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Chapter 14
Violence is as American as Cherry Pie:
Mass Incarceration and Juvenile Violence

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to offer "food for thought" regarding an under researched area of juvenile violence causation: the possible connection between steadily increasing incarceration rates and steadily increasing incidents of school violence. Unfortunately, the negative, and sometimes violent, traits individuals develop while incarcerated are often brought out into their lives in society and personal lives, which often involve the raising of children. Research has documented the impacts that being incarcerated can have upon an individual. There is growing research supporting that these newly developed traits and behaviors can easily be imbedded in the children in which they have contact with upon release. The authors argue that we should not be surprised about the increases in juvenile violence given the constant flow of individuals in and out of American prisons. This is not to say that everyone who has served time will follow this path, but this is one area where actions and patterns of behavior which have been developed in one social environment can saturate another.

INTRODUCTION

On July 27, 1967, the black activist H. Rap Brown gave a rancorous speech at a press conference in Washington, D.C. that is widely cited as the origin of his well-known quote "Violence is as American as cherry pie." In a way, it was the origin, however, that seven-word aphorism is the shortened, popularized version of what Brown said in his speech. To be precise, what he said that day was, "I say violence is necessary. Violence is a part of America's culture. It is as American as cherry pie. Americans taught the black people to be violent. We will use that violence to rid ourselves of oppression if necessary. We will be free, by any means necessary."

Brown was commenting on what he felt that African-American community needed to consider during the civil right struggle of his time if other actions were not working. But his message has carried on by many even into the 21st century who point out that American culture continues to be very violent in nature. The genesis of our county was founded on violence many could argue. Unfortunately, violence is also a daily event in many American K-12 schools.

The response of the United States is to incarcerate those who cause violence and break the law. This practice has placed many in various types of institutions and under governmental control and supervision across the country. The purpose of this chapter is to offer "food for thought" when it comes to an under researched area of juvenile violence causation ~ the possible connection between steadily increasing incarceration rates and steadily increasing incidents of school violence. Unfortunately, the negative, and sometimes very violent, traits and behaviors individuals develop while incarcerated are often brought out into their personal lives in society, personal lives which often involve the raising of children. Research has documented the myriad impacts that being incarcerated can have upon an individual. While sparse, there is growing research supporting the idea that these newly developed traits and behaviors can easily be imbedded in the children in which they have contact with upon release. The authors argue that we should not be surprised about the increases in juvenile violence given the constant flow of individuals in and out of American prisons. This is not to say that everyone who has served time will follow this path, but this is one area where actions and patterns of behavior which have been developed in one social environment can saturate another.

IMPACT OF MASS INCARCERATION

Mass incarceration leaves its footprints in so many areas of American society. That it is not to say that people who commit crimes should not be prosecuted, convicted, when guilty, and sentenced appropriately. The U.S., however, had reached points of incarceration which dwarfs all other countries (Michelle, 2012). The greater problem comes from the fact that state and federal corrections are not doing enough to work and make progress with individuals during their incarceration. The system has become a machine that simply creates better, more aggressive, more violent, and more distorted individuals. Some have said, the spout that releases felons is not returning clean water. Instead, it is polluted and saturating free society (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004).

Countless studies (Stanko & Crews, 2016; Toth, Crews, & Burton, 2008; Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004; Crews & Montgomery, 2001; Montgomery & Crews, 1998) have shown the collateral damage from mass incarceration in the United States. The trail of psychological, social, and economic effects has a huge part in inflicting unbelievable damage on entire populations. It is epidemic, and it is contagious. The damage is not only on the families of the incarcerated (who are blameless and innocent), but it is also in the communities around them.

For years, academics have studied certain effects of mass incarceration. They include, but are not limited to (Michelle, 2012):

- Children with incarcerated parents are more likely to be incarcerated.
- Children do not complete school.
- In families of incarcerated parents, children have increased health and psychological problems.
- Poverty, unemployment, lower wages, and unstable housing.

- Increases strain on marriages and relationships which break down the model of family units.
- Children of incarcerated parents are far more likely to have behavioral problems, delinquency, and school truancy.
- High rates of internalizing problems.

