganization and extreme economic deprivation. Family-related risk factors involve family history of problem behavior, family management problems, family conflict and favorable parental attitudes concerning crime and involvement in crime. School-related risk factors are early and persistent antisocial behavior, academic failure in elementary school, and lack of commitment to school. Finally, individual and peer-related risk factors include alienation and rebelliousness, friends who engage in problem behavior, favorable attitudes toward problem behavior, early initiation of problem behavior and constitutional factors. The latter factor also includes the role of heredity in addiction.

Protective factors either reduce the impact of risks or change the way a person responds to them. Hawkins and Catalano (1992) also suggest three basic categories of

protective factors. They are: 1) individual characteristics, such as having a resilient temperament or a positive social orientation; 2) positive relationships that promote close bonds; and 3) schools, families, and peer groups that teach children healthy beliefs and that set clear standards. Thornberry (1995), a researcher in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) found that the presence of multiple protective factors had a sizeable impact on reducing delinquency.

Behavioral Concepts

Paadal, Milgrom, Cauce, and Mancl (1994) conducted a study on behavior problems in 5 to 11 years olds from low-income families. This environmentally specific study, used the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) survey scores of a nonclinical population of United States urban children from low-income families, and compared the distribution and pattern of scores with the normative data in the CBCL manual. They found that, from their sample of 890 low-income urban families, the total CBCL score was significantly higher than the norm, which lead them to believe that poverty is a “risk” factor for delinquency in children.

Gordon and Caltabiano (1996) compared urban and rural areas on the subject of adolescent self-esteem, leisure boredom, and sensation seeking, as predictors of leisure-time usage and satisfaction. A significant number of adolescents experience leisure boredom and dissatisfaction, which have been implicated as contributors to drug use and delinquency. The purpose of the study was to find out to what extent adolescent leisure experiences, in an urban as compared to a rural area, were influenced by individual and situational variables. The results showed that demographic variables, as well as other variables mediated teenage leisure experiences. Urban adolescents reported higher social leisure, while rural adolescents engaged in more passive leisure.

Violence and crime are common adolescent issues. Berton and Stabb (1996) conducted a study on the exposure to violence and its relationship to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in urban adolescents. Comparisons of incidents were made in terms of

gender, ethnicity, family constellation, self-reported exposure to violence, self-reported exposure to trauma, and incidents of violent crime in the vicinity of school. The results revealed that minority males were exposed in their neighborhoods and schools to more violent crime than were any other group. They also found that girls respond to violence with more symptoms of PTSD than boys do.

Peer Relationships

There is a strong connection shown in the literature between peer relations and adolescent problem behaviors such as delinquency and substance abuse (Pabon, Rodriguez & Gurin, 1992). The peer culture also places emphasis on popularity, physical attractiveness, and athletic success (Warr, 1993).

Hartnagel and Tanner (1982) examined the impact that high school and adolescent experiences in high school have on the relationship between social class and delinquency. These researchers regarded the high schools as a more important source of delinquency than social class.

Paetsch and Bertrand (1997) conducted a study to examine the relationship between self-reported delinquency and peer, social, and school factors among junior and senior students in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. One interesting fact that resulted from this study was the strong positive correlation between delinquency, involvement in sports, and commercial/entertainment activities. Students reporting high levels of involvement in these activities were also self-reporting delinquent behaviors.

Children who participate in sports are very concerned with fitting in and are very competitive (Paetsch & Bertrand, 1997). They tend to follow the crowd and try to lead the crowd as much as possible. If the lead athlete is committing acts of deviance, then other team members may tend to follow so as not to be left out and be made fun of by fellow teammates (Paetsch & Bertrand, 1997).

Genetic Theories

Sociobiologists disagree with the notion of environment affecting delinquency;

instead, they focus primarily on the child's genetic makeup. According to Roth (1997), genes appear to count far more than upbringing. He believes that "criminals are born rather than made" (Roth, 1997). Roth's study included identical twins from Europe, America, and Australia. Traits such as intelligence, aggressiveness, impulse control, optimism, even political orientation, appear to be strongly affected by a person's genetic makeup. Thomas Bouchard (1997), a researcher for the University of Minnesota, conducted a twin study as well. He found that twins reared apart are about as similar as twins reared in the same home on measures of personality characteristics and social attitudes.

Alexander Thomas, Stella Chess, and Herbert Birch (1997) monitored the development of 114 children born in a New York hospital. They identified 9 temperamental traits, which allowed them to characterize some children as easy and others as difficult. Interestingly, 70% of those identified as difficult in infancy had relatively serious behavioral problems later in childhood as opposed to only 18% of those characterized as easy.

Sociobiologists try to stress the importance of not overlooking the likely genetic similarities between parent and offspring and mistakenly attributing such similarities to upbringing. According to Roth (1997), researchers in Israel and the United States have independently identified a gene for the personality trait associated with a tendency to be impulsive, excitable, and quick-tempered. This gene appears to be important in how the brain utilizes the neurotransmitter dopamine. Researchers believe that the reason that genetic influences are sometimes overlooked is because genes produce different effects depending on the presence of other genes, making it hard to test (Roth, 1997).

Symbols

Symbolic researchers tend to agree more with the structural functionalist or the ecological theorist to some degree. They essentially believe that what causes children to fall into deviant practices is their tendency to worship a person or a symbol, and follow

what they believe to be a higher power (Snyder, 1995).

In the news daily, more and more children are joining gangs (Snyder, 1995). These children end up battling each other to prove that the beliefs and strengths of one gang are far better than those of the other. The types of symbols these children use can be anything from religious objects, to colors, songs, phrases, etc. We all need beliefs, we need direction, and we need to believe in things that will guide our way of life (Snyder, 1995).

Wherever we find our own beliefs and directions is also how we are all different from each other (Snyder, 1995). Many people learn them from their parents or their peers, but wherever they learn them, they are taught to believe in them and their actions follow accordingly (Snyder, 1995).

Family Influence

In the United States, attitudes towards juvenile delinquency began to change, beginning right after independence from Britain. The new American citizens declared that punishments would be more humane and less brutal (Rothman, 1990). To promote this progressive attitude, recorded interviews were conducted in 1829 and 1830 at New York State's Auburn Penitentiary (Rothman, 1990). These interviews concentrated largely on childhood and upbringing. Loss of family control was determined as the cause of deviance in two-thirds of the biographies. This loss stemmed from three factors. First, as children, some of these inmates imitated corrupt parental behavior. Secondly, there appeared to be a breakdown or disintegration of family control caused by death, divorce, or desertion. Finally, through no apparent fault of the parents, the child left the family and home.

Loeber and Dishion (1983) reviewed approximately 70 studies focusing on family characteristics that appear to be associated with subsequent delinquency. They found consistent predictors in relation to age of the child. For example, at age 6, family functioning predicts delinquency. Antisocial behavior and aggressiveness at age 9

indicate delinquent tendencies, while parental criminality at age 10 is a valid predictor. Educational factors predict delinquent behaviors at age 15. And finally, at age 16, if the child is involved in delinquency, continued delinquency is predictable.

Snyder and Patterson (1987) examined approximately 100 studies, which led them to develop a two-stage model of delinquency. They proposed that inept family socialization initially lead to trivial antisocial behaviors in children. These antisocial behaviors and lack of social skills led to rejection by teachers and peers. They found that discipline and positive parenting were modestly related to delinquency and a lack of parental monitoring of the child had a stronger association toward delinquency.

In reviewing the relationship between family transactions and child psychosocial functioning, Henggeler (1989) concluded that low levels of parental control strategies might be a source of delinquent behavior. Secondly, if parental controls are present, but are inept or ineffective, youths in these families are at risk for development of delinquency. Finally, the antisocial behavior of parents seems to be a strong predictor of delinquent behavior in young family members.

Recent research suggests that family disintegration, resulting from the death, desertion, or divorce of parents, is the primary factor of undisciplined children who eventually become criminals, but sociologists Matsueda and Heimer (1987) suggest that the single-parent family is the single primary factor. Matsueda and Heimer suggest that single parents can less effectively supervise their children simply because there is only one parent rather than two. Consequently, their children are more likely to come into contact with delinquent influences. Dornbusch (1985) agrees with Matsueda and Heimer and offers a second explanation specific to single mothers. This researcher suggests that the single mother gives the adolescent a greater say in what he or she can do, thus reducing control over the youth. Wells and Rankin (1986), however, criticizes this body of knowledge and concludes: "Despite a sizable body of research extending across various academic disciplines, the question of the causal connections between broken

homes and delinquency remains unresolved and ambiguous" (p.68).

