



# Advancing Change in Juvenile Justice Policy and Practice

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## Today's Presentation

- Pathways to delinquency
- The link between child maltreatment and delinquency
- A focus on crossover youth
- Implementation of juvenile justice reform through systems change

## Attribution

- The portion of my presentation on crossover youth is predicated largely on the work done in the Causes and Correlates research conducted by David Huizinga, Ph.D. (Denver), Rolf Loeber, Ph.D. (Pittsburgh) and Terence P. Thornberry, Ph.D. (Rochester).
  - This research was sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the U.S. Department of Justice.
  - It was a longitudinal study conducted over two decades.
- The “Bridging Two Worlds: Youth Involved in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems” report commissioned by APHSA, Casey Family Programs, and Georgetown University’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (2008) also informs the crossover youth portion of this presentation.

## The Pathway to Delinquency

- The average age at which juveniles took their first step toward delinquent behavior was approximately 7.
- Moderately serious behavior began at about age 9.5.
- Serious delinquency began at age 12.
- The average age at which youth first came in contact with the juvenile court was 14.5.
- This means that there is a seven year window of opportunity to intervene and interrupt their pathway to delinquency.
- So how do we take those first steps that many would call prevention or early intervention?

Source: Research from Causes and Correlates Study

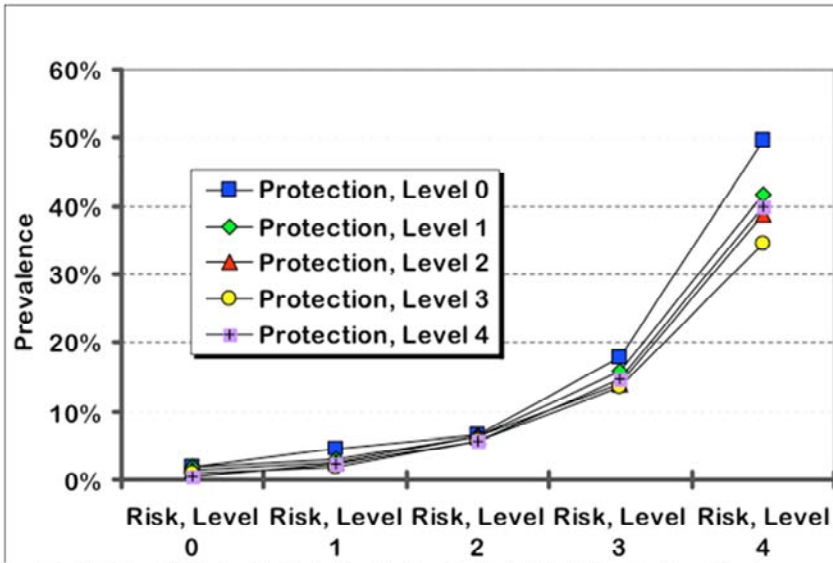
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## Risk and Protective Factors

- The work of the Causes and Correlates Study Group is very closely related to a body of research around risk and protective factors and their relationship to delinquency.
- Risk factors are predictors of problem behaviors such as:
  - substance abuse
  - teen pregnancy
  - dropping out of school and youth violence
- Protective factors are predictors that counterbalance the effects of risk such as opportunities for pro-social activities and the influence of a positive adult to whom the child or youth has bonded.
- Risk and protective factors are related to the domains in which a child or youth lives their life - family, peer group, school, community and within their own individual characteristics.

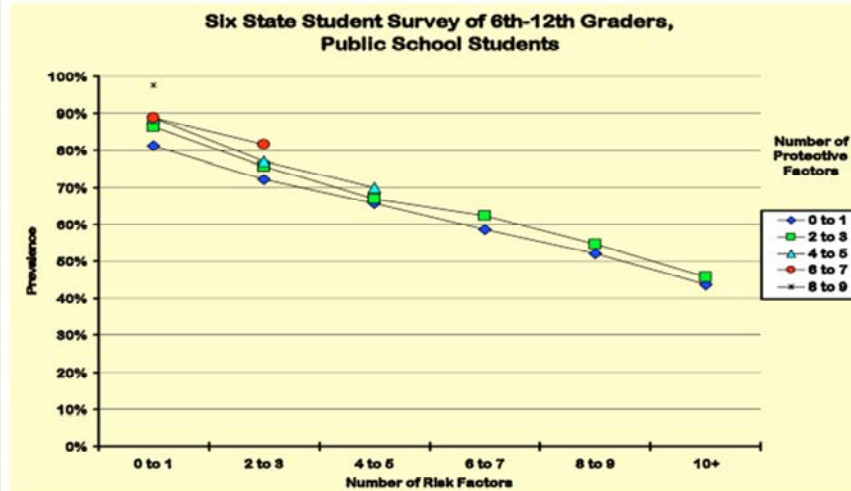
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## Prevalence of “Attacked to Hurt” by Number of Risk and Protective Factors