These are only a select few. In looking at these problems, it is important to understand that the collateral damage can extend emotionally and in behavioral patterns that can show themselves in the same subtle and/or aggressive ways that they are taught and learned. Likewise, the released felon can often not even realize that he/she is teaching the behaviors as they are actions that were learned during the incarceration and have become first-hand actions or reactions to situations. Incarceration creates more than simply a record of an individual's criminal behavior, incarceration may very well create *new* individuals. The greater the period of incarceration, the more the developed the behaviors and the more the personality which will, in turn, display those actions.

IMPACT OF LACK OF REENTRY PROGRAMS

The one common change that occurs with the release of the individuals is that they are no longer incarcerated. They are no longer inmates, and therefore, they do not have to be submissive to guards, correctional rules, and the staff or other inmates. What happens in this transition is key. Pre-release programs in many departments of correlation are becoming more and more rare as they are among the first programs to be decreased or even dissolved in budget cuts. Likewise, step-up/step-down classification programs that would normally move offenders steadily to institutions with more privileges and less violence (based on good behavior) are limited by bed-space. They only reach a small portion of offenders (Jonson & Cullen, 2015; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005).

Offenders (Jonson & Cullen, 2015; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005) that have not received any prerelease programs or treatment, which should be an integral part of all long-term offenders' release process, are exiting institutions with the suppressed emotions and levels of anger and frustration created from years of incarceration. With all those emotions built into the offender's behaviors, there must be some form of structured release. The offender's release transforms their role as they are no longer bound by the same restrictions as have been the case throughout their incarceration. The released offenders become a new being because they are subject to, and controlled by, only to their own choices and actions.

SATURATION OF DEVELOPED BEHAVIOR FROM ONE ENVIRONMENT TO ANOTHER

Fortunately, albeit still deeply troublesome, most behavior problems in schools are a product of what many would consider just "childish" adolescent behavior (Crews, 2016). These instances can be easily labeled as normal and simply part of a child's socialization process. The analysis of the child's behavior often does not receive a deeper or more complete examination of all possible factors causing his behavior unless their acts are extreme, self-destructive, or violent to others. While great caution must be used not to overreact to a child's negative behavior, it may be a sign of the child's early propensity for violence.

Recent years (Crews, 2016) have shown exponential increases in the number of lower level, yet still harmful, incidents of school violence and a progression in the intensity connected to these events. Generally, the search for causes and investigation into those confrontations seek a distinct cause or some correlation that has triggered the situation.

The authors would like to offer that another area of "causation" which should be considered. The root cause for negative, aggressive, anti-social behavior or attitudes may come from actions, patterns of thought, and behaviors which have been developed in other social environments and subsequently saturated into civil societies. This chapter is discussing one of those potential saturation points ~ American prisons to American families.

PRISON NORMS TO FREE WORLD NORMS

History has repeatedly demonstrated (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986) that the saturation of aggressive and violent thoughts and behaviors can dilute a society's established cultural norms, acceptable morals, and values. What was once an unacceptable behavior can slowly be accepted and even encourage as more people see the benefit of a certain behavior or attitude.

As more and more prisoners are released into society, there is no switch, no magic elixir, that an inmate can use to cure the patterns of behavior that were learned while incarcerated (Jonson & Cullen, 2015; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005). Those patterns and behaviors are released into society in both subtle and sometimes dramatic ways. Too often, it is the subtle ways that help transfer the behavior to children. Children, then, pick up the traits from their loved ones whom they revere and/or fear. Continued incarceration with those individuals only increases and strengthens the knowledge and use of those behaviors.

The Incarceration Process

To begin, one must understand the prison environment and how it establishes, actually requires, its own social interactions for those incarcerated to live by each day (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004). Even in the most non-violent of prisons, it is a world that is designed on violence, intimidation, fear, and strength. Every institution, state and federal, is comprised by a population of individuals that have committed crimes against others. The "strong" (physically and/or violently) are dominant and generally dictate everything that occurs in the part of "the system" in which they live. The "weak" (slight in stature, mentally ill, frightened) become "prey" and victims to those who are stronger and more willing to take whatever they want to get what they need.