Effective Services

According to the Department of Justice (DOJ), there are several reasons why prevention is critical in combating delinquency. First, numerous studies suggest that serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders are more likely than other youngsters to become adult career criminals. Second, evaluations of prevention programs show that many are effective in preventing delinquency and reducing crime (1995). Delinquency prevention strategies that work must be part of a rational approach.

To address the need for early prevention of delinquency, several services were reviewed by the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (1995) and were found to be effective. They are 1) the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. These clubs provide afterschool activities across the country. They have been effective in increasing rates of school attendance and in improving academic performance. 2) Families First, an intervention program in which families at risk of having their children removed from the home participate in 20 hours a week of home-school therapy for 6 to 10 weeks. A case manager serves as a strong link between the school and the home and monitors the needs of the child and family. Afterschool tutoring, parent education and referral services are available to the families who participate in this program. 3) Child Development Project a school and home program. It is aimed at fostering skills and commitments in children that they will need to carry out adult roles in a competent, caring and responsible manner. Child Development Project is designed to be a vehicle for making comprehensive improvements in elementary schools, and for linking school and home. Teachers and parents become effective partners in rearing and educating children. 4) The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program is the most frequently used substance abuse education curricula in the United States. D.A.R.E. uses uniformed police officers and classroom teachers to provide a variety of anti-violence, conflict resolution, and managing anger skills. 5) Metal Detectors in the schools. This action reduces the number

of guns, knives and other metal weapons students bring to school. A team of security officers scans randomly selected students with hand-held metal detectors as they enter the school building. 6) Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a program for parents of infants who enroll and remain in the program until the child is 3 years old. During each monthly personal visit, a PAT professional suggests strategies to address individual concerns, such as discipline. They involve parents in age-appropriate learning activities with their child. Children are periodically screened for vision, hearing, and normal growth and development. 7) Project Bootstrap, Inc. is a multifaceted program that integrates an educational support, supportive family groups, family mentoring, and alcohol and other drug abuse programs; and 8) The Homebuilders Program, an intensive family preservation program, is designed to avert the unnecessary placement of children in foster or group homes, or institutional care.

Grant Supported Projects

The Gault decision of the United States Supreme Court in 1967 provided the stimulus for the Delinquent Act of 1967 (H.R. 7642), in which local communities were mandated to find ways of detecting and avoiding youthful crimes. The President's Committee on Delinquency awarded grants for these projects. These projects include Ocean Tides, Project Turnaround and Delinquents under Ten.

Ocean Tides

The Ocean Tides, a private residential treatment center for "hard core" juveniles, established in 1980, is one of the grant recipients. The Christian Brothers, a teaching order of the Catholic Church in Rhode Island operates it (Lindner & Wagner, 1983). As a private (non-governmental) center for juveniles, it has the right to establish its own admissions criteria. The Ocean Tides program is limited to 120 males, between the ages of 13 and 17, who have been adjudicated to juvenile delinquents by the family court. This 6-month voluntary program serves "hard-core" delinquents who have no other institutional support and who were previously incarcerated unsuccessfully (Lindner &

Wagner, 1983).

The program utilizes the services of the community and social services to meet the treatment goals. It is intended that the adolescent will be rehabilitated within the institution in order to reintegrate successfully into the community. Weekend visitation to the home is encouraged, and it is suggested that the parents visit the facility. The staff developed an apprenticeship program. This program provides summer employment at local beach clubs, summer camps, youth centers, local gardeners and the highway department's maintenance area (Lindner & Wagner, 1983).

Ocean Tides Residential Program provides a comprehensive after care component. The director of treatment, teacher, line staff, juvenile delinquent, family and a social worker meet as a team to discuss the readiness of the adolescent to be discharged. Recognizing that institutional behavior is not necessarily a valid indication of future behavior in the community, strong consideration is given to the evaluation of the child's behavior during home visits (Lindner & Wagner, 1983).

Project Turnaround

In 1993, Hennepin County Juvenile Justice Department sponsored research to explore the context of juveniles' lives in relation to offending behaviors (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995). The aim of Project Turnaround was to create family-based, alternative paths for 10 to 13 year old adolescents. The project involved interviews of families, adolescents and review of data submitted by Juvenile Court, Juvenile Probation, Social Service Agencies and Minneapolis Public Schools. Social Service Agencies included providers affiliated with residential treatment centers, foster and group homes, shelters, chemical dependency treatment centers, diversion services, and restitution services. Based on the findings of this study, the juvenile delinquents committed their first offense between ages 10 and 12 (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995).

Project Turnaround research involved interviewing 14 parents and 10 children. Parents were asked questions about factors that might contribute to their child's

delinquency and improve circumstances for their child and family (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995). Four factors emerged from the interviews: (1) family, (2) school, (3) community, and (4) juvenile justice. The results suggest: 1) parents know their children's friends; 2) parents believe that the teachers are incapable of handling disruptive students; 3) the communication between schools and families is poor; and 4) most parents believe that their children had too much unstructured, free time. Parents believe that there is a lack of prevention/primary services to support families (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995).

Results of information obtained from Social Service Agencies and School Personnel reveal that the services provided to the families ranged from childcare support to individualized psychiatric treatments to placements. The most common risk for an adolescent to become delinquent included being a single parent, father incarcerated, parent with mental illness, parental substance abuse, child physically abused, child runaway and child truancy (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995). The most common predictor of delinquency categorized by the school was that children transitioned on the average 6 different times to 6 different schools within 4 years.

Social Workers and Probation Officers most frequently identified the family as the greatest contributing factor to delinquency (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995). The family characteristics included lack of nurturance, little parental supervision, and lack of role modeling (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995). The results also suggest that interventions should target the child, family, and community, simultaneously (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995).

The overall conclusion of Project Turnaround study suggest that parents want more respect as agents of socialization, want their children to grow up healthy and whole, want the schools to be responsive to their children's needs, and want the agencies that make decisions for their children to have consistent interpretation of policies (Geenen, Hirsch & Sedlezsky, 1995).

Delinquents under Ten

Funding was obtained by Hennepin County Attorney's Office in 1994 from the Minnesota Legislature to study delinquents under 10. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office conducted a study to determine the action needed to address the growing problem of children under the age of 10 who were the subject of police reports due to their delinquent acts (Wiig, 1995).

The findings of this study indicate that the current child welfare system interventions are focused primarily on modifying the behavior of parents and do not address the long-term outcomes specific to the child's well-being and crime prevention. Further outcomes indicate large expenditures of public monies are made on these delinquent families. Unless the child's risk of future delinquency is addressed, the expenditures will only increase (Wiig, 1995).

While delinquency tends to be much more frequent in adolescents coming from homes where there is abuse and neglect (Widom, 1989); however, rather than a single event or casual element preceding a youth's delinquent activities, the behavior results from a complex interplay of multiple factors (Buka & Earls, 1993). It is critical to examine and evaluate services that focus on the well being of the adolescent and families. As Patterson, DeBaryshe, and Ramsey (1989) noted, it would be most beneficial to promote resiliency in the child and effectively intervene with childhood aggression through family, school, and community mediators.

Gaps in the Literature

There is very little literature that addresses juvenile delinquency from a social services perspective in conjunction with that of juvenile probation. The closest study found was mention previously, Project Turnaround. The following are gaps in the research literature of juvenile delinquency. There is a lack of studies available on the following issues: 1) collaboration of services that emphasizes the family's system approach; 2) how social service delivery impacts the adolescent?; 3) combining social

service and correctional policies governing juvenile delinquents; 4) how early social service interventions of juvenile delinquents can be measured; and 5) resiliency and specific variables that reduce juvenile delinquency?

This research study will specifically address collaboration of services for the family. It will address the relationship between social services and juvenile probation from the social worker and probation officer point of view.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the various aspects of juvenile delinquency. In the next chapter, the theoretical framework is presented.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The third chapter has two sections. The first section identifies and explains the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. The second section describes the application of the theoretical framework.

Cognitive Theory

Cognition is the process of obtaining, organizing, and using sensory and perceptual information from the environment (Kietzman, Spring, & Zubin, 1985). Prominent among cognitive psychologists is Jean Piaget, whose concepts about cognitive development are widely used in various areas of cognitive science and impact many areas of social work practice (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997). Piaget built his career on studying the relationship between how we develop and how we learn. He believed that there are inborn processes in humans that play a fundamental role in understanding reality. These processes are adaptation and organization (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997).

