

# [Mental health conditions such as high blood pressure](https://assignbuster.com/mental-health-conditions-such-as-high-blood-pressure/)

Mental health is an ever-growing concern on aworldwide basis. In the UK there is a possible teenage mental-health crisis asstudies over the last 25 years show that rates of depression and anxiety inteenagers have increased by 70% and the amount of youth entering A&E with apsychiatric condition has more than doubled since 2009. (Bedell, 2016) Before going any further with this subject, the wayin which we attempt to define ‘ Mental Illness’ should be discussed as thisplays a massive role in the actual clinical diagnosis of any mental healthcondition. Health care professions all across the globe make use of the latestversion of the DSM (DSM-V) in an attempt to collect many ideas about whatdifferent mental health illnesses could be, despite there not being an easilyrecognisable set of symptoms, as there are for health conditions such as highblood pressure or diabetes for example. Each mental health condition affectseach individual differently and manifests in a multitude of different ways. Asa result, there is no solid definition for mental health disorders and iscurrently simply defined by Stein et al(2010) as “ a clinically significant behavioural or psychological syndromeor pattern…associated with present distress, or disability, or with asignificantly increased risk of suffering, death, pain, disability or animportant loss of freedom”- the definition that was first included in DSM-IIIand DSM-III-R.

The definition also encompasses the fact that this mentalillness cannot be a response to a specific life event at one particular periodof time, for example the death of a loved one or deviant behaviour unless thesebehaviours are due to a dysfunction occurring in the individual. (Stein et al., 2010) Another discussion surrounding this topic is whethergenetic or environmental factors play a greater role in the development ofmental illness, this all in all boils down to the age-old nature vs.

nurturedebate, one idea is that inherited genes may result in the development ofmental health conditions and then on the other hand there is the environmentalexposures that may be experienced before birth, exposures such as environmentalstressors, inflammatory conditions, toxins, alcohol or drugs, all of whichcould possibly be linked to the development of mental illness. According to theonline article ‘ Mental illness- symptomsand causes’ brain chemistry can also be significant in the possibledevelopment of mental health conditions when the neural networks (which carryneurotransmitters) become damaged or altered in some way. This in turn affectsthe way in which the nerve receptors work, possibly causing concerns withregards to an individual’s mental health. Other possible risk factors includebrain injury, traumatic experiences, experience of abuse as a child and use ofalcohol or recreational drugs. Moreover, circumstances such as sexual abuse orthe breakdown of a relationship can allow a person to experience feelings ofloss or danger which could eventually lead to depressive disorders. All ofthese factors whether environmental or genetic have the potential to interactwith any “ genetic vulnerability” to alter brain chemistry and thereby alter the condition of thisperson’s mental health.

(Mayo Clinic, 2015)These mental health issues can result in socialisolation from friends and family, legal or financial problems, poverty orhomelessness or even self-harm or harm to others (including suicide or homicide) (Mayo Clinic, 2015)  which can in some cases result in courtsentences and jail-time, particularly for vulnerable young people. However, there still remains the overall debate as to whether mental health conditionsin juvenile offenders are pre-existing and have caused them to enter the justice system, or elements or the justicesystem itself has produced psychologicalstress of some kind that leads to a mental health disorder and later, possiblereoffending in the future. Prior to any contact with the juvenile justicesystem there are numerous ways in which the probability of an adolescent committingcrimes (at times very serious crimes) can be reduced. Chartered childpsychologist Jennie Lindon statesthat through the use of both positive and negative reinforcement, parentalfigures to children can either dismiss or reinforce specific ‘ bad’ behaviours.

