

**RUTGERS**  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW JERSEY

**SUPERVISING HIGH(ER) RISK YOUTH IN  
THE COMMUNITY**

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**Antisocial behavior and  
ecological-developmental theory**



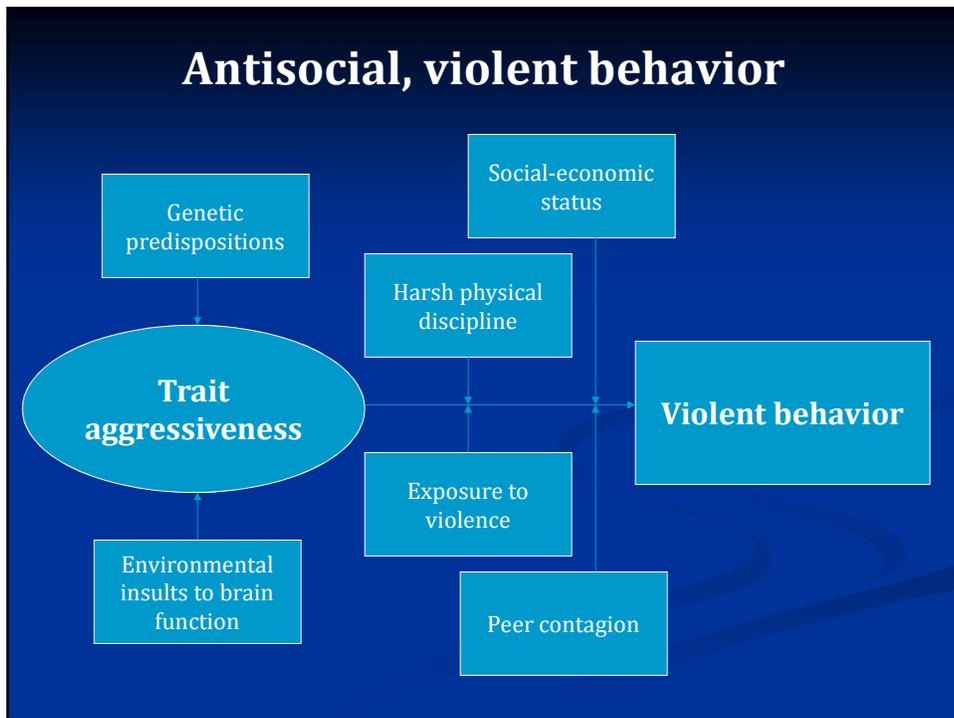
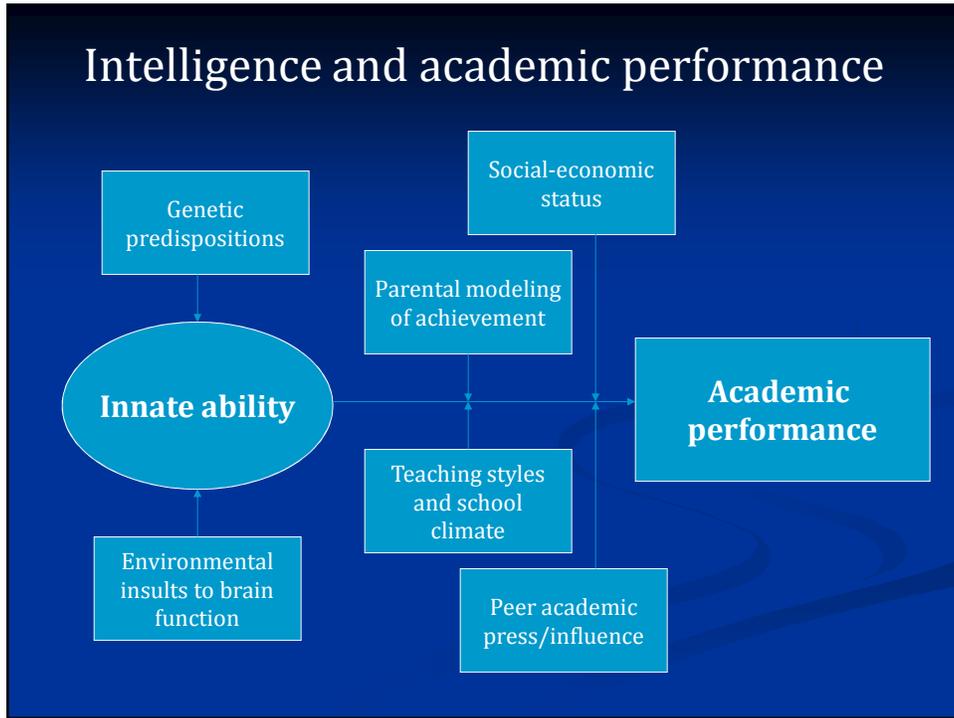
## Antisocial behavior