Adaptation and organization are primary concepts of Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Adaptation deals with the individual's relation to the external world and the ability to change or adapt to that world. According to Piaget, we can assimilate new information into our existing thought structures and thereby change what we perceive (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997).

Organization is the way we make sense out of what we perceive. In Piaget's view, individuals are endowed with physical structures that are species specific. In other words, through heredity, everybody possesses the same basic nervous systems, perceptual structures, and other similar attributes (Ginsburg, 1985). Piaget suggests that the specific heredity of humans guarantee that they have in common, a universal potential for acquiring a specific type of cognitive development (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997). Therefore, all humans have the inherited potential for abstract thought, but they will not develop this psychological function without an environment that stimulates the need for

the development of abstract adaptations (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997).

Piaget proposed that individuals go through a series of developmental stages. Cognitive development in adolescence is identified with Piaget's last intellectual stage – formal operations (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997). This period of development generally begins at around age 11 or 12 and it is at this stage, the adolescent is capable of abstract thought. Adolescents begin to understand abstract propositions and try to reason logically about them. This kind of logical problem solving is referred to as hypothetical-deductive reasoning (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997). This problem-solving process uses hunches to solve a problem and follows a planned manner to test and evaluate the hunch until the best solution is discovered (Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie, 1997).

Adolescents may begin to ponder the nature of their own thinking. They can think about why they were thinking about certain things. According to Ashford, LeCroy & Lortie (1997), this kind of abstract thinking is associated with idealism and thoughts about future possibilities. Piaget (1972) would argue that this thinking is caused by the characteristics of formal operational thought. They can now think beyond the real to the possible and reflect on the nature of thought itself (Piaget, 1972).

Piaget also emphasizes formal operational thought. It is believed to occur during adolescence when the adolescent consolidates new information into existing knowledge. As adolescents gain experience, they incorporate their formal operational thinking (Lapsley, 1989). Although Piaget's theory stresses a universal understanding of thought, it is important to recognize the individual variations that occur in adolescents' cognitive development.

The Ecological Perspective

The ecological perspective best describes the conceptual framework utilized in this study on juvenile delinquency. According to Carol Germain (1991), it explains the relationship between the individual and the environment and allows for a holistic view of people and society where neither can be fully understood without looking at the context

of relationships. It is Germain's belief that such attributes as relatedness, competence, self-direction, and self-esteem are outcomes of a person's environmental relationships (Germain, 1991).

The ecological perspective believes that people are thought of as being involved in constant interaction with various systems in the environment (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 1993). These include friends, family, social service, employment, religious, political and educational systems.

In many cases it is not the juvenile's fault that problems exist. Rather, something outside of the juvenile may be causing the problem. The ecological perspective (Germain, 1991) identifies youth as a product of their environment, they learn what they live, and live what they learn. The lack of a stable home environment due to turbulence and disruption contributes to the profile of delinquency and it also eats at the base of a person's social support (Germain, 1991).

While the ecological perspective tends to place greater emphasis on individuals and individual family systems, it might be considered an offshoot or interpretation of the general systems theory (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 1993).

Germain (1991) suggests that physical and social settings, as well as the culture, are context variables in human development. They provide security and shelter, symbolic identification, social contact, pleasure, growth, and feedback about the consequences of one's life. They can be sources of pain, stress, and conflict. In other words, an adolescent might become delinquent because of the dysfunction in their relationships with their environment and family settings.

Application of Theory

The cognitive theory was used as a theoretical framework for this study. The cognitive theory is in part, a development of behavior theory, building on the social learning theory. Cognitive theory argues that behavior is affected by perception or interpretation of the environment during the process of learning (Payne, 1997).

The cognitive theory applies to this study because social workers and probation officers are often helping adolescents change their negative learned behaviors and maintain new improvements. It focuses on analyzing the problem and identifying interventions that enhance positive results. This focus or goal is reinforced in the ecological perspective with the goal being enhancement of the relationship between adolescent, family and environment.

The ecological perspective applies to this study because it allows the social worker a framework to analyze why juvenile delinquents behave the way they do. This perspective is a more specific base for integrating theories and research findings on people and environmental transactions holistically.

Social workers can “link people with systems” (Baer & Federico, 1978, p.68), so that clients have access to resources and opportunities. The social worker facilitates interaction between the individual and his social environment with a continuing awareness of the reciprocal effects of one upon the other (Bartlett, 1958). Later, Bartlett used two concepts: life tasks to describe common, demanding situations that confront people; and coping to describe how people actually respond to these situations and how they master them. Together the two concepts reflect certain interactions or exchanges between people and environments (Germain, 1991).

Social workers today are generalists. A generalist practitioner is one “whose knowledge and skills encompass a broad spectrum and who assesses problems and their solutions comprehensively” (Barker, 1991, p.91). The ecological perspective allows the social worker and probation officer to view juvenile delinquency from multiple perspectives in the context of the entire social environment, which sets the stage for numerous intervention approaches.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the cognitive theory and presented an ecological perspective. In the next chapter, methodology is discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, research questions and design used to conduct the study are presented. Further, key terms are defined. Subsequently, characteristics of the population studied will be described along with sampling procedures used. Procedures used to verify the quality and trustworthiness of the data collected will also be discussed. Next, the interview guide will be presented along with procedures used for data collection. Methods used for analysis of data collected will likewise be explained. In conclusion, procedures to protect human subjects will be defined.

Research Questions

The following research questions were studied:

1. What are the characteristics of adolescents who are the subject of delinquent acts?
2. What type of services or solutions do Social Workers and Probation Officers use with juvenile delinquents and their families?

Design

The design of this study is a qualitative in-depth interview using a non-probability convenience sample of social workers and juvenile probation officers. The interview consisted of open-ended questions (Appendix A) in order to gain detailed responses of key informants who provide services to and work directly with juvenile delinquents.

Strength of the design is its effectiveness for studying the subtle nuances of attitudes and behaviors and for examining social process over time (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). For these reasons, a chief strength of this design lies in the depth of understanding it may permit (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). Qualitative research is more flexible than quantitative. It is much more difficult to initiate a survey or an experiment, whereas qualitative research typically can be undertaken by one researcher, notebook and pencil (Rubin & Babbie, 1997).

A weakness of qualitative research is that it does not allow an opportunity to evaluate all parts of the programs (Patton, 1987). It seldom yields precise descriptive

statements about a large population (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). Another weakness of qualitative research is time. Open-ended interviewing can take a great deal of time and produce volumes of narrative data (Patton, 1987). Often, the conclusions drawn from qualitative research are often regarded as suggestive rather than definitive. This is due to certain problems and subjectivity with generalizability (Rubin & Babbie, 1997).

Key Terms and Definitions

The key terms applied in this research are adolescent, delinquent, juvenile delinquency, key informants, probation officer and social worker.

Definition of Terms

Adolescent – persons, between 10 and 18 years old, who is developing from childhood to adulthood.

Delinquent – persons, between 10 and 18 years old, who fail or neglect to do what the law requires.

Juvenile Delinquency – a pattern of antisocial behavior by juveniles that would be regarded as criminal in nature if committed by adults.

Key Informants – for this study, these are Juvenile Probation Officers and Children and Family Services Social Workers.

Probation Officer – an officer appointed by a magistrate to watch and report on a person placed on probation.

Social Worker – a person with a Bachelor of Social Work or a Master of Social Work from an accredited school of social work, or a license to practice social work in the state of Minnesota.

Study Population

This research study attempts to better understand the effectiveness of services available to juvenile delinquents and their families. Requirements of participants include being a Social Worker or a juvenile probation officer. The study population consisted of 6 women and 4 men who work with adolescents. Hennepin County employs the

participants. They are often exposed to crisis situations, including criminal offenses. Settings or units the social workers and probation officers have experience in include: Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center, Hennepin County Home School, St. Joseph's Home for Children and Minneapolis Public Schools.

Sampling Procedures

The research study, which looks to understand the services delivered by social workers and probation officers to juvenile delinquents and their families, required participants who work with adolescents in Hennepin County. In order to locate participants who met these criteria, all Juvenile Probation Officers and Children and Family Services Social Workers were invited by posted flyers to participate. The first 10 participants to respond were the designated participants (N=10). Therefore, participants were recruited through a non-probability, purposeful sampling.

