

Psychological theories of delinquency

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In his article, Kelley discusses the Psychology of Mind theory, or POM, which was created using the work of Banks (1983, 1989); Mills (1990); Mills & Pransky (1993); Suarez (1985); Suarez & Mills (1982); and Suarez, Mills, & Stewart (1987), which focuses strongly on original or unconditioned thought, which is a thought process that takes into account principles and reasoning that is automatic through common sense and positive thought.

As well as reactive thought, which requires a deliberate thought process, and is a decision, which is made without taking into account consequences or considering other options (1996). Psychology of the mind theory proposes that the offenders percentages of responsive thinking versus conditioned thinking is that of which determines his or her level of mental health as well as their risk for criminality or delinquency (Kelley, 1996). According to the Psychology of Mind theory, juveniles actions are based off of how conscious they are of their actions.

If a juvenile finds them self in a situation and takes the time to consciously think about their actions, they generally act in a positive way. It is when a juvenile is in a situation where they act without thinking about the consequences where it is possible for a deviant decision can be made (Banks 1983, 1989). Kelley states that one's level of insecurity directly correlates to their style of thinking. If an offender feels insecure in a situation and thinks reactively, they are more likely to think reactively and engage in deviant or delinquent behavior.

Where as if an offender feels insecure in a situation and thinks responsively, they will be less likely to partake in delinquent behavior. Kelley points to the fact that one with a high level of self-esteem will be a lot less likely to make

a decision that may lead to a delinquent act than one with a lower level of self-esteem based. This is based on the fact that one who has a higher level of self-esteem naturally wants to maintain that higher level of self-confidence and will be less likely to partake in an act to jeopardize that level of self-esteem.

Where as one with a lower level of self-esteem may be willing to commit a delinquent act to increase their self-confidence (1996). In a separate article, a study performed on one hundred and ninety-nine male participants and ninety female participants, all juveniles of which were incarcerated within a juvenile correction facility, Kerig, Ward, Vanderzee, and Moeddel examined the correlation between Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the juvenile's delinquency.

In a related literature that assesses the effects of PTSD on adolescence, its author, Nader(2008) states, " Following traumatic experiences, a significant number of children react in ways that substantially disrupt or impair their and their family's lives, their growth and development, and their abilities to function normally" and thus, unresolved trauma " may seriously derail a youth's life path; task, work, or academic performance; and well-being" (p. 3)

According to Ford et al (2006), prolonged exposure to traumatic experiences has the potential to cause a juvenile's brain exhaustion and a lesser ability to cope with situations. This in turn may lead to problems within a juvenile's mental development, including lower self-esteem, self-respect, and interpersonal trust. A juvenile may engage in " survival coping", which may include acting out, and other defiant acts, in an attempt to hide their inner feelings of despair.

Juveniles then may progress to more aggressive forms and a lack of consciousness pertaining to the negative effects of the deviant acts that they are partaking in. According to Landsford et al (2006), after a traumatic exposure, a juvenile may partake in delinquent acts or deviant behavior as a way of numbing their feelings and attempting to get away from the awareness of their stress.

The results of the study performed by Kerig, Ward, Vanderzee, and Moeddel (2009) show that juvenile males that were incarcerated reported that prior to incarceration they had experienced community violence, domestic violence, witnessed domestic violence, and had been effected by the death of a loved one. Thirty-six males had claimed to had experienced the death of a loved one, thirty-six other males had experienced community violence, twenty males had experienced domestic violence, and eighteen males had witnessed community violence.

The highest reported traumatic experience from females incarcerated at the facility was that of sexual abuse, where nineteen females reported that they had been sexually abused prior to being incarcerated. Sixteen females experienced domestic violence, and eleven females experienced the death of a loved one. According to Wolf et al (2006), many adolescents already display risk taking behaviors and are more likely to partake in the use of substances or delinquent acts, because during this time you are in a transition from youth toward adulthood and are becoming familiar with your self.

However, juveniles who have been exposed to traumatic experiences such as domestic violence, sexual assault, or other events that may cause Post

Traumatic Stress Disorder, it may be more likely that they will partake in more heinous acts of delinquency or criminality because they may have a lesser ability to cope with their feelings and may mask them through these deviant acts.