- Behavior that intentionally violates the rights of others and/or exhibits clear disrespect for the law
  - Covert, nonviolent (e.g., theft)...
  - Overt, violent (e.g., physical assault)
  - Early-starting (life-course persistent), later-starting (adolescent-limited)
  - Escalations over time in severity

e.g., Boxer & Frick, 2008a; Loeber, 1982, 1985

## Social and behavioral development

- General model: *Nature AND nurture*
  - How youth behave and function in the world is the result of:
    - Individual, genetically determined predispositions and biologically based functions
    - Exposure to and interactions with various social-environmental influences
  - For example...

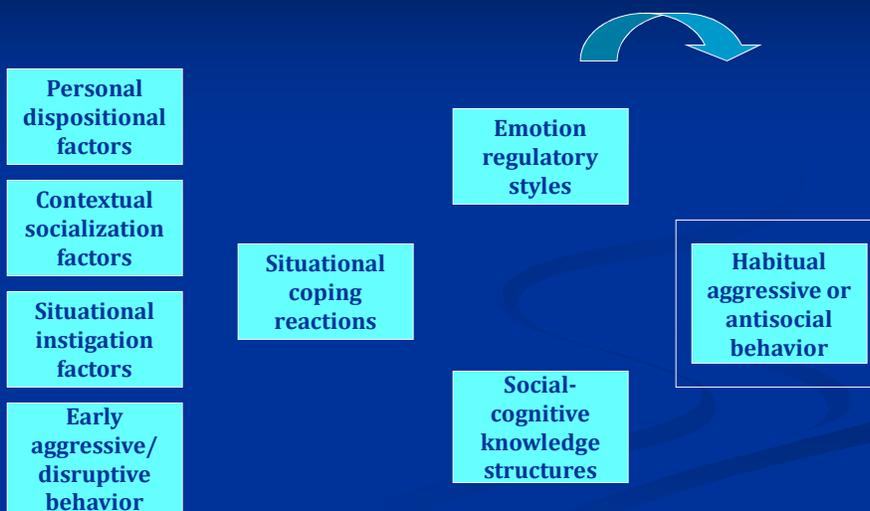