The measure of intimidation and violence (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004)used by an inmate is based on the instance. This is one of the few characteristics of prison life that is correctly depicted in media, be it books, television, movies, or otherwise. A convict will use his strengths to intimidate and/or attack another inmate for reasons big and small. It is done for food, for possessions, for privileges, for sex, for anything. It is done by every inmate, in some form or another, every single day on every single interaction. When an inmate sits down at breakfast, he risks another taking his tray. When an inmate goes to the unit store, he risks his items being taken before he even gets back to his cell. When an inmate is asked to hold drugs or other contraband, he risks a beating just by saying "no". Rape and assault are always a possibility. In almost every single instance of every inmate's life during incarceration, he is

dealing with a moment of being either the "stronger or the weaker" in a two-man decision. It is a world in which the hierarchy is established already or will be re-established quickly in a very violent way.

This lifestyle inherently becomes a part of every inmate's nature (Montgomery & Crews, 1998). They view every single interaction as a need to instantly size-up the individual across from them. The first seconds of interaction are to immediately assess who is being faced and what is the *acceptable and desired* outcome of the encounter. What do we want? What will it take to get it? How do we approach it (with what level of aggression do we start)? And how far are we willing to go and how quickly do we make that level known to everybody involved. All of this is determined in the opening seconds of every contact.

In any civilized society, these thoughts would be considered brutish and bullying in nature. Nothing about such an instantaneous assessment and a need to decide about adversity would be acceptable or "normal" in polite social environments.

In prison, it is the norm. It is how people live, not just on occasion, but 24/7/365. That life becomes embedded in each person (Stanko & Crews, 2016). The result is that the strong get stronger and get an increased sense of entitlement. They also learn how to strengthen their measures of intimidation and violence and fine-tune them into tools for their future needs and wants. Occasionally, the individual considered to be weaker may take the challenge and either win and, thereby, move up the hierarchy to another level, or lose and remain. Obviously, in a loss (and in wins), the hope is not to be hurt beyond the point of quick recovery. Most important to the inmate, it will be common knowledge to everyone when the event is over as to how the hierarchy stands. Even in a loss, the weaker individual can move up, because by holding his ground and fighting well, others can see him as a greater opponent. One who will fight is an individual that is less likely to be challenged. No matter what, in prison, it is violence or intimidation that decides each person's position in the population. There are no wars of words, no awards for participating, it is simply intimidation. It is violence. It is all the time, and it is how life is.

The Reentry Process

With 95% of all incarcerated felons being released back into society (Jonson & Cullen, 2015; Lowen-kamp & Latessa, 2005), that means that 95% of the aforementioned *hierarchy* is then released. These individuals, and their understanding of societal norms and hierarchy, are now entering (or reentering) civilized society.

It must be remembered that there is no switch or elixir that stops the behaviors learned from in prison from passing through the gates into neighborhoods and families across the country. In every release, there is an individual that has lived that life of violence and intimidation with others. The strongest have overcome other violent offenders and exemplify the highest levels of aggression, intimidation, and violence. Even the weakest are still more aggressive, intimidating, and violent than most polite society. In many instances, these become the more volatile. Having been abused and brutalized during their stay in prison, much of that emotional damage will become the weapons they use on others.

The Family Process

The transition (and learned behaviors) now goes to the children in the homes, neighborhoods, and societies where these individuals then return. Social environments create their cultural "norms" and beliefs throughout their populations, from family to school, in work areas, and across the community. Karen

Horney (1950), a German-born psychoanalyst, reasoned that unhealthy or "toxic" social environments would foster and create equally unhealthy belief systems in those individuals that make up that environment. In Horney's studies and research, much of the focus was on "self" and individual views on oneself. The fact is that those same "toxic" environments, like those in the prison systems, foster the self-ideology of how strong or powerful individuals see themselves – even in the family units.

Young children (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986) in a home will see the actions of the adult figures in their homes and will take on those very same attributes. Released felons who have served long periods of time in the prison systems often do not even recognize how much they use violence and intimidation in their new free daily lives. It becomes so natural that they use subtle versions of that intimidation in their everyday activities. Many families have a member who is the "alpha" or head of the family. That person is often the disciplinarian and individual whom the younger crowd and children all seek acceptance and approval in. He/she is often that same person who can use a glance, a stern look, a clearing of the throat, or some other simple act or motion to get others to do what is needed or wanted. Even in the most loving of families, that is an act of intimidation. In the simplest forms, it is using the fear of other to obtain the desired result.

