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The Self Regulation Model: Research Findings and Implications for Treatment

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Self-Regulation Model (SRM) Background

- Sex offenders are diverse (Hudson, Ward, & McCormack, 1999). However, relapse-prevention-based treatment involves an "one size fits all" approach (Ward, T., Bickley, J., Webster, S. D., Fisher, D., Beech, A., & Eldridge, H., 2004):
  - Offenders want to avoid offending and offense is the result of coping deficits and leads to feelings of guilt.
  - Ward & Hudson (1998) found that many offenders actively sought to offend, engaged in planful behavior, and experienced satisfaction after the offense.

- Self-Regulation Theory
  - Self-regulation- “internal or external processes allowing individuals to engage in goal-directed action over time and in different contexts” (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996)
  - The process is also concerned with maintaining, eliciting, or enhancing a particular behavior as well as suppressing it. (Ward, et. al 2003)
  - Goals may be either acquisitional (approach) or inhibitory (avoidant) (Cochran & Tesser, 1996)
  - Self-Regulation Styles
    - Under-regulation/ Mis-regulation
    - Those individuals with intact self -regulatory skills have been somewhat neglected in sex offender literature

- SRM posits that sexual offenses involve the use of two types of goals, avoidant or approach, and two types of strategies, passive/automatic or active/explicit (Ward, T., Louden, K., Hudson, S.M., & Marshall, W.L., 1995).
- Yates & Ward (2008) developed 9 phases of the offense process based on the Self-regulation Model
  - Each phase may involve approach or avoidant goals and they may change as the offense progresses.
  - Eventually, all offenders' goals become approach, since they end up committing the offense.
  - Offense strategies may vary depending on the offender and/or the particular offense.

SRM Phases


1.Life event
2. Desire for offense
3. Goals
4. Planning - Strategy
5. High Risk Situation
6. Lapse
7. Offense
8. Evaluation
9. Attitude towards future offending

SRM Pathway coding

- Part I: Offender Goals
  - Item 1: Desire to Prevent Offending
    - Absent in Approach individuals
    - In Avoidant offender, determine nature of goals (appropriate v. inappropriate)
  - Item 2: Attitude Toward Offending
    - Attitudes v. Cognitive Distortions
  - Item 3: Cognitive Distortions
    - Avoidant offenders hypothesized to have less cognitive distortions than Approach offenders
  - Item 4: Post- Offense Evaluation

- Part II: Offense Strategies
  - Item 5: Self-Regulation Skills
    - Coping with life circumstances
    - Goal-directed Behavior
    - Tolerance of Emotional States
  - Item 6: Offense Planning
    - Approach: Explicit planning of victim access, offense activity, etc.
    - Avoidant: Unsophisticated or absence of planning
  - Item 7: Control over Offending Behavior
    - Perceptions of internal or external attributions

The 4 Pathways

- Based on the above goals and strategies, four possible combinations, or pathways, arise:
  - Avoidant-Passive
    - Low coping skills/ Covert Planning / Underregulation.
  - Avoidant-Active
    - Inappropriate or ineffective attempts to manage desire to offend or to prevent the offense.
  - Approach Automatic
    - Impulsive / Lack of self-regulation even if possesses general coping skills.
  - Approach Explicit
    - Explicit offense planning / Intact Regulation/ Positive evaluation of offense/ Learns from offense for future offenses.

Validation of SRM

- The Self-Regulation Model has been supported empirically (Bickley& Beech, 2002, 2003; Keeling, Rose, & Beech, 2006 & Proulx, , Perreault, & , Ouimet, 1999; Simons, , McCullar , & Tyler, 2006; 2008; Ward, Louden , Hudson, & Marshall, 1995; Webster, 2005; Yates & Kingston, 2006).
  - It has been found to differentiate between offender types, offense characteristics, use of pornography, planning, static and dynamic risk to reoffend, treatment performance/change; and use with special needs offenders (Yates, 2009).
- However, these studies have been limited by small sample sizes (i.e. N=96, N=86) and did not examine the possibility of differences between ethnic groups.