Development of Interview Guide

Data was collected in the spring of 2000. The researcher developed interview questions based on the cognitive theory. Information was gathered through in-depth interviews. This interview guide was pretested on one social worker from the same county on which this study was conducted. Results from the pretest were included in the final version of the interview guide. The data was organized and categorized by themes according to each research question. Social Workers and Probation Officers, who provide direct service to juvenile delinquents, were asked to identify: 1) services to be enhanced, 2) the need for possible new services, 3) more effective service delivery systems, 4) social policy issues that need addressing, and 5) the need for a more effective collaborative-systems approach.

Validity and Reliability

This qualitative research study searches for accuracy and rich detail experience of Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers who work with adolescents experiencing stress and crises. Therefore, a standard scientific criterion for establishing quality and

verification of research does not apply for this study. In attempts to answer the question: “How do we know that the qualitative study is believable, credible and accurate?” Deborah K. Padgett (1998) recommends six strategies for quality control in qualitative research. These strategies are not necessarily exhaustive, but they are the most common. They are prolonged engagement; triangulation; peer debriefing/support; member checking; negative case analysis and audit trail.

Padgett (1998) discusses the importance of “trustworthiness” in qualitative research. Prolonged engagement involves learning about the culture, building trust and also checking for and verifying misinformation. Prolonged engagement makes withholding information or lying by respondents less likely. A trustworthy relationship between the researcher and respondents reduces the motivation as well as the opportunity for deception. Once a respondent has given informed consent to participate in the study, it seems unlikely that he or she would cooperate just to trick the researcher. Lengthy interviews make it hard to maintain an untruthful story for long. Some qualitative researchers argue that respondents do not fabricate, but simply interpret events through their own filters.

In addition to Padgett, researchers Howe and Eisenhardt (1990) designed five standards to ensure quality and validity in qualitative research. The first standard states that it is necessary to ensure that it is the research question that is driving the data collection and analysis. Second, data collection and analysis techniques must be applied in a technical sense. Third, the researcher’s assumptions must be made clear. Fourth, the study must have overall warrant with theoretical explanations included. Fifth, the study must answer the “so what” question as well as fulfill ethical questions of confidentiality, privacy and truthfulness and full disclosure to and with participants (Cresswell, 1998).

Researchers Lincoln and Guba (1985) also established standards for insuring quality and verification of research. Their eight standards begin with “inquiry community,” which involves guidelines for publication. Next, “positionality” refers to

the need for honesty or authenticity in regards to the position of the text as well as the position and convictions of the author. "Community", the next standard, acknowledges that research "takes place in, is addressed to, and serves the purposes of the community in which it was carried out" (Cresswell, 1998). The standard of "voice" refers to the narration of participant's stories and allows participants to be heard rather than silenced, disengaged or marginalized. "Critical subjectivity" requires the researcher to have heightened self-awareness and to be conscious of personal psychological and emotional conditions throughout the research process. "Reciprocity" as a standard, involves an intense sharing, trust and mutuality between the researcher and the participant. The standard of "sacredness" places a requirement on the researcher to respect the relationship, collaboration, and egalitarian aspects of the research. Finally, the standard of "sharing of the privileges" requires the researcher share in any wealth that occurs due to the research.

In order to ensure "validity and quality", measurements of this study began by making certain the research question was "driving" the data collection and analysis. Further, data collection and analysis were conducted in a professional manner guaranteeing confidentiality, privacy, and truthfulness. The merit of the study was assured through a thorough literature review and theoretical findings. In addition, trustworthiness of the study included the verification procedures of prolonged engagement.

Reliability was addressed by the pretest, which indicated that probes were necessary for the interview. The interview was then modified and the use of probes were included, but limited to elaboration and clarification. The total interview time was 60 minutes. From pretest results, the depth and detail of the interview led to changes for the interview guide.

Data Collection

The first 5 Juvenile Probation Officers and first 5 Children and Family Services

Social Workers to respond to the posted flyer were selected for the interview. After reviewing and signing a consent form (Appendix E), a one-hour, semi-structured, interview was conducted at a date and time that was convenient for both the researcher and participant. The interview was audio taped, with the permission of the participant, for the purpose of transcription. Furthermore, the interview was conducted within Hennepin County.

The researcher used open-ended interview questions, guided by a questionnaire (Appendix A). The use of open-ended questions provided key informants the opportunity to offer ideas not identified by the researcher, and to provide findings that expand the research base.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews, the “root” as described by Cresswell (1998), were reviewed in their entirety several times to get a sense of the narrative as a whole. Subsequently, the transcripts were “broken” into parts to discover key concepts or categories (codes) of information that reoccur. Next, themes and patterns of regularities were developed for further interpretation.

The data was analyzed using content analysis. This process, according to Cresswell (1998), involves “moving from the reading and memoing loop into the spiral to the describing, classifying, and interpreting loop” (p.158). Furthermore, participants’ direct statements, along with findings in the literature, support interpretations and themes.

Protection of Human Subjects

In order to protect participants, the research proposal was reviewed and approved, prior to the study, by the Augsburg College Institutional Review Board (IRB #2000-24-2), (Appendix E). Participation for the research study was completely voluntary and participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Additionally, each participant signed an informed consent form (Appendix E) prior to the interview and data collection. The consent form informed participants of

the purpose of the study, study procedure, possible benefits as well as potential risks involved. Participants were provided with a phone number of a resource that could be utilized for support in the event that painful emotions or stress does occur due to the research and interview questions. Any identifying information from the interview has been altered or removed to ensure participant privacy. No names or identifiable information about participants have been used. Audiotapes and transcribed texts were kept in a locked drawer in the researcher's home and will have been destroyed by August 1, 2000. Furthermore, the only people who had access to the audiotapes and transcripts were the researcher and the thesis advisor.

Summary

This chapter discussed the design method used in this study. Key terms were defined. Subsequently, characteristics of the study population were identified along with the procedure used to recruit participants. Procedures were next addressed, including measurement issues, data collection procedures and data analysis measures used. Finally, measurements used to ensure the protection of human subjects were addressed. In the next chapter, results of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, results of the study are presented. To begin, demographic characteristics of the participants are described. Next, detailed responses requiring the participant's professional experience is presented in response to the first research question. Services performed by the participants are presented in response to the second research question. The environmental factors that affect juvenile delinquency are presented within themes under which they are categorized: 1) family/parenting skills, 2) peer influence and 3) truancy.

Profile of Participants

The participants in this study include 6 female and 4 male social workers and juvenile probation officers. Years of social work experience range from 8 to 24 years and include experience in residential shelters, maximum security facility, out of home placement, and schools. All of the participants have earned a college degree.

In-depth interviews were conducted in order to examine: (1) the scope of the problem; (2) its societal ramifications; (3) some possible causes; (4) the attitudes that professionals have about juvenile delinquency; (5) and review the services performed by professionals. The researcher wondered if people's thoughts and beliefs about the causes of, and solutions, to aberrant behavior among adolescents had changed over the years. Most of the participants believe that family/parenting skills, peer influence and truancy are the major characteristics of delinquency. Similar to the words of Sondheim and Bernstein's famous 1957 song from the musical, West Side Story, "Gee Officer Krupke," that the cause of misbehavior might be a child's upbringing:

Dear kindly Sgt. Krupke,
 You gotta understand
 It's just our bringin' upke
 That gets out of hand
 Our mothers are all junkies,

Our fathers all are drunks
 Golly Moses, natcherly we're punks!
 Gee, Officer Krupke,
 We're very upset
 We never had the love that
 Ev'ry child oughta get
 We ain't no delinquents,
 We're misunderstood
 Deep down inside us there is good.

Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of adolescents who are the subject of delinquent acts?

Family/Parenting Skills

While all participants described a number of factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency, all 10 indicated that the family lifestyle and/or the parenting style were the dominant factor. Speculation as to causes of delinquency have usually been as diverse as Sondheim and Berstein suggest in their lyrics, and the attitude among professionals that positive change could occur has often been as hopeless as the judge in West Side Story:

My father is a bastard,
 My ma's an S.O.B.
 My grandpa's always plastered,
 My grandma pushes tea
 My sister wears a moustache,
 My brother wears a dress
 Goodness, gracious, that's why
 I'm a mess! (Yes!)
 Officer Krupke, you're
 Really a slob
 This boy don't need a doctor
 Just a good honest job
 Society's played him a
 Terrible trick
 And sociologic'ly he's sick
 (I am sick)

For example, one participant said:

The most common cause of delinquency is bad parenting. I understand that that's a judgmental term, perhaps I should say inadequate or ineffective parenting for

whatever reason. I think that's by far the most significant environmental factor.