Take an individual (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004) that has had an extended sentence and has served years in prison building a level of violence and intimidation that is hundreds of times more refined than even the best of disciplinarians in society. The released convict has been using these tools 24/7/365 just to survive in a world with thousands of other similar individuals. While not realizing what he is doing, he is exercising a level of dominion and control over the members of his family that they have never seen before. Again, many of these released felons have absolutely no idea and/or realization that they are doing this.

In the same sense, members of the family unit do not completely understand what they are learning (Horney, 1950). They are now learning intimidation and violence. Remember that in the prison setting, when one individual challenges another and neither back down, the result is the beginning, but if said goal is not reached through some measure of intimidation, it does not end. It is only the beginning. In prison, the violence can be a fight of great proportions. Even the most hardened of convicts, however, will rarely present a high level of violence directly upon children in their return to society.

Instead, it may be a grab of the arm, a jerk of the upper-body, or even a slap in the face or a punch in the arm. It will always be enough to not just gain the individual's attention but to reach a clear understanding. It will also be more than is considered acceptable in any civilized society. These actions, however, build that feeling of inferiority in children, and it is that feeling that will subsequently motivate them, many times in negative ways. Wanting to achieve that same level of power and respect, the children begin to take on these characteristics. They see the level of intimidation and, if necessary, they take that and the violence to reach their goal (Stanko & Crews, 2016).

Continuing Impact on Children

Of course, it is widely known that people learn how to act and react in childhood (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). The family, in whatever form, is the model that builds the roles for what "we are and that we become." In the case of families with released felons, it is the *prison factory* that is playing a huge part in constructing, or reconstructing, the family unit. Ideally, children want to come from a family with good and strong morals. Society wants families that teach their children characteristics and traits that build better social environments not only to continue in their home but into their community as well.

Prison environments, however, build the opposite of that which is desired (Crews & Montgomery, 2001; Montgomery & Crews, 1998; Stanko & Crews, 2016; Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004; Toth, Crews, & Burton, 2008). Prison environments build continual patterns of irrational, negative, and violent behaviors. The adults who spend lengthy sentences in prison systems gather the behaviors and conditional responses of the prison system and carry them out to their family.

Along with the intimidation and violence, the prisoner naturally form a propensity to be confrontational and even violent against authority and other government figures (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004; Montgomery & Crews, 1998). Even the most docile and respectful of inmates will view the two-sided world of prison. There are inmates and there are officers. There are inmates, and there are staff. In short, there is an inmate population, and there is a correctional staff. The government prosecuted them, period and the result was incarceration. In the eyes of many, there is no way to get away from having a confrontational opposition to positions of authority with the state and government. These irrational behaviors and patterns are now transferred from the prison industry to the family of each released convict and are now becoming unintentional tools in building the personalities in children that they will take into their school and community.

The same process of actions and events that occurs in prison with the now-released felon is starting the children out in their early stages of development with the same destructive patterns (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). In the prison setting, however, these actions were a means of survival. The offender did not necessarily grow up with those attitudes and characteristics. Many non-violent offenders are placed in maximum-security institutions and are subjected to the life of violence as a result of prison overcrowding. Nevertheless, they learn the life to survive the incarceration. It is *eat or be eaten*, *kill or be killed*, *when in Rome do as the Romans do*. However, with regard to these children who are now being raised with this sort of stimulus in their home, a natural and inwardly developed role of violence is becoming a very distinct part of their character, their personality, and their life. It is less something they learn as it becomes more of who they are.

PROCESS OF BRINGING THE TRAITS TO SCHOOLS AND FELLOW STUDENTS

When children begin to appreciate and truly prefer the use of these acts of intimidation and violence, it becomes an emotional part of who they are (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). There is a powerful feeling that is generated inside of them and the want and willingness to repeat and continuing doing it forms on a subconscious level before it is realized. When the preference for something is born from a continued history of exposure to it, it is something that can occur even at a subliminal level and truly unknown to the individual.