Yates and Kingston (2006)

- Sample: 80 federally incarcerated offenders
  - Avoidant-Passive: n= 11 (13.75%)
  - Avoidant-Active: n= 5 (6.25%)
  - Approach-Automatic: n= 23 (28.75%)
  - Approach-Explicit: n= 41 (51.25%)
- Offender pathway differed based on offense type (child molester, rapist, incest offender, etc.)
- Static/Dynamic risk factors varied among pathways
  - These risk factors predicted pathway membership

Goals

- Empirical support of the Self-Regulation Model using archival data.
- Assessment of differences in offense pathways based on:
  - Offender type
  - Criminal history
  - Level of Psychopathy
  - Ethnicity

Methods

- Participants
  - 163 Adult male convicted sex offenders serving state prison sentences at the Massachusetts Treatment Center.
    - Rapists- 57.1% (n=93) Child Molesters- 31.9 (n=53) Mixed Offenders - 11% (n=18)
    - Age at the time of evaluation: 21-76(M = 41.76, SD = 9.80)
    - Ethnicity: Caucasian- 72.4% (n=118) African American- 17.2 (n=28) Latino- 10.4% (n=17)
    - Marital Status: Single- 46.6% (n=69) Married- 8.8% (n=13) Separated- 6.8% (n=10) Divorced- 37.2% (n=55)
    - Average Level of Education: 10.34 (SD=1.92)
  - Subjects participated in comprehensive assessments as part of their participation in treatment.

- Measures
  - Demographic data gathered from assessment reports obtained at the Massachusetts Treatment Center
  - Self-Regulation Model Coding Protocol (2009)
    - 7 items:
      - Offense-related Goal (desire to prevent offending, attitude toward offending/schema, cognitive distortions, post-offense evaluation)
      - Offense strategies (self-regulation skills, offense planning, control over offending behavior)
    - Combination of goals, strategies yields offense pathway

- Psychopathy Checklist
  - Screening Version (PCL : SV; Hart, Cox, & Hare, 1995) for 65 subjects.
  - Revised (PCL – R; Hare, 1991) for 30 subjects.
  - Revised – Second Edition (PCL – R: 2nd; Hare, 2002) for 55 subjects.

- Procedure
  - Assessment reports coded for demographical information by graduate student research assistants.
  - SRM coding performed by one primary and one secondary rater. Inter-rater reliability was substantial (ICC = .830).
  - For all PCL measures, percentile scores for Factor and Total scores were used in order to allow for comparisons. The Screening Version provides percentile scores. Both full versions provide standard *T* scores. These scores were converted to percentile scores. The resulting scores had acceptable internal consistency (alpha = .73)

Results

- Confirmed utility of the SRM Coding Protocol (94.5% of sample was assigned a pathway).
- There was no significant difference in pathway assignment among ethnic groups ($X^2 = 10.46$, $p = .234$).

Offender Type

Groups differ significantly on rates of pathway assignment ($X^2 = 22.77$, $p < .01$)

	Offense Pathway				
	Avoidant Passive	Avoidant Active	Approach Automatic	Approach Explicit	CND*
Rapists n = 93	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1)	43 (46.2)[a]	45 (48.4)	3 (3.2)
Child Molesters n = 52	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.7)[b]	10 (19.2)[c]	34 (65.4)	3 (5.8)
Mixed Offenders n = 18	1 (5.6%)	0 (0.0)	3 (16.7)	11 (61.1)	3 (16.7)[d]

[a] z=2.0, [b] z=1.9, [c] z=-1.9, [d] z=2.0

* Could not determine pathway (either goal, strategy, or both)

Criminal History I

- No significant differences found on:
  - Total number of arraignments.
  - Total number of charges.
  - Total number of charges for which they were convicted.
- However, some significant differences based on the types of crimes for which they were convicted.