Another participant stated:

I think we need to teach the parents how to parent. Like when they teach them their ABCs, they need to teach them their body parts, how to handle their emotions and anger. This is something that needs to be taught to kids early on.

Contrary to the hopelessness expressed in Sondheim's lyrics and with some professionals, I am optimistic that early identification of behavior problems and thorough assessment as to the cause, followed by consistent and appropriate intervention across agencies through a child's development can help every child succeed. The stress from Social Workers and Probation Officers working with some families is best captured in one participant's statement:

The families! I never used to think it was the families and I always thought the kids could get out of it, but it is so frustrating lately to deal with the parents. They don't care what their kids are doing. Most of the families are single parents. A lot of times there are no male role models in the home or in the family. Also, a lot of the parents are involved in criminal activity. There is no support from the family.

Review of the literature and interviews suggests that the number of women in the labor force rose from a fifth to a third of the total female population during 1900 and 1950 (Roe, 1956). For the past 20 years, the fastest growing segment of the U.S. labor force has been women with young children; 73 percent of today's mothers with school-age children have jobs (Minnesota Business Partnership [MBP], 1991). Ironically, while jobs do not allow working parents time to make certain their children are well supervised, the community must support parents so they don't become discouraged and give up on their children. When I asked one participant her opinion on how the family and poor parenting skills contribute to delinquency, she said:

I think family dysfunction is a huge part of it. I think all families are dysfunctional by definition. There are no perfect families and there are no normal families.

Families that give the image that they are perfect, probably have the most stuff going on. You tend to find the same dysfunction over and over again. I know it's difficult being a single parent and it's not a rip on a single parent, but when you have a single parent and that person is working full-time, it's a lot harder to keep track of what your kids are doing. I know that's not what those people signed up for when they had kids. I think it's an unfortunate factor, but that's just a reality.

As a society, the apparent increased problem with delinquency may be an indication that our country is suffering from growing pains, as the expectation that all able-bodied adults seek employment escalates. Unfortunately, children who are delinquent cause many professionals to throw up their arms in defeat since most individual efforts to correct the problem seem to have little impact on the child or parent. Poor parenting skills was continually seen as the major factor contributing to delinquency and one participant stated:

I think sometimes it just comes down to the parenting. When I say this, I say it because I consider myself a surrogate parent to 200 kids. I see the same thing happening in Mounds and in Maple Grove as I do in South Minneapolis. Either the parents don't want to take the time, or they don't want to follow through, and the child has gotten the message that there will not be a consequence to my behavior. With the parenting that's going on, and not to say that it's bad, but it doesn't surprise me that that's why the child ended up in court.

Much remains unknown about the relationship of parents' effective parental supervision and delinquency on the part of their children. Research suggests that parents who clearly communicate expectations for acceptable and mature behavior, and who monitor and encourage adherence to those standards, enhance their children's sense of social responsibility. Authoritarian parents rely heavily on coercive controls, but tend to be inconsistent in their application. Permissive parents are not inclined to discipline but, in avoiding confrontation over the child's misbehavior, fail to define and encourage mature

behavior (Wright & Wright, 1994).

Bonding to parents is viewed as an essential element in the developmental process leading to conformity. Poor child-parent attachment reduces commitment to academic and long-term social and economic goals. Without such commitments, school failure is more likely, thus reducing the chances of conventional success. As children mature and a shift in bonding occurs, their loyalty apparently shifts away from parents toward their peer group and an increase in lack of communication. One participant described communication between child and parent as:

Most of the kids on our caseload, they're not scared of their parents or the consequences. The way you hear some of these kids talk to their parents, it just absolutely amazes you. You should fear the consequences of your misbehavior when you're a kid and a lot of these kids don't have that. They don't. They talk to their parents like they talk to their friends.

What is necessary to keep children from becoming delinquent? Apparently, a healthy home environment is the single most important factor, an environment characterized by parents' affection, cohesion, and involvement in their children's lives. Children need the love, support, and acceptance that parents can provide. When these elements are missing, that is, when parents are harsh, unloving, overly critical, and authoritarian, healthy development is impeded and the child's risk of delinquency increases. Parental rejection appears to be the most powerful predictor of juvenile delinquency. Another participant explained how family contributes to juvenile delinquency in this manner:

I think we see similar family dynamics that contribute to the delinquency of adolescents. I believe that delinquency can be a corrosive family process where one or both parents are chemically dependent or absent from the home. Conduct disorders often emerge from the corrosiveness of the chemically dependent family system.

Working with high-risk families before their child become involved with delinquency,

will give them a smoother start in life, reduce the number of crimes committed, and save money that would otherwise be spent pursuing, prosecuting, and jailing offenders.

Improving predictions, developing effective intervention programs, and changing social policy will save a considerable amount of money.

Peer Influence

The second most common theme shared by the participants as a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency involved peers or gangs influence. This theme most often was described as “fitting in”. Many research studies suggest that male antisocial behavior tends to involve violence toward people and property, while females tend to engage in sexual activity, substance abuse, and less serious property crimes, such as shoplifting (Earls & Reiss, 1994). One way that females engage in crime may be indirect rather than direct – the so-called Helen of Troy syndrome, in which females instigate criminal acts by their male partners or children (Earls & Reiss, 1994). One participant suggested:

I think we need to take a strong look at what’s going on with their peers. Well, let’s say that Johnny commits an offense with Steve and Toby. If Johnny’s court order says no contact with Steve and Toby, that means we have to rely on the new arrest or parents’ reporting. Let’s say a parent reports that they’re running around with them, or there is a police report indicating that they were all together, that is a probation violation. We’re seeing that more and more now, the no contact.

While there are a variety of problems that contribute to delinquency, one participant stated: “I think one of the things is age. Kids are experimenters, they make mistakes, peer pressure, you have that and I think that’s a big factor across the board.” Heroes are not only found in movies, they are also found in everyday life. Children choose role models based on their environment and peer pressure. They may become violent towards their siblings and even towards their parents, trying to follow the actions of their peers. The consensus appears to be that, delinquency occurs mostly in a group context and that if an adolescent associates with other adolescents who are involved in

delinquent activities, then that individual is more likely to be involved in similar activities. Most participants felt strongly that peer pressure is extremely important to adolescents, and as reported by one participant:

We let the kid know that they are on probation 24 hours a day. They can't do whatever they want – smoke pot, hang out with the gang or crowd, go out after curfew. Our expectation is that they are doing what they are supposed to do all the time. We put them on a contract. Part of the contract lets them know that they need to be in school, not hang out with this person or that person, because maybe these guys have 2 or 3 years of trouble. When I was growing up, we wouldn't dare hang out with certain kids. We were afraid that if our parents caught us talking to "bad" kids, we would be in trouble. The kids on my caseload use poor judgement. They meet and "hang out" at the Malls or downtown Minneapolis. They wear their pants hanging down and around their knees. They just want to "fit in."

Peer conformity increases the potential level of delinquent behavior for all parties involved. As a result of interpersonal gratification the adolescent may be destined to attach him or herself to delinquent peers. The children develop solidarity and a desire to satisfy peer expectations. They participate in delinquent or deviant activities to help insulate them from ridicule. Another participant stated:

We have a wonderful speaker for the juveniles whose philosophy is that you hang out with shit, you smell like shit. You have kids where when they're hanging out with people who dropped out of school or kids who are getting into trouble, or kids who are on probation, it doesn't take long before some of it starts to rub off.

Truancy

Unfortunately, in spite of alarming statistics, truancy has often not been taken seriously by those who have the power to implement change. A final common theme on factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency was truancy. Most data reported that "the dropouts, both male and female, has four times more police contacts than the high school

graduates, and the dropouts also reported more delinquent behavior (Elliott & Voss (1974). Truancy was also more common among students with a history of reading difficulties, and among young people in “special populations” such as residential treatment centers, detention centers, and alternative schools (Elliott & Voss, 1974). Supporting the idea that truant youth often engage in other risky behaviors or have serious emotional problems, one participant said:

I think parents overall would like their children to attend school, but the child may suffer from a learning disability and is too embarrassed to participate in school. They would rather stay home or walk the streets than to go to school and feel humiliated. There are so many underlying issues that the parents cannot address and school is not a high priority. So I think there’s a lot of things that I would see that are more important from some of my parents’ perspective than forcing their child to go to school.” Another participant stated: “if a truant continues with the behavior, the likelihood of them accelerating to more serious crimes is backed by research. I think truants can come from inappropriate school programs where they have unaddressed learning disabilities or unaddressed gifted abilities.

