Research on Juvenile Offender Careers: Implications for the PA JJSES

James C. (Buddy) Howell, Ph.D.

Pennsylvania SPEP Orientation and Rater’s Training

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Goal: Bend the age-crime curve in PA

Source: Justine Fowler, PA Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission
First Study of Entire Juvenile Offender Court Careers From Age 10 to 18 (Arizona)

- Non-Serious: 64%
- Non-Violent: 34%
- Non-Chronic: 15%
- Serious: 4%
- Chronic: 4%
- Violent: 8%
- C,S & V: 8%

Source: Snyder (1998) Maricopa Co. Study (N=151,209)
Developmental Pathways to Serious and Violent Behavior

**AGE OF ONSET:**
- **LATE**

**% BOYS/GIRLS:**
- **FEW**

**OVERT PATHWAY**
- **EARLY**
  - **MINOR AGGRESSION** (bullying, annoying others)
  - **PHYSICAL FIGHTING** (physical fighting, gang fighting)
  - **VIOLENCE** (rape, attack, strong-arm, homicide)
- **SERIOUS DELINQUENCY** (auto theft, burglary)
  - **MODERATELY SERIOUS DELINQUENCY** (fraud, pick-pocketing)
  - **PROPERTY DAMAGE** (vandalism, fire-setting)
  - **MINOR COVERT BEHAVIOR** (shoplifting, frequent lying)

**COVERT PATHWAY**
- **EARLY**
  - **AUTHORITY CONFLICT PATHWAY** (before age 12)
    - **Stubborn Behavior**
    - **Defiance/Disobedience**
- **LATE**
  - **AUTHORITY AVOIDANCE** (truancy, running away, staying out late)

© R. Loeber: Pittsburgh Youth Study
A larger percentage of very young offenders have serious, violent, and chronic careers.

Source: Snyder (1998) Maricopa Co. Study
A small proportion of delinquents is responsible for half of all youth crime.

Source: Loeber, Slot, Laan, & Hoeve, 2008
Timing of Delinquency and First Felony Court Contact

Age: 7.0  9.5  11.9  14.5

Minor Problem Behavior
Moderately Serious Problem Behavior
Serious Problem Behavior

First Court Contact for an Index Offense

Source: Loeber: Pittsburgh Youth Study
Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders

**Prevention**
*Target Population: At-Risk Youth*

- Preventing youth from becoming delinquent by focusing prevention programs on at-risk youth

**Intervention & Graduated Sanctions**
*Target Population: Delinquent Youth*

- Improving the juvenile justice system response to delinquent offenders within a continuum of treatment options and system of graduated sanctions

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*Source: Wilson & Howell (1993)*
Strongest Risk Factors for Later Delinquent or Criminal Offending

- The single strongest risk factor: Prior delinquent or criminal behavior
- Early problem behavior: School failure, violent, aggressive, & impulsive during childhood
- Family risk factors measured during childhood
- Other key risk factors within the individual, family, peer, and school risk domains vary in strength across the developmental stages in adolescence and early adulthood.

Source: Tanner-Smith, Wilson, & Lipsey, in press
Two Poorly Served Offender Groups that Impede Successful Bending of the Age-Crime Curve

- Girls
- Gang Members
Why are girls important?

- Potential serious, violent, chronic offenders
- Do delinquent boys and girls have the same risk and protective factors? Yes.
- But the cumulative effects of risk factors may be worse for girls than for boys; requiring multimodal services.
- And girls also have higher levels of co-occurring problems than boys.
Girls Unique Treatment Needs

- Delinquent girls are more impaired across a range of co-occurring domains; and uniquely, anxiety and affective disorders.

- Delinquent girls have more severe family problems, especially in disadvantaged areas.

- Although boys are more likely to report some type of assault victimization, females are 10 times more likely to experience sexual assault than boys.

Sources: Augimeri et al., 2013, Hipwell & Loeber, 2006, Wasserman et al., 2005
Juvenile Self-reported Violence Rates Before, During, and After Gang Membership

Source: Howell, 2012
Levels of Gang Involvement

Level I—Fantasy
Level II—At-risk
Level III—Associate
Level IV—Active Gang Member
Level V—Core Member of Gang

Source: Johnson, 1987
Comprehensive Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Model

Comprehensive Gang Model Strategies

1. Serious and Chronic Offenders
   - Targeted Suppression
2. Gang-Involved Youth
   - Gang Intervention
3. High-Risk Youth
   - Secondary Prevention
4. All Youths
   - Primary Prevention

National Gang Center: http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/
Key Statewide Delinquency Intervention Strategies for Bending the Age-Crime Curve

- Forestall progression to serious, violent, and chronic (SVC) offender careers
- Intervene early with potential SVCs
- Serve girls intensively as well as boys
- Target gang members
- Promote desistance
A goal within reach: Bend the age-crime curve in Pennsylvania with JJSES tools and the SPEP