## Antisocial behavior

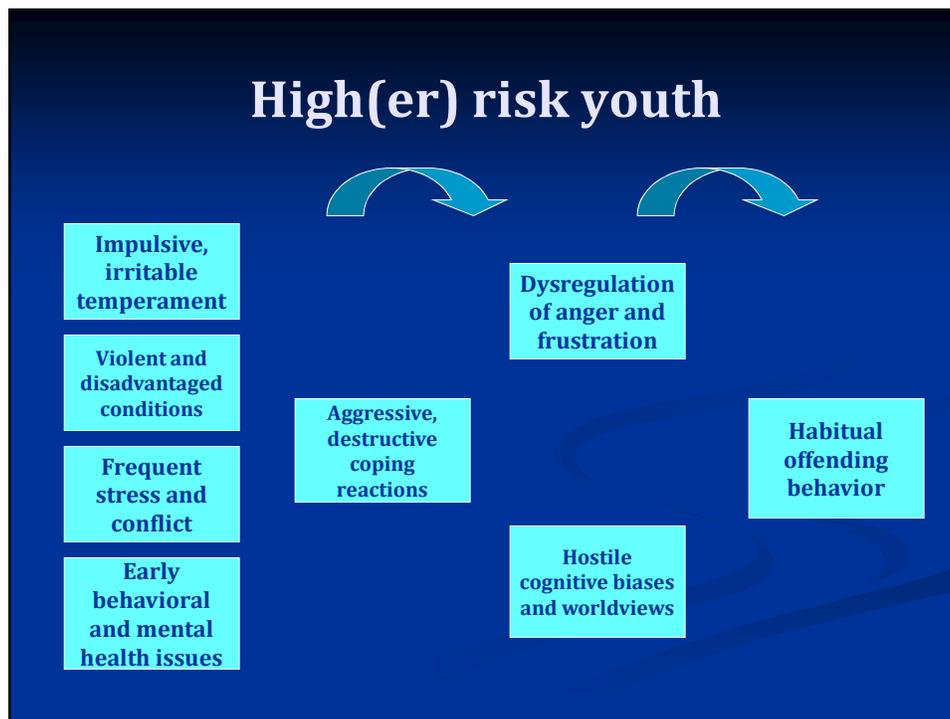
- Nature AND nurture
- Antisocial behavior emerges and maintains through a confluence of developmental and environmental factors
  - Genetic-dispositional risk status
  - Emotional and cognitive liabilities
  - Contextual risk experiences (episodic) and conditions (chronic)

e.g., Boxer & Sloan-Power, 2013; Calkins & Keane, 2009; Cole et al., 2009; Dodge et al., 2010; Dodge & Pettit, 2003; Frick, 2006; Guerra et al., 2008; Huesmann, 1998; Moffitt, 2006; Tolan et al., 1995

## A basic schematic

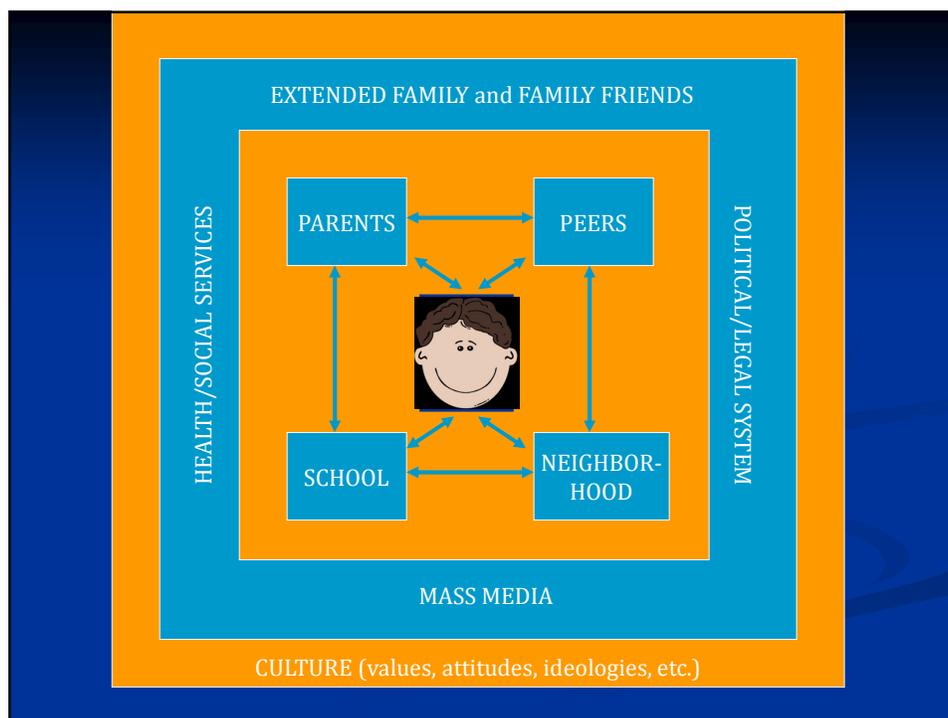


Aggressive, antisocial behavior that is persistent over time and across situations