One participant felt strongly that immediate consequences must be in place for children who do not follow court orders, especially school attendance. The participant stated: “if a kid’s not in school, I want to be able to do something immediately, not wait a month until I go to court and say he hasn’t been in school now for a month.”

There is a commonality between truancy and corrections and as one participant stated:

Truancy is a BIG factor. It’s pretty rare to have a kid on probation that attends school regularly. We have a lot of kids who are in the EBD [emotional, behavior disorder] or the contained classrooms. They are in the emotionally and behaviorally disturbed classrooms. There are alternative programs during the night or day treatment schools that a lot of those kids attend. It’s not to say that all kids

on juvenile probation are in or have educational problems, but a lot of kids who have educational problems I think are on juvenile probation.

Most of the Social Workers and Probation Officers would agree with the participant who stated:

The parents go to work before this child gets up in the morning and goes to school. They don't know if this child refuses to get up, or this child refuses to go to school. Many parents throw their hands up in disgust and frustration. Probation seems to get these kids to go to school, because if they don't we have schools file a truancy petition." Another participant went on to state: "when kids go to school, they are going to be productive contributors to society. They are going to have a career, be able to make money and they won't have the need to resort to crime and other delinquent behaviors.

There are two units in Hennepin County Children and Family Services that specifically handle educational neglect and truancy petitions filed by the schools. One participant stated: "we have cases assigned to us because the child is not going to school. They would have missed more than 7 days out of the school year. Most of them have missed anywhere from 12 to 25 days of school. What we say is that the parent needs to have her child in school."

Research Question 2: What type of services or solutions, social workers and probation officers use with juvenile delinquents and their families?

Monitoring

The most frequently cited service performed by participants involved monitoring and supervision. Eight participants perform some form of monitoring through the schools, the residential facility or the juvenile's home. One participant stated:

My job is supervision, so it's monitoring the kids on a regular basis. I go to schools and I check their school attendance and how they're doing. I do UAs [urinal analysis] on them to see if they're using. I meet with the families on occasion, but

most of my contact is with the kids. Once in awhile I'll go to the homes.

In another interview, a participant discussed the importance of "keeping check" on the adolescents. The participant stated: "I make a call to the schools at least once a week to see if the child is there. If they have unexcused absences, I phone their home to see what's going on. Most of the time, I have to go to their house because they don't have telephones." One participant reported:

Since I work primarily in a residential facility, the children are strictly monitored.

They do not get the opportunity to leave the premises, unsupervised or get involved with unsupervised activities. The child is aware of his or her boundaries and the consequences for violating a house rule.

According to Karen and Kevin Wright (1994), the second most important family life factor that places children at risk for delinquency is inadequate supervision. Children who are inadequately supervised by parents who fail to teach them the difference between right and wrong, monitor their whereabouts, friends, or activities, and who discipline them erratically and harshly are more likely to become delinquent.

One participant recalled the supervision of one of his adolescents: "he stay at other kids' houses and every morning I go to this kid's house, his dad is drinking. The brandy bottle is out, so you know what this kid sees from his father. It definitely hurt the kid." Monitoring and supervision emerge as one of the most powerful predictors of juvenile delinquent behavior (Wright & Wright, 1994). Adequate supervision allows parents to influence the child's selection of friends and activities, express disapproval, and sanction antisocial and delinquent behavior (Wright & Wright, 1994).

Appropriate Placement

Attempts to find the most appropriate placement for adolescents were cited nearly as frequently as monitoring and supervision. For many participants, this involved out of home placement. In one interview, the participant was faced with a young man who was recently discharged from a group home for sexually acting out. He was held in detention

while the social worker, probation officer and the family could put together information to determine the best possible options. Given the juvenile's age and cognitive limitations, it was difficult to find an appropriate placement. Options that were considered were out of state residential treatment center, Hennepin County Home School or another local group home. It was decided that the young man would be held in the County Home School for a period of time before being transferred to a different group home.

In another situation, a participant stated that his job was to "recommend to the court who stays incarcerated and who doesn't." While incarceration may present an opportunity for some juveniles to effect a turnaround in their lives, for many it is a revolving door. One participant stated: "a good chunk of my kids have been placed out of the home already. They've been in residential treatment centers anywhere from 3 months to over a year." Often the decision to place a child in an out of home placement is determined by what is best for the child. This is evident by the statement made by one of the participants:

The programs we use for the higher level offenders are out of home residential treatment centers. The residential treatment centers are giving these kids drug help, getting them help for family issues, they are giving them anger management, teaching them how to be self sufficient and how to deal with a lot of the problems that they have going on.

Some programs seldom use the option of out of home placement. The Community Alternative Probation Supervision (CAPS) is a group supervision program for lower to medium risk juvenile offenders. For a child to be placed out of the home, who is participating in CAPS, all possible options will have been exhausted. A participant described CAPS as a cost-effective program, in part, due to the high turnover rate of juveniles who complete the program and the low use of out of home placements. The average cost of incarcerating juveniles for one year is approximately \$34,000 (Office of

Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 1995).

Most out of home placement decisions involve probation officers and social workers. One participant recalled: “sometimes I will take a kid to court. I think it is a lack of understanding of following the law. We try to provide a spectrum of services, but sometimes it becomes necessary to take them to court and possibly place the child at St. Croix Camp, a residential facility.”

Out of home placement involves separation after attachment. One participant stated: “...to pull someone from the home has got to be extremely difficult. I can’t imagine a job that would be more stressful and difficult, as a Social Worker having to take kids out of the home.” Rutter (1981) suggests that children from broken homes display higher rates of delinquent behavior than children from intact homes. Rutter also suggests that there were more symptoms of delinquency in children from homes with family problems that caused the breakup than in children from stable homes where the parent had died.

Family Support

The third and final service most often provided by the Social Worker and Probation Officer involves family support. While all participants described various ways of supporting the family, some participants did not feel that they should provide services to the family. One participant reported: “we are mandated by the court to supervise the juvenile and are not obligated to furnish the family with direct services.” One participant stated:

While they are at the County Home School, there are a lot of parents who do family counseling. I will do visits and talk to their mom. I will go out once a week and do visits, either at school or at home. So, you know, without the parents, the job is extremely difficult. We try to tie the parent in as much as possible.

Another participant explained:

Let me say this, I look at the family system as a whole system, not just look at the

child as an individual. I look at the child as a product of their environment and I look at the family also as being a product of the environment. I assess the whole family, what is going on with the family, not just with the kid acting out.

Most participants reported that it is almost impossible to perform their job without the family. A participant described the relationship with the family as “essential.” One participant stated:

It is my job to arrange placement of children with family members. The kinship unit is responsible for locating family members once a child has been court ordered into long-term foster care. You get to know the relatives and sometimes assist them with what they need in order to facilitate the relative placement.

Characteristics of Juvenile Delinquents

In response to the first research question: “What are the characteristics of adolescents who are delinquents?” two examples are presented.

Example 1

“Jerry” (not his real name), 13 years old, has been documented as a runaway 10 times and a subject of police reports for his delinquent acts 8 times. Jerry’s family has a long history of involvement with Hennepin County Children and Family Services.

A child protection case was opened for Jerry’s family 4 times over the past 14 years. The first two case openings occurred when Jerry’s two older sisters were infants. In both instances, the case was opened because of the mother’s mental limitations, lack of parenting skills, and inability to bond with the infants. The initial report to child protection alleged physical abuse of the two girls by their mother and Jerry’s father. Additional reports during that time included concerns about lack of supervision, because Jerry was found by the police wandering in the street twice within a 10-minute time frame. The final case opening occurred when Jerry’s oldest sister began sexually acting out in school. The mother later admitted that when her daughter was very young, a man who came to the door and offered to care for her, sexually abused her.

Since the last case closure, there have been three additional child protection assessments. In each case, the callers were concerned that the children were being left with their grandfather, who was recently released from prison. Other concerns included physical abuse and cocaine use by Jerry's mother.

Jerry's family has had an active child welfare case since the middle of 1990. The case was opened mainly because of Jerry's behavior (running away, damage to property and other delinquent acts). Jerry's social worker stated that Jerry gets into trouble most of the time when he has a lot of spare time and is with other kids. Since the fall of 1996, the social worker believes that the problem has been addressed quite successfully by getting Jerry involved in structured activities to fill his spare time (summer camp and after school programs).

Example 2

In October 1993, "Hal" (not his real name), 8 years old with a diagnosis of mild retardation was reported to the police for having a dangerous weapon in school.