Source: Richard F. Catalano, Ph.D. The Knowledge Base for Prevention Science: The Knowledge Base for Prevention Science: Risk and Protective Factors Risk and Protective Factors. 5 October 2006.

## Prevalence of Academic Success by Number of Risk and Protective Factors



Source: Richard F. Catalano, Ph.D. The Knowledge Base for Prevention Science: The Knowledge Base for Prevention Science Risk and Protective Factors Risk and Protective Factors. 5 October 2006.



## Application of Risk and Protective Factors in the Causes and Correlates Study

- The Study Group studied the impact of risk and protective factors on middle school age youth in their Rochester site.
- Youth were surveyed on both the risk and protective factors in their lives.
- Delinquency histories were tracked for the same youth. Based on study criteria:
  - Youth with 5 or more risk factors were “high risk.”
  - Youth who had five or more risk factors and who had 5 or fewer protective factors offended at a rate of almost 80%.
  - High-risk youth with 9 or more protective factors offended at a rate of just over 22%.
  - The presence of these 4 additional protective factors reduced offending rates by 75%.



## A Focus on Child Maltreatment

### Research Findings

- Most maltreated youth do not have official records and do not self report delinquency.
- Maltreatment that occurs only in childhood is not significantly related to adolescent delinquency and other problem behaviors in the Rochester study.
- Any adolescent maltreatment is causally linked to subsequent criminality, including serious and violent offending.

## Implications of Research Findings

- These findings suggest that developmental models that highlight the long-term consequences of early trauma may overestimate its impact and underestimate sources of resilience.
- These results do not suggest, in any way, that childhood maltreatment is not a serious problem. It is abhorrent and has many adverse consequences.
- Treatment and services must be provided.
- It is imperative that we focus on adolescents who experience maltreatment.

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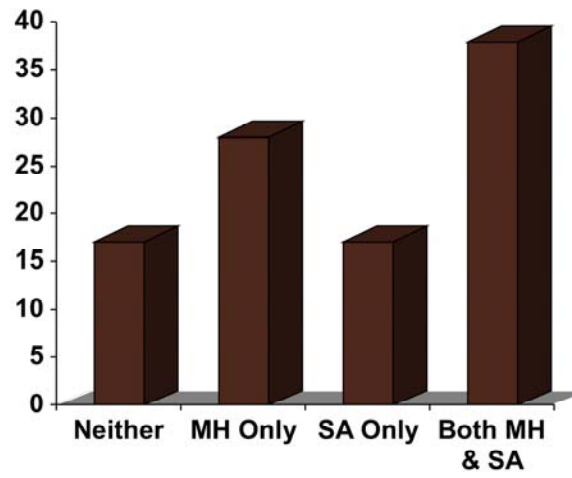
## Brief Description of Covariates “Risk and Protective Factors”

- Placement Instability
  - Number of Placements: The more substitute care placement, the greater the risk for delinquency.
  - Type of Placements: Congregate care increased the risk more than foster care settings.
- Age at Time of Maltreatment
  - Maltreatment that begins and ends in childhood less problematic.
  - Persistent maltreatment and adolescent limited maltreatment is more problematic for a range of problem behaviors.
- Social Bonds
  - Attachment to positive adults can reduce the likelihood of delinquency.
  - Commitment to school and possibly religious organizations can reduce the likelihood of delinquency.

## Brief Description of Covariates

- Gender
  - There is an increased prevalence of females crossing into delinquency compared to the general population.
  - Females have an increased prevalence of mental health problems.
  
- Race
  - African-Americans are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system.
  - African-Americans are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system.
  - African-Americans are disproportionately represented to an even greater extent in the crossover population.

## Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems



Source: Herz and Ryan

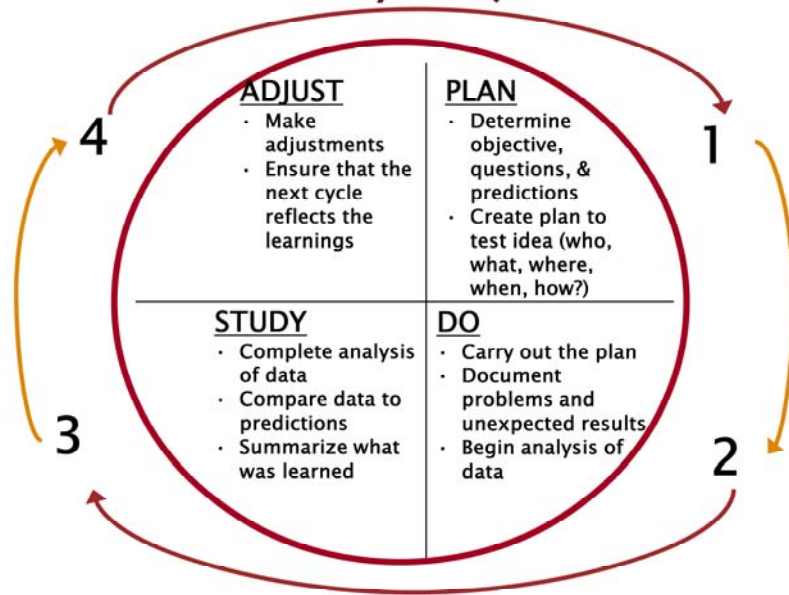
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## Breakthrough Series Collaborative Model

- A Continuous Quality Improvement Method
  - Uses small, rapid tests (PDSAs) to create change
  - Measures results on an ongoing basis –throughout the BSC
- A Systems Improvement Method
  - Focuses on achieving improvements in a specific topic.
  - Grounds work in a specific structure (Change Package) to address all parts of the system.
- A Collaboration Among Committed Teams
  - Generates new and better ideas quickly
  - Creates opportunities to assess similar strategies within different agencies and within different populations

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# Plan, Do, Study, Adjust



Adapted from © 2001 Institute for Healthcare Improvement | 5



## The Six Components of the Change Package

1. Measurable Systems of Agency/Interagency, Court, and Community Accountability
  2. Active Engagement of Family and Youth in Planning and Decision Making
  3. Integrated System of Information Compilation and Sharing
  4. Shared Approach to Prevention, Identification, Assessment, and Case Plan Development Within and Across Systems
  5. Shared Case Management, Decision Making and Community Service Utilization
  6. Effective Use of Blended Resources
- Each Component contains a listing of subcomponents. The subcomponents are practices and policies that can be instituted to improve outcomes for crossover youth.



## PDSAs

- An Alert (flag) has been added to the DJS ASSIST database to notify staff when a DJS youth is dually involved with DSS and provide the contact information for the DSS caseworker (Baltimore, MD).
- “Crossover Court” to ensure that a crossover youth’s delinquency and CINA hearings will be heard by one judge at the same time (Baltimore, MD).
- Identify alternatives to detention/incarceration for crossover youth (Georgetown County, SC).

## PDSAs (continued)

- Improve communication with placement agencies in an effort to prevent police involvement with youth in group homes (Los Angeles, CA).
- Reduce or eliminate the need for children to be taken to receiving/detention from a shelter care facility by improving interagency communication and scheduling a MDT staffing with the family (Sioux City, IA).
- Implement a diversion program with the prosecutor's office for dependency involved youth who commit a delinquent offense (Los Angeles, CA).
- Assignment of "Parent Partners," who are parents who have experience dealing with both systems, to crossover families to engage them in the case planning process, increase family/youth involvement, improve case planning and overall family satisfaction (Baltimore, MD).

## PDSAs (continued)

- Use a cultural broker to assist crossover youth and their families with navigating both systems and connecting with culturally competent services (Los Angeles, CA).
- Conduct a joint home study by DSS and DJJ for crossover youth (Georgetown County, SC).
- Utilize a MDT staffing for youth at the point of entry into child welfare and juvenile justice (King County, WA).
- Joint staffings within 10 days of placement to develop a consolidated treatment plan (Denver, CO).

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## **Moving Towards Broader Implementation and How to Advance Change in Juvenile Justice Policy and Practice**

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