A common result of this process is that children who have taken on such negative traits and characteristics common to the prison population, are going into schools with children of their same age and level of mental development (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). It is safe to assume and consider that they are entering their schools and networks of friends and peers either as the "alpha" of the class or group and may now be displaying those similar actions (commonly displayed in maximum security prisons), upon their classmates and friends.

The concepts and interactions of a prison society have, thereby, made their way into elementary, middle, and high school environments (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). Little discussion is needed to understand how hierarchy environments are created at these levels. Likewise, it is easy to understand

how bullying, intimidation, and violence at these levels can subsequently lead to larger problems. Too many stories have been played out across the nation of bullied children who later enacted their own sense of revenge in mass shootings and other types of violence.

As these children continue to grow in number regarding the released felons as adult figures in their homes, the saturation of prison-based belief systems will continue to saturate elementary, middle, and high school environments (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). The behaviors and traits will have simply transformed from prisons to schools. Children will teach other children the same behaviors in the hierarchy of schools.

As was stated previously, however, the characteristics and traits adapted in the prison system by individuals were/are done out of survival (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004). They were also men who had, in some form or another, already committed some form of criminal activity that led to their incarceration. They were in a terrible place, with uncomfortable living conditions and dealing with thousands of other people dealing with the same situation. To sum up, thousands of individuals, uncomfortable surroundings, coupled with high anxiety and stress levels, and multi-level hierarchies. Some might argue that a prison can seem identical to a school for some children.

While it is unfair to say that schools and prisons are the same, the truth is that on many emotional and psychological levels, they are very much the same (Crews & Tipton, 2000). There is no greater need to feel accepted than that of school in the elementary, middle, and high school levels. These are also some of the highest stress and anxiety environments everywhere. Finally, the hierarchy of the average high school is rivaled by no other.

Process of Learning Violence

When a child sees an individual that he/she loves, respects, or fears use the prison-learned skills of intimidation and/or violence to carry out their will and get the desired results from others, they begin to acquire knowledge (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). They do this in their reasoning as a result of constructing meaning that is based on the information gained in those experiences. They are processing that information and turning it into a true part of who they are and what they believe. The more they are exposed to these actions and events, the more the appreciation and understanding of it.

Constant and repeated exposure to any sort of activity and stimulus will promote appreciation and breed a growing familiarity with it (Staub, 1996; Straus & Gelles, 1986). Even at a very young age, a child can begin to use the tools of subtle intimidation and more aggressive violence, when believed to be necessary, on other children of their same age. That appreciation and familiarity will create attitude changes in the children that are more centered around the stimulus. The more their actions lead to obtaining the goals and results desired, the quicker the repeated action will turn into something that they prefer to do. This is simply because it gets them what they want and helps to make them who they are and what they want to be.

Views of Authority

For the purposes of this overall discussion, it is important to understand that the actions of officers and staff on the inmates become the way in which they view the role of authority (Zimbardo, 2007). Aside from being subjected to the authoritarian rule and developing patterns and behaviors from the effects of those things, inmates begin to pick up those same actions as their own when given position above-over

others. In prison, inmates have no power over the system. They have some power over their other inmates depending upon their position in the hierarchy of the population. The very second, however, that any inmate steps out of the prison fences, he/she instantly redefined his/her position in the world. To be at the bottom is the very last place that they envision themselves.

This is where the released felons begin to impose their will on others. In a family setting or whatever domiciliary that the inmate finds himself, it is easy to take the role of *alpha* (Evans & Wallace, 2008; Lutze & Murphy, 1999). Remember, in prison, inmates are dealing with a population of other alphas, most of which were deviant and aggressive. In most social situations, the released felon will instantly obtain an upper position in the hierarchy. This is when many of the additional traits that were learned by officers and staff will begin to show themselves.

As more and more inmates are released after long-term sentences (Jonson & Cullen, 2015; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005), without receiving pre-release programs and help and assistance with reentry into society, greater numbers of children are learning these shared traits which come from prison. Children are learning the behaviors and emotions in the developmental stages of their life. The result is that instead of learning ethics, ideals, and morals with positive influence and integrity, they are, instead, learning distorted ones.