Hal's family first came to the attention of Children and Family Services in August 1990 when Hal was 5 years old. A neighbor called to report that Hal's mother often left him alone and unsupervised. Hal, in an interview with the investigative worker, confirmed that he often played unsupervised in the parking lot of their apartment complex. Hal's mother denied that he is left unsupervised. She also stated that her boyfriend had tried to break down the door the night before the interview and that she was concerned for her safety. The conclusion of the investigative worker was that Hal's mother was under a great deal of stress because of the domestic violence occurring in the home. In addition, while child maltreatment had occurred, it was concluded that the risk level to Hal was low, so no further child protection services were provided.

Children and Family Services received the next referral for the family in December 1991 when Hal and his younger sister were placed on a 72-hour health and welfare hold, because they were left unsupervised by their mother. Again, during the interview, Hal

confirmed that his mother often left him and his younger sister alone. He also stated that he was concerned about his mother's drinking, and that his mother hit him almost daily. Hal's mother stated that she had been sexually and physically abused as a child. She had runaway when she was 13 years old, and that she was an alcoholic. The case remained open after it was determined that neglect due to lack of supervision had occurred and that the level of risk to the children was high. The children were placed in a foster home, where they remained until September 1992, at which time they were returned to their mother.

The case was reopened in October 1993. The reporter stated that Hal's mother was drinking again and was leaving the children unattended. The caller was also concerned that Hal had sexually abused his sister. While the case was being investigated Hal was the subject of the police report that brought him to the attention of the County Attorney's Office.

In addition, Hal's mother called to report that Hal was threatening to kill himself and requested that he be placed. The psychologist who examined Hal concluded that he was not suicidal, but that his actions indicated that it was likely he was a victim of abuse. Further investigation by the social worker, uncovered the fact that Hal himself was a victim of sexual abuse and that he was sexually abusing his sister. The case was opened in Child Protection Services with a finding of maltreatment and an indication that the children were at high risk of future maltreatment.

Jerry and Hal's cases are not unusual. They are typical cases of juvenile delinquents. Both children and their families exhibit a number of characteristics that predict that Jerry and Hal are at high risk of future delinquency. Wiig (1995) suggest that the characteristics most often used as predictors of future delinquent behaviors are: 1) Age at first contact with the police or a documented incident of delinquency; 2) Abuse, neglect and/or violence in the home; 3) Particular family characteristics, including multiple problems in daily functioning; 4) Criminal or delinquent histories of parents or

siblings; 5) Poor school attendance and school failure, and 6) An absence of positive supportive relationships or connections with adults and peers.

Summary

This chapter presented findings from the data analysis. In summary, participants suggested that the environmental factors that affect juvenile delinquency involved family/parenting skills, peer influence and truancy. They described the services they perform as monitoring, appropriate placement and family support. In conclusion, the characteristics of juvenile delinquency were presented.

Chapter six will present a discussion on the findings of the study. The final chapter will also describe strengths and limitations of the study. In conclusion, implications for practice and policy, as well as implications for further research will be offered.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The final chapter will present a discussion of the major findings of the research study. Strengths and limitations of the study will likewise be presented. And finally, implications for social work practice and policy, along with implications for further research will be discussed.

There were limited studies found in the literature review, which explored collaboration between social service systems. Social service systems include health care, human services, education, and justice. However, there is an abundance of research on risk factors contributing to juvenile delinquency.

Major Findings

Question #1

What are the characteristics of adolescents who are the subject of delinquent acts?

The interview findings are consistent with the literature in reporting that poor parenting skills was continually seen as the major factor contributing to delinquency. These findings concur with many research studies (Bray, 1980; Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Coebean & Power, 1978; Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller & Skinner, 1991; Goldstein, 1984). Wright & Wright (1994) concluded that a healthy home environment, one in which parents and children share affection, cohesion, and involvement, reduces the risk of delinquency.

Social workers and probation officers agree that parents must start early to identify characteristics of delinquency in their children in order to have effective prevention approaches. Bilchik (1995) suggests the following effective delinquency prevention efforts: 1) address the highest priority problem areas and identify strengths (both risk and protective factors) to which children are exposed; 2) focus mainly on populations exposed to multiple risk factors; 3) address problem areas and identify strengths early and at appropriate developmental stages; 4) address multiple risk factors in multiple settings

such as family, schools, and peer groups; 5) offer collaborative interventions across many systems, including health and education, and deal simultaneously with many aspects of juveniles' lives; and 6) monitor and supervise at-risk juveniles consistently and often. These efforts are both prevention and early intervention in nature.

Bilchik (1995) concluded that collaboration between the juvenile justice system and other service systems, including mental health, health care, child welfare, law enforcement and education is essential in the process of intervention. Four participants agreed with this conclusion and stated: "there has got to be more involvement and consideration given to juveniles who has mental health issues. It is important that they receive the message from the judge and probation officer that they cannot misbehave. Given their mental limitations, they must experience immediate consequences."

While there are a variety of problems that contribute to delinquency, there is no one simple solution. A participant stated:

Delinquency can be a corrosive family process where one or both parents are chemically dependent; a bi-product of biochemical influences in the child; a serious traumatic injury that can result in some very distorted thinking; some psychotic behavior that's related to neurological dysfunction; mental health problems that are inherited genetically; conduct disorders; or unresolved loss from abandonment.

These findings concur with many research studies (Farrington, 1991; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Kazdini, 1994; Olds, Henderson, Phelps, Kizman & Hanks, 1993).

The interview findings are consistent with the literature, in that positive parental attitude toward crime, education, and behavior will more likely create positive attitudes in their children. The findings concur with many research studies (Thornberry, Huizinga & Loeber (1995); Thornberry (1994); Tolan & Guerra (1994). Baumrind (1989) concluded that parents who are indifferent or uninvolved are associated with adolescents with the greatest risk for psychological, social and delinquent problems.

Question #2

What type of services or solutions do Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers use with juvenile delinquents and their families?

Nine out of 10 participants expressed their involvement in the adolescent's education. It is standard for court orders to include school attendance as a probation requirement. Participants expressed their involvement in working with the parents, adolescent and school to improve the child's attendance. This involvement may include monitoring attendance records, regular visits to the school, phone calls to the school social worker, providing the adolescent with an alarm clock, assisting the family in locating alternative schools, or helping the family arrange tutorial services. These findings concur with Wagner & Stevenson (1982) who suggest that schooled children can outperform unschooled children.

In the open-ended question regarding the impact of delivered services to the adolescent, their family and the community, Social Workers and Probation Officers most frequently mentioned: 1) creating an opportunity for the adolescent to grow up in a safe environment; 2) promoting education and self-esteem; and 3) providing an environment for the adolescent to make good choices.

Implications for Practice and Policy in Social Work

Social workers and juvenile probation officers need to recognize the importance of collaboration. Joining as a team will eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort and allow for a consolidated support to the adolescent and the family. When problems arise, they are able to use their combined resources as solutions. This team or collaborative approach explores the strengths within the family along with taking care of their needs. The team can assess the strengths to address the needs. This is an approach that gives a family responsibility, decision making power and choice, with the support of a team.

Continued efforts should be made to help families achieve balance. Screening teams consisting of psychologists, members of the community, school, social workers,

administration, probation officers, paralegal, police department and county attorney's office will have to develop interventions based on research and knowledge about what works with "chronic" families. Such a team would be able to help the family, not only with the current crisis, but will address the issues that may later affect the family. There needs to be attention directed to the whole family.

Implications for Future Research

The information obtained from this study, although not generalizable to the entire population of social workers and juvenile probation officers, will provide a basis for further research. There is a need for continued research that looks at barriers to collaboration of social services.

Hennepin County Children and Family Services could perform services to a family whose child may get locked up at the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center. Since the child is governed by juvenile correction policies, rules and regulations, the child could remain at the maximum security facility for 30 to 90 days without an opportunity to work on some of the issues that he or she had begun with the social worker from Children and Family Services.

As social workers, we must work at removing some of the policies that hinder us from rendering services to our clients, specifically clients with special needs.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Strengths

A primary strength of the study is the in-depth interviews of the participants. The qualitative design, which included open-ended questions, allowed participants to give detailed descriptions, which permitted a deeper understanding of the subject. Participants' years of experience with juvenile delinquents further allowed for a wide range of experiences to be analyzed. Finally, in-depth interviews strengthen the study by allowing participants to be honest with their thoughts and perceptions.

