

The theories of risk and protective factors among youth offenders



In today's world there are many risk factors that play into a youths life. A risk factor approach assumes that there are multiple, and overlapping, risk factors in an individuals background that lead to adverse outcomes.

Examples of risk factors which may lead to a youth being a offender are non-attendance at school, school failure, substance abuse, being abused, unemployment, and living in a single-parent household. Not all children exposed to risk factors become involved in crime.

There are protective factors that shield a youth from risk, those would be academic success, regular school attendance, remaining drug free, being employed, and being raised in a loving, functional, non-abusive family setting. There are a multiplicity of risk and protective factors. Ideally, for each risk factor there is at least one protective factor. There are many communities in the United States that are continually assessing the risks to which their youth are exposed.

I believe we all know what causes a youth to commit a crime, that has been determined through studies, but is I believe that constructing a theory on this is demanding. If we know the theories one might be able to better understand criminal behavior in America's youth. One could argue the theory that drugs are corrupting the minds of are young adults. Could this be the reason for our youth having so many risk factors? In the year 2006 a survey was gathered from over 50, 000 students in more than 400 schools across the nation about life-time use, past-year use, past-month use, and daily use of drugs , alcohol.

Mininizing risk factors and maximizing protective factors throughout the development cycle from birth through adolescence can give the youth a better chance to lead productive, crime-free lives Early intervention programs and services for juveniles engaged in high-risk and minor delinquent behaviors are significantly reducing the number of juveniles penetrating the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Many interventions geared toward serious juvenile offenders have had positive effects on subsequent reoffense rates. (Coordinating Council, 2000, p. 9 and 12)

I believe this is truly an important theory in keeping youth crime down, not that there have been a lot of studies done on this but , I do think it is an important role in monitoring our youth. I believe that understanding why the youths have committed the crimes might help us to better come up with theories to better understand the mind/actions of our criminal youths.

Wermolder, studied in his youth and found asporting activities to be protective factor for at-risk youth, “ Generally, the importance of sports lies within the leisure time sphere, but for employed youngsters sports can also function as an alternative and meaningful pastime.

Sports are not only a means to meet people, they stimulate a feeling of respect. ” (Werdmolder, 1997, p. 111). Maybe one theory might be to get to the youth before the crimes are committed, maybe monitoring students who come from certain social backgrounds. Since we have a certain idea on some theories, one could only implement the plan and see if that theory could take effect. I believe that theories can help us as a nation develop social policies, and have a better understanding and maybe identify a child of a crime ,

before it actually trakes place using the theories that we have in place.
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I believe that each risk factor needs a protective factor in order to prevent the risk from leading to crime involvement. In the long run putting protective factors in place will result in reduced gang activity and youth violence.

Realistically, few communities or neighbor hoods are going to be able address all of the risks identified, But every community can chose to focus upon the risks it has identified the most and develop protective factors to cancel out their influence. That would be my recommendation and resoultion.