## Social context is an essential and *enduring* part of human development

- Bronfenbrenner (1979)
  - The broad, nested social ecosystems of human development



## Multi-context exposure

- Exposure to crime and violence is a robust risk factor for violent and nonviolent offending
- Greater exposure to violence across the social ecology is associated with increases in aggressive responding:
  - *E.g., Youth exposed to violence/crime across multiple microsystems are more aggressive than those who are not*

## Contagion of violence

- Exposure to crime and violence is a robust risk factor for violent and nonviolent offending
- Violence at higher levels of the social ecology increases violence at lower levels, in turn increasing aggressive responding:
  - *E.g., Ethnic-political conflict and violence increases family and neighborhood violence, and in turn youth aggressiveness*

## Learning of aggression and antisocial behavior

- Exposure to crime and violence is a robust risk factor for violent and nonviolent offending
- Learning – observational (social) and direct – is a primary mechanism through which antisocial behavior emerges and maintains
  - *E.g., Coercive interactions between parents and children lead to problem behaviors between peers*

## High(er)-risk youth

- Youth with extensive learning histories promoting the development of problem behaviors – aggression, violence, substance use, theft, etc.
- Youth immersed in proximal social environments that support the persistence of these problem behaviors.

## Best-practice intervention strategies

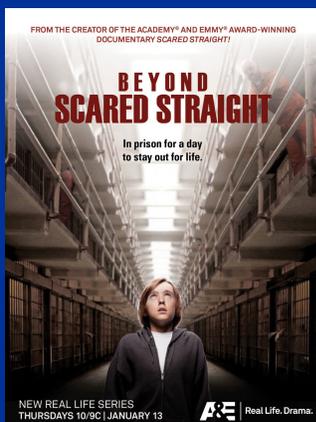


## Intervention services

- With respect to antisocial youth involved in the justice system, only about 5% have the opportunity to benefit from services with established effectiveness (Greenwood, 2008) and:
  - *“Although effective interventions have been developed and validated during the last 20 years, it remains the case that the vast majority of current services utilized in the juvenile justice system have not proven effective or simply have not been evaluated.”* (Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2010, *SRCD Social Policy Report*)

## Intervention services

- *“...services utilized in the juvenile justice system have not proven effective...”*



Great TV, terrible policy and practice.

(About to begin 5<sup>th</sup> season on A&E.

**Despite DOJ policy statements discouraging its use.)**

## Best-practice interventions

- What is a “best practice” intervention for antisocial youth?
  - There are many evaluative authorities that have applied a number of different criteria to discern what constitutes best practice in intervening with seriously antisocial youth.
    - I.e., nonprofit advocacy groups, university-based policy and research centers, state and federal agencies

## Best-practice interventions

- Narrowing down the field:
  - Best practices for intervening in *serious antisocial behavior among adolescents* via most stringent criteria (Blueprints):
    - Functional Family Therapy (Alexander)
    - Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (Chamberlain)
    - Multisystemic Therapy (Henggeler)
  - These are “name brand” programs, but they are based on generic strategies and tactics!