Limitations

The first limitation is the fact that all the participants are current county workers. By limiting the study to current workers, the study lacks the experience and perception of individuals who have left the field. The sample size was small. Only 5 social workers and 5 juvenile probation officers participated in the study.

Conclusion

This study has explored the impact environmental factors, family relationships and peer pressure have on adolescents. The study is only the beginning in looking at collaboration between family services and corrections. The results suggest that there are similarities between the two agencies and “teaming” of the two would be a big step toward intervention.

Additionally, those working on the front lines with these very troubled adolescents found support and encouragement from one another – the professionals began to feel some hope that, through collaboration, change was possible. The results of the findings suggest that today’s epidemic of juvenile delinquency requires a collaborative investment. The following recommendations are based on the research for this study and professionals who see family/parenting skills, peer influence, and truancy as early indicators of far more serious problems for the community if left unattended:

- (1) Policy makers should pool their resources to provide family advocacy. This effort should include strategies that help families develop good family management practices, like clear expectations and consistent consequences for misbehavior. Funding for this effort could be secured from grants. Resources could include families who volunteer to mentor other families and develop an extended family system. Home visitation programs that offer specific services, including intensive support to parents, anger management training, parental enrichment training, financial planning, and discipline techniques will help lay the foundation for stronger families and less child maltreatment.

- (2) Policy makers should continue the funding of community-based programs. This effort should include more site-based collaboration with mental health services, social services, corrections, churches, schools, libraries, recreation centers, job services and legal assistance. This author strongly believes in the “team” approach to problem solving. No one program can handle the delinquency problem alone, but multi-disciplinary members from the community, with a common mission to raise healthy young people to be responsible adults, can be an excellent starting point.
- (3) Policy makers should ascertain that schools incorporate a strategy to address educational neglect and truancy. Current efforts between the county attorney’s office, juvenile probation, Minneapolis Schools and county social services should continue. It is hoped that school officials will no longer examine their policies, procedures, and resources in isolation, but rather include other agencies that support their efforts.
- (4) Policy makers should make certain that “family” training is available to all personnel who work with families. The training should include information about the societal ramifications of delinquency, effective methods for working with adolescents who are at-risk of becoming delinquent, and ways to interact positively with those often incorrigible and offensive adolescents and their families. While these families can be quite difficult, they frequently perceive “professionals” to be difficult as well. An attitude change may be needed at both levels.
- (5) Policy makers should fund future programs that are devoted toward prevention efforts. Prior to allocation of monies to build bigger and stronger police departments and prisons, all public funded proposals should be examined against its agency’s vision and mission statement. It is hoped that policy makers will agree that prevention efforts are best for all of society.

This author, as well as the results of this study, supports what one finds in the above literature review of the topic. Zigler, Taussig, and Black (1992) argued for treating children through their broad environment:

The first important influence on children was the family but children and families are interactive members of a large system of social institutions, such as the school, the workplace, and community health and child care services. By improving parents' interactions with these systems, and by helping them to support their child's physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development, early intervention programs aim to make positive changes in overall functioning that will help the child to be effective in a variety of social contexts (p.997).

By working together we can help society come up with treatments and programs that make "growing up" the utopia it was meant to be.

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APPENDIX A
IRB #2000-24-2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

To be asked by the researcher

1. Could you begin by telling me your job title?
2. How long have you worked as a professional with adolescents in the juvenile justice system?
3. What services do you provide to adolescents and their families?
4. In your opinion, what do you think the problems are that contribute to juvenile delinquency?
5. What impact does your service have on the adolescent, their family and our community?
6. What other services is needed to increase the effectiveness with juvenile delinquents?
7. What would you do to increase your effectiveness of working with juvenile delinquents?
8. Is there anything else you would want me to know about the social forces in the lives of juvenile delinquents?
9. In your opinion, what interventions are most effective with juvenile delinquents?

APPENDIX B
IRB #2000-24-2
RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Helen Marie Lewis. Can you tell me what you have been told about my research study so far? Let me tell you more about my project. I am currently in my final year of a Master in Social Work program at Augsburg College. As part of our program requirements, we must work on a thesis, or research paper, in an area of interest to us. I have chosen the issue of environmental factors that affect juvenile delinquency. Some of the literature I have found discusses how girls and boys respond differently to juvenile justice programs with gender-specific approaches and methods. However, I would like to find out about *your* experiences as you work with juveniles. I specifically want to know what you see as the common problems faced by children you serve.

The process entails a 60-minute in-person interview in which I would ask you a few questions. I would like to audiotape the interview for transcription purposes. To ensure confidentiality, the audiotapes and my notes would be destroyed when I have finished my study and paper. You will also be asked to read through an interpretation of your interview for accuracy.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You will receive an honorarium, total value \$10.00 whether or not you complete the interview. Possible indirect benefits include helping to improve the understanding of the researcher and social work practitioners. Do you think you would be interested in participating in my study?

If yes, when is a good time to conduct the interview?

If no, thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C
CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

IRB #2000-24-2

This research study includes sensitive and confidential information about study participants. This information is shared with you confidentially for the purpose of being transcribed. By signing this form you are agreeing to not reveal names, identifying information or any of the content of the interviews.

Name of Transcriptionist

Signature

Date

Appendix D

CONSENT FORM

IRB #2000-24-2

An Exploratory Qualitative Study

The Environmental factors that Affect Juvenile Delinquency

You are invited to participate in my research study designed to look at the environmental factors that affect juvenile delinquency. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be involved in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary. This research study is being conducted by Helen Marie Lewis in partial fulfillment of the Master of Social Work thesis requirement at Augsburg College.

What will happen during the study?

The study consists of one audiotaped interview lasting about 60 minutes. Helen Marie Lewis, a Master of Social Work student, who is working on her thesis, will conduct the interview. You will be asked to relate your experience as a juvenile probation worker or social worker. After the interview is complete, I will listen to the audiotapes and write an interpretation.

Are there any risks?

It is possible that through the discussion of your interview, disturbing memories or thoughts could occur. If at any point during the interview you feel too uncomfortable to go on, you may stop the interview without consequence. After the interview, the following 24-hour counseling referrals are available for you to contact should the need arise:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Hennepin County/Minneapolis Area | Crisis Intervention Center | (612) 347-3161 |
| Ramsey County/St. Paul Area | Regions Hospital | (651) 221-8922 |
| 7 County Metro Area | Crisis Connection | (612) 379-6363 |

Are there any benefits?

It is possible that you could experience an enhanced sense of well being or satisfaction as a result of this interview. Also, participants will receive an honorarium worth \$10.00 before the study.

When and where will the interview be done?

The interview will be scheduled at a time and place that are convenient for you. Interviews will be done in person.

Who will have access to the interview material?

The audiotaped interviews will be transcribed by a trained transcriptionist and then destroyed. The trained transcriptionist will be required to sign a confidentiality form to ensure your privacy. Any identifying information from the interview, including your name, will be removed or altered on the written transcript. The transcripts will be shared with the researcher's thesis advisor during the process of writing the thesis and several members of a research team who will be reading, interpreting, and reflecting on the transcripts. All information is confidential. However, the researcher cannot guarantee anonymity due to the small sample size, but I will make every effort to maintain anonymity. Transcripts will be identified with numbered

codes only, and no names or identifiable information will be used in this study. Raw data, including the audiotapes, will be destroyed no later than August 1st, 2000.

What if you change your mind?

You are free to withdraw from this study or refuse permission for the use of your interview or transcript at any time and the \$10.00 honorarium will be yours to keep. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with Hennepin County, Minneapolis Police Department or Augsburg College.

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on aspects of the study that are unclear. I will attempt to answer any questions you may have prior to, during, or following the study. If I am unable to answer any of your questions to your satisfaction, you may also call my thesis advisor, Maria Dinis at (612) 330-1704.

Authorization:

1) I, _____, have read this consent form and decide to participate in the research project described above. My signature indicates that I give my permission for information I provide during the interview to be used for a thesis research project. I will be given a copy of this form for my records.

Signature

Date

Complete Address (for purpose of re-contacting you to verify my interpretation of your interview)

Telephone number (for purpose of re-contacting you to verify my interpretation of your interview)

In addition:

2) I consent to be audiotaped.

Signature

Date

3) I consent to the use of direct quotes from my interview.

Signature

Date

If you have any questions or concerns you may reach me at:

Helen Marie Lewis
Augsburg College, MSW Student
Phone☎ (612) 818-9535

Or if you need further information, you may contact my thesis advisor:

Maria Dinis, Ph.D.
c/o Augsburg College
Business Phone: (612) 330-1704