Criminal History II

Pathway	Convictions for Property Charges $X^2 = 10.52, p < .01$		
	0 n (%)	1-4 n (%)	5+ n (%)
Approach Automatic n = 53	16 (30.2) z = -1.8	26 (49.1)	11 (20.8)
Approach Explicit n = 88	51 (58.0)	28 (31.8)	9 (10.2)

Criminal History III

Pathway	Convictions for Motor Vehicle Charges $X^2 = 4.97$		
	0 n (%)	1-4 n (%)	5+ n (%)
Approach Automatic n = 54	30 (55.6)	22(17.7)	2 (3.7)
Approach Explicit n = 89	52 (58.4)	25 (28.1)	12(13.5)

Criminal History IV

Pathway	Convictions for Alcohol/Drug Charges $X^2 = 1.14$		
	0 n (%)	1-4 n (%)	5+ n (%)
Approach Automatic n = 53	35 (66.0)	16 (30.2)	2 (3.8)
Approach Explicit n = 89	62 (69.7)	21 (23.6)	6 (6.7)

Criminal History V

Pathway	Convictions for Violent Non-Sexual Charges $X^2 = 12.23, p < .01$		
	0 n (%)	1-4 n (%)	5+ n (%)
Approach Automatic n = 54	13 (24.1) z = -1.7	26 (48.1)	15 (27.8) z = 2.1
Approach Explicit n = 88	42 (47.7)	38 (43.2)	8 (9.1) z = -1.7

Criminal History VI

Pathway	Convictions for Sexual Charges $X^2 = 2.59$		
	0 n (%)	1-4 n (%)	5+ n (%)
Approach Automatic n = 55	1 (1.8)*	36 (65.5)	18 (32.7)
Approach Explicit n = 89	0 (0.0)	52 (58.4)	37 (41.6)

*Subject charged and convicted of Manslaughter, which had sexual components.

Level of Psychopathy (PCL)

PCL	Approach Automatic n = 47	Approach Explicit n = 87	Mann-Whitney U	Sig. (2-tailed)
Factor 1 Mean Rank	65.00	68.85	1927.00	.583
Factor 2 Mean Rank	84.76	58.18	1233.50	.000
Total Mean Rank	76.80	62.48	1607.50	.041

Factor 1: Interpersonal/Affective; Factor 2: Instability/Antisocial Behavior

Discussion

- Although no ethnic differences were found, sample sizes for non-whites were rather small. The present findings should not deter from future study of potential differences.
- Rapists had higher rates of assignment to the Approach-Automatic pathway than expected. The opposite was the case for Child Molesters.
- Child Molesters had higher rates of assignment to the Avoidant-Active pathway.
- Findings similar to those reported by Yates and Kingston (2006) for Rapists. Child molesters could not be compared.

Discussion

- Differences found in regards to criminal histories were consistent with the constructs behind the pathways. Crimes that can involve more reactive, impulsive behavior (such as violent non-sexual offenses) were more prevalent among those who follow an approach-automatic pathway.

Discussion

- The same was true when considering psychopathy:
  - Subjects in the approach-automatic pathway had significantly higher scores than subjects in the approach-explicit pathway on the lifestyle/antisocial factor in the PCL, which assesses impulsiveness and lifestyle instability.

Treatment Implications

- Provides support for the notion that current treatment methods based on relapse prevention conceptualization of sexual offending may not be helpful to many sex offenders.
- Although beyond the scope of this presentation, the SRM's relationship with the Good Lives Model underscores the value of a holistic approach to the conceptualization and treatment of sexual offending.

Limitations

- The present study is retrospective and archival (did not utilize the interview protocol developed by Yates, et al., 2009).
- It did not include information/coding for the Good Lives Model, in which the Self-Regulation Model is embedded.
- Given the nature of the data, more offenders were assigned to the approach pathways than would likely be the case if we had more detailed information about the earlier phases of the subjects' offense progression.

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