A CLASSIC EXAMPLE: THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT

A classic example of the impact that incarceration can have on those incarcerated and those who deal with the incarcerated is the Stanford Prison Experiment conducted at Stanford University between August 14th and 20th, 1971 (Zimbardo, 1973). It was an attempt to investigate the psychological effects of perceived power, focusing on the struggle between prisoners and prison officers. It was conducted by a research group led by psychology professor Philip Zimbardo using college students. The experiment was funded by the U.S. Office of Naval Research as an investigation into the causes of difficulties between guards and prisoners in the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps. The entire study had to be stopped after six days because the environment created in the project became so threatening to the participants that it had to be ended. In fact, half of the students (prisoners) had to be released early because of the severe emotional and cognitive disorders which were transient but intense at times.

In reality, when an inmate is sent to prison, he/she does not get to go home when the situation gets too intense. There is no timeout. There is no reset or way to make things better. In six days, things grew so intense that the experiment had to be ended. Inmates spend years in prisons dealing with thousands of other inmates, thousands of other officers and staff members, and the never-ending threat that anything might happen at any given moment in time. If an entire experiment had to be ended in only six days because of the threat to the participants, one must truly consider the psychological trauma and effects on the millions of released felons every year that have served years in prisons and are now entering society. Almost all said offenders are eventually released without any sort of pre-release counseling and preparation from prison to society. Instead, these men and women are simply returned to society with years of dehumanization and behaviors that had to be stopped after six days with the Stanford Experiment.

In *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (2007), by Dr. Philip Zimbardo based on his Stanford Project, he wrote:

One of the worst things that we can do to our fellow human beings is to deprive them of their humanity, render them worthless by exercising the psychological process of dehumanization. This occurs when the "others" are thought not to possess the same feelings, thought, values, and purposes in life that we do. (p. 222)

This is the very dehumanization that occurs daily in both prisons and, it could be argued, schools across the country. He went on to write (Zimbardo, 2007):

The Stanford Prison Experiment created an ecology of dehumanization [just as prisons do] in a host of direct, constantly repeated messages. It started with the loss of freedom and extended to the loss of privacy and finally to the loss of personal identity. It separated inmates from their past, their community, and their families, and substituted for their normal reality a current reality that forced them to live with other prisoners in an anonymous cell with virtually no personal space. External, coercive rules and arbitrary decisions by guards dictated their behavior, more subtly, in our prison [as in all prisons I know about] emotions were suppressed, inhibited, and distorted. Tender, caring emotions were absent among both guards AND prisoners after only a few days. (p. 225)

In institutional settings, the expression of human emotions in contained to the extent that they represent [impulsive, often unpredictable individual reactions] when uniformity of mass reactions is the expected norm. Our prisoners were dehumanized in many ways by the treatment of the guards and by degrading institutional procedures. However, they soon added to their own dehumanization by suppressing their emotional responses except when they "broke down". Emotions are essential to humanness. Holding emotions in check is essential in prison because emotions are a sign of weakness that reveals one's vulnerability both to the guards and to other prisoners. (pgs. 223-224).

The experiment (Zimbardo, 1973) made clear the many factors that experts already know about the prison system. The dehumanization that comes from prison life destroys the personal identity of every inmate to different degrees. Emotions are "suppressed, inhibited, and distorted" while "tender caring emotions were absent among both guards and prisoners [after only a few days]." Again, it is important to recognize that these changes were only after a few days. Not specifically noted is the fact that these individuals were not actually convicted felons, so they knew that they were not facing a continued sentence but still went through unbelievable changes in the short time of the experiment.

Zimbardo (1973) instantly recognized the effects of incarceration on individuals in recording, "… they soon added to their own dehumanization by suppressing their emotional responses except when they 'broke down'. Emotions are essential to humanness." Inmates routinely lose their humanity and emotions and become aggressive from the inwardness and depression. With years of incarceration, the effects only continue to get worse and worse until they become more of a permanent attitude and characteristic.