However some adults unknowingly give these adolescents the attention they arecraving, thereby reinforcing this behaviour and causing it to repeat where theyshould instead “ choose to ignore the behaviour or, or to give it minimalattention” and also should not “ ignore the child as a person”. She goes on todiscuss how selectively ignoring unwanted behaviour is in fact more successfuland much more reliable than punishment which provides a very restrictivemessage to the child, enforcing the message of “‘ don’t’ rather than ‘ do'” (Lindon, 2009)Furthermore another explored possible pathway todelinquency is children’s exposure to violence. This pattern is extensively exploredby the NatSCEV (funded by the OJJDP) which researches the extent to which exposureto violent behaviour can possibly affect a child living in the United States. Accordingto the ‘ Crimes Against Children Research Centre’ website, the survey addressesmultiple areas which prior to the set-up of the survey were previously notaddressed, such as the variety of violence across the demographics of gender, race, age and family structure, as well as the different types of violencewithin schools, families and also within the community. (Crimes Against Children Research Centre) Further details wereconsistently released by the OJJDP in the form of a ‘ Juvenile Justice Bulletin’which detailed that after gaining knowledge on individual’s experience researchteams asked further questions with a higher focus on the child and thesespecific experiences, including the location of the violence, the child’srelationship to the perpetrator and details upon possible injuries sustained bythe child. The survey eventually led to the conclusion that youth who are consideredto be both victimised and take part in delinquent activities are seen as displayinghigher rates of mental health symptoms paired with lower level of socialsupport, than groups of youth who are either victims or delinquentsexclusively.

Supporting evidence that “‘ bully-victims’ are often the mostdistressed children” and therefore are most in need of support, as they are theadolescents who are considered more high-risk for taking part in delinquentactivities. (National Survey of Children’sExposure to Violence, 2013) On the other hand, Fuller’s summary of ‘ JuvenileDelinquency: Mainstream and Crosscurrents’ states that the nature theories withregards to delinquency state that both Body-type theories and Biosocial theory claimthat certain characteristics within adolescents can make them more likely tocommit crimes and thereby become involved in the Juvenile justice system. Thisis proved by the way in which hormones are thought to in some way be responsiblefor the demonstration of these antisocial tendencies, for example testosteronehas previously been linked to a general increase in aggression. However, Anthony Walsh (American Criminiologist) objects to these biological theories inrelation to crime stating they are “ deterministic and socially dangerous” onthe basis that “ crime is socially constructed so there can’t be any genes forcrime” (Fuller, 2013) This gives theidea that we are all born as a blank-canvas and that our environmental factorsplay a much larger role in this nature vs.

nurture debate of the causes ofJuvenile delinquency. Media influences such as TV and video games has beenconsidered in more recent years to be very impactful upon behaviour of childrenand young people, through its depictions of pro-social and anti-socialbehaviour. According the work of Kaplan(2012) Emanuel Tanay, MD (retired Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at WayneState University) states that “ violence in the media has been increasing andreaching proportions that are dangerous” and in accordance with the NielsonCompany “ Nearly two-thirds of TV programs contain some physical violence. Mostself-involving video games contain some violent content, even those forchildren”. This evidence showing that as these different media outlets areincorporating more and more violent imagery into our TV and videogames, themore accepting we are as a society of these types of abusive, gore-riddenimages and so the more normalised it becomes, especially to impressionableyoung people. According to Tanay, “ mentally ill individuals are vulnerable todramatized violence…they are sick, and they may misinterpret something” (Kaplan, 2012) now whilst it is unfairto assume that all people suffering from a mental health condition who areexposed to high levels of violence in the media will react in horrific ways andcommit terrible crimes, it may not be impossible to see that there can be acertain vulnerability around those with a mental health illness that leavesthem very open and impressionable to the violence that they are seeing. Onecase study in aid of this point is the 2 teenage boys- Eric Harris and DylanKlebold- who murdered 12 schoolmates and one teacher whilst injuring 21 othersbefore killing themselves at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999. The twoboys were said to have lived in a “ pathological environment” and were bothheavily involved in violent video games which is said to have had someinfluence in the boys committing this tragedy (Kaplan, 2012)