

Psychology questions

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With respect to " Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentoring: The Power of Developmental Relationships, " why do you think minority Little Brothers and Sisters showed a more dramatic lowering effect in their likelihood to use drugs, compared to non-minority Little Brothers and Sisters? According to the statistics 46% of the at risk youths, involved in the Big Brothers/Sisters mentoring programs, were less likely to use illegal drugs, and there are improved numbers in regards to raised grades, school attendance, and avoidance of illegal substances. However, one interesting statistic stems from the 70% of minority males showed the highest degree of turn around. (Benard & Marshall, 2001) All of the at risk youths involved in this study were living in low-income environments, many in homes with a history of violence or drug use, so why such a substantial number within the minority participants? I think that minority youths are often placed in greater risk environments where there is a low expectation of potential and overall success. They feel that they have little choice in the outcome of their futures, because the fate of many of their peers and siblings may not been encouraging. When they are introduced to a program like the Big Brothers/Sisters that implement developing relationships that offers the opportunity for such a child to have a voice, be heard, and they may realize the that there are a lot of other options available to them they are eager to take them.

2. With respect to the Criss et al. article, it was found that neither temperament nor social information-processing patterns (encoding skills) influenced the likelihood of having positive peer relationships and friendships. The authors also note that unmeasured factors, such as physical attractiveness, IQ, and athletic ability, could possibly account for the buffering effects of positive peer relationships and friendships. How do you

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think such factors could influence having positive peer relationships and friendships, which would consequently lead to protection against family risk factors? Feel free to draw on research findings from the earlier modules (such as previous research on IQ and social competence) when giving your answer. It is logical that having strong friendships among peers can have a strong “buffering effect” for children with harsh, violent, and inhospitable home environments. (Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge & Lapp, 2002) But this is not the kind of relationship that can be guaranteed to every child who may need it. I, also, think that there are superficial variables that play huge roles in what children are easily befriended and those that are not. Most children make their close peer relationships through shared activities. Many children make the friends through a sports team, or a science club, or dance or cheer squads. These youths are gaining acceptance and friendship through athleticism, skills, or talents. For a child not involved in such activities are less likely to have the option of said friendships. Appearance, sadly, also, can be hugely important in choosing friends, sadly this tendency will may carry out through childhood well into young adulthood. A children unaffiliated with group activities and is deemed “unattractive” will more likely be excluded, teased, and bullied. For a child already deemed “at risk” will only face further damage their emotional, social, and mental well-being.

3. According to the Rodgers and Rose study, the most salient finding with respect to the resilience model is that peer support can buffer the effects of low parental support on internalizing behaviors for adolescents from divorced single-parent families. One interpretation of this finding is that more peer support leads to less internalizing behavior. However, another plausible explanation is that adolescents with internalizing behaviors attract less peer support.

Why might that be the case? It makes good sense that youths who have strong peer support can lead to a lesser tendency to internalize. (Boyce Rodgers & Rose, 2002) Having that outlet will allow them to substitute that support for the lack of parental support that may exist at home. However, the problem is, simply, that if a youth is displaying depressive and/or antisocial behaviors others are less likely to be quick to offer friendship. In fact, in this day and age many children would mock, tease, and provoke such a child, which could only produce further negative internalized feelings from the “victim.” These situations are more predominant in junior high and high school environments. Children deemed “at risk” would be far better helped if peer support or “programs of that nature” should be introduced prior to leaving elementary school, in order for that foundation to “take root” and they can take it with them into the future school environments.

4. One core problem with the Cosden et al. study is that many members of the control group actually did attend other forms of homework assistance programs. Can you think of a way to deal with this issue? The issue of how best to provide positive after school activities that are safe, constructive, and beneficial to students is a consideration all over the country. This particular study aimed to determine the positive/negative outcomes of after school homework assistance programs. However, overall determining the actual effectiveness is difficult because of all the varying and differing factors of the children, parents, programs, and instructors involved. (Cosden, Morrison, Albanese & Macias, 2001) To children in high-risk communities after school activities are limited, of such programs as these would provide safety and supervision; while in students from more economically fortunate areas, where the children have many options of extracurricular activities, and therefore the

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programs would be less attractive. In this study the results were somewhat scattered. There were some inconsistencies in the attendance of the students; the approach of instructors, several participants attended other forms of tutoring, which made gauging the overall success of the program difficult to follow. The only satisfactory way to truly determine the actual success is to be much more structured and in control of the participants. They cannot attend other, similar, programs, their attendance must be regular, and most importantly focus upon students that are actually in need of homework assistance. That is how you will see if the children are in fact benefitting academically from the program.

5. According to Miller et al., in the discussion section of this paper under "Implications for Future School-Based Efforts," researchers recommend a "dental model of prevention," whereby programs that modify antisocial behavior are delivered at strategic points in time. One of these strategic points may be the time in which students make the transition from one school system to the next (e. g., elementary school to junior high school; junior high school to high school). Why do you think that children predisposed to antisocial behavior are more vulnerable during such life transitions? The idea of a "dental model of prevention" that can help idealize the right time and right means to have successful preventative measures in the dealing of antisocial youths is wise. (Miller, Brehm & Whitehouse, 1998) It is, also, wise to identify that the transitions between elementary school to junior high, and junior high to high school, are pivotal moments in any child's development. Children at this age are growing, changing, and adapting to new schools, new hierarchy, and new, often, more complex education requirements and responsibilities. That is a lot for any child, but one who is not in an ideal environment and/or

already antisocial it can be all the more difficult. It would be fantastic to have programs that could benefit these children set in place to make these kinds of transitions less overwhelming; however, as mentioned in the article, a “one size fits all” template will not be the right solution to every child. (Miller, Brehm & Whitehouse, 1998) Such a program, in order to be successful, would need to have the means to take the time to address individual cases, which are as individual as the children they seek to benefit.

6. Consider Michael Chandler’s research and explain how the narrative strategy of self and the oral storytelling traditions of Canadian Aboriginals play a role in maintaining cultural continuity and building resilience in Aboriginal youth. Michael Chandler’s research linked that there is a distinct relation between those Aboriginal tribes that have strong connection to their culture, traditions, and history having lower suicide rates among their youth in comparison to youths in Aboriginal communities where there is far less cultural awareness and much higher suicide rates. Culture, like family, plays a huge role in how individuals relate where they belong; it is essential to self identity. The use of oral storytelling to maintain their cultural social relevance and spiritual comfort is necessary to help their youth find their center. It is the sense of cultural “connectedness,” explains Rod McCormick, which helps youth form their sense of balance and communal and personal empowerment. Without those stories, without their history, their ancestor’s accomplishments, the youth within in society have less of a cultural foundation and therefore a poor outlook and less hope for their future. It seems only logical that protecting and continuing to press the importance of passing on cultural awareness is hugely important to the positive development of the youths in question. References Benard , B., & Marshall,

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