This is what occurs to inmates during their incarceration (Stanko, Gillespie, & Crews, 2004), and with increased levels of isolation of prison, the results increase and produce a different individual. The researchers and individuals that created this experiment clarified," …just as real prisons do…as in all prisons I know about." The effects of the incarceration on individuals both in the experiment and in real-world settings are common with all. Emotions become, "…suppressed, inhibited, and distorted," and, "tender, caring emotions were absent among both guards and prisoners after only a few days." This occurs as a guard and as an inmate.

OTHER IMPACTS UPON CHILDREN

One of the other things that must be considered in conjunction with the saturation of intimidation and violence from prison environments is that there are many other violent stimuli coming at children during these stressful ages (Dominick, 1984). The video game and computer-based multiplayer industries have thrived on violent games and programs for many years. The problem is that it has also created an inherent potentially subliminal justification in children and teenagers that violence is not only common but that it also creates winners and earns respect.

Likewise, the shows created as "comedy" in cartoon formats promote levels of disrespect of authority by children as never seen before. The evaluation of these shows can be compared with direct proportion to the level of disrespect to authority that many children and teenagers now show.

The idea is simple, if one thinks think back (if old enough), to the years of "Leave it to Beaver," and consider the expectations of children to use their manners, saying "yes sir & no sir, thank you, yes ma'am & no ma'am." They were clearly expected to be respectful of adults and people in positions of authority and control negative outbursts. It was definitely a different time and there were fewer young children that were challenging authority and feeling as though it was acceptable to take actions that might hurt others.

And this is not to say that the following are examples of factors that have led to the *decline of society*, but since the introduction of shows such as, "The Simpsons, Family Guy, and South Park," there has been a steady decline in the way in which children and youth view their roles in family and community, what is approved and acceptable in areas of communicating and sex, and what is an acceptable level of violence (Jung, 2010). The evolution of what children can see, and thereby emulate, at all levels of media and communication has grown exponentially in terms of quantity and maturity. That exposure to the belief that it is acceptable to argue and fight authority, combined with watching family members use of intimidation and violence to achieve desired results becomes a very dangerous potion of belief and understanding in the mind of the young, especially when they are in the extremely high-stress world of school.

CONCLUSION

Until the correctional systems, and society, across the United States begin acknowledging what is truly coming "out" of their prisons, things will only continue to grow worse.

A parent enters prison facing potentially years in prison with little or no rehabilitation or treatment. The parent exits prison and returns to society with all the behaviors, aggression, patterns, intimidation, and violence that were learned in prison. In the family unit, the local community, and all other interactions, the released felon teaches those behavior, characteristics, and traits to the children around him, and because the young children are in their developmental stages, these things become a part of their personality at an early stage. The children teach other children. It is epidemic. It is contagious. And when the children grow and end up in prison, they must experience that same prison life at a concentrated level. Upon release, the cycle begins anew.

I, the primary author, spent eight and a half years in maximum and medium security prisons. During those years, I worked to assist a great many inmates with their legal redress to the courts. In doing so, it was a guarantee that we would have several extended conversations concerning their individual childhoods and families. In the vast majority of cases that I was a part in helping, the individual had at least

one, usually more, adult figures that he showed high respect and reverence toward that had been previously incarcerated. The truth is that I would hear more stories about those men, the released convicts, than I would hear about respectful and honorable family members that had never been arrested. Prison had become a generational byproduct of the families.

The part that bothered me even more was that the more in-depth the conversation continued, the more each one of these inmates would discuss how what they had done was not a matter of something they decided to do, but instead, it was a part of them that seemed inevitable.

During this time in prison, I spent three years teaching G.E.D. at a Youth Offender (Y.O.A) institution that had four dorms of youth offenders and one with "straight timers" like myself. Youth offenders were sentenced to periods of 1 to 6 years, in which the *good* are released in as few as 13 months with good behaviors and program participation or stay in for six years if *bad*. They were almost all between 18 and 24 years old. I spoke often to the young men, and they constantly displayed the attitude that their adult examples were always intimidating and physical. That would be the individual that they aspired to be. It was an absolute rarity that I heard one say, "I was to be 'kind' like my…"

Every year, more than a million men and women are released from prison back into society. Very few get any pre-release programs to try and prepare them for return to civilized society or aftercare in society. If nothing changes, the result is the fact that prisons are being consistently imprinted upon American children in one way or another.

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