## Common factors or core elements

- These best-practice treatments are organized around three key features
  - Minimum criteria for effective intervention with adolescents showing clinical levels of problem behavior... or a *basic premise or starting point for effective intervention*:

e.g., Boxer & Goldstein, 2012; Boxer et al., 2005; Boxer & Frick, 2008a, 2008b

## Basic premise for effective intervention into antisocial behavior

- **Behavioral**
  - Explicit emphasis on learning (or reifying) constructive behaviors and extinguishing problem behaviors

e.g., Boxer & Butkus, 2005; Boxer & Frick, 2008a, 2008b; Boxer & Goldstein, 2012; Frick, 2001

## Basic premise for effective intervention into antisocial behavior

### ■ Family-centered

- Primary interventions focus on supporting and empowering caregivers to engage in more effective parenting practices and develop better relationships with youth

e.g., Boxer & Butkus, 2005; Boxer & Frick, 2008a, 2008b; Boxer & Goldstein, 2012; Frick, 2001

## Basic premise for effective intervention into antisocial behavior

### ■ Multi-systemic and ecological

- Interventions delivered in natural settings; extended and connected beyond the family system

e.g., Boxer & Butkus, 2005; Boxer & Frick, 2008a, 2008b; Boxer & Goldstein, 2012; Frick, 2001

## **We know a lot about how to serve high-risk youth effectively**

- **But...**
- *We do not have a research base yet describing how best to connect those high-risk youth to effective services efficiently and consistently*

## **Problem in Newark: Escalating delinquency**

- Newark PD and Essex County PO were beginning to notice and discuss trends over time in certain cases that were following a fairly predictable pattern:

## Problem in Newark: Escalating delinquency

Youth arrested for  
low-level offense:

Case dismissed

Youth re-arrested for  
more serious offense  
(possession, robbery):

Case dismissed or  
home detention

Youth re-arrested for  
more serious offense  
(assault, robbery,  
weapons charge):

Home detention or  
short detention stay

Youth arrested for  
most serious offense  
(aggravated assault,  
attempted murder,  
murder):

Waived to adult  
system and off to  
prison

**Pathways to the adult criminal system through the juvenile justice system illustrating tensions between law enforcement/court system and the goals of JDAI**

## Problem in Newark: Getting youth into services

- Challenge brought to Rutgers team was how to intervene in the escalation by connecting youth to services
  - Determined with Newark PD and Essex County PO how to access or reach out to juveniles and their families prior to any formal dispositional hearings
  - Collaborated with NPD crime analyst to examine trends in juvenile arrests and identify common arrest types and ages of arrest
  - Created new links between NPD and service organizations by modifying an existing police-community partnership model utilized with adult parolees and probationers

## A new approach to service connections

- “COPY” – the “Call-Out Program for Youth” –
  - Partnership of NPD, Rutgers, and three service agencies implementing evidence-based strategies
    - Big Brothers/Big Sisters (mentoring)
    - Community Solutions (Multisystemic Therapy)
    - Essex County Family Support Organization (parent support/mentoring groups)

## A new approach to service connections

- “COPY” – the “Call-Out Program for Youth” –
  - Services offered directly by NPD as voluntary engagement to youth/families at first robbery arrest
    - Waiver to release information developed with prosecutor’s office
    - After initial release, NPD + service agency make outreach
  - No external funding necessary

## A new approach to service connections

- From March 2015-February 2016, there were 90 robberies committed by juveniles in Newark
  - Of these, 49 youth were eligible COPY candidates.
  - From these 49 cases....
    - 31 did not sign waiver to access COPY service connections.
    - 7 signed the waiver, but did not engage in services.
    - 5 became active in Big Brothers Big Sisters
    - 5 became active in Multisystemic Therapy (Community Solutions)
    - 1 became active in BBBS and MST.
- Re-arrest rate for youth not active in COPY services: 26%
- Re-arrest rate for youth active in COPY services: 0%.

## Expanding and evaluating COPY

- Since June 2016, COPY has expanded to consider the following types of juvenile arrests (along with robbery):
  - Possession with intent to distribute CDS
  - Receipt of stolen property
  - Weapons offense
  - Assault (in limited cases, at Youth Aid officer discretion)
- A Rutgers IRB proposal is under review to permit formal evaluation of COPY.

<http://youthviolence.rutgers.edu/>

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