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Practice

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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA

Contents

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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 2 of *Practice: The Corrections Journal.*

We've had some great feedback on our first issue, and word of its arrival has spread across the country and beyond our shores. We're delighted that this publication can showcase some of the great work that is going on in New Zealand to work more effectively with offenders and bring re-offending rates down.

Issue 2 is a special issue in that we've decided to focus on a single topic, a topic that is particularly important if we are going to really get to grips with reducing re-offending. All the articles in this issue focus on youth offending. It's timely to dedicate an issue to this topic, since although youth crime rates are dropping in New Zealand, there are still significant numbers of young people making their way through the criminal justice system and ultimately coming to Corrections to serve prison or community-based sentences.

As a Department we want to do better with these young people. To signal our commitment to achieving this we have created a youth strategy as a means of aligning all the work we are doing and to highlight the areas where we need to do more. We have recently appointed a dedicated principal advisor youth strategy to lead this work. This is tangible evidence of our commitment to doing better for young offenders so they go on to commit fewer crimes and create fewer victims.

As with much of the work we do in Corrections, we cannot expect to succeed if we try to address youth crime alone, so we are partnering with other justice and social sector agencies to share expertise and knowledge and work together in ways to better address the problems.

It's a real honour that so early in the establishment of our new publication we've had respected academics and experienced senior officials from other agencies submit articles to sit alongside those of our own experts in this issue. This bodes well for the future of *Practice*. We are sure that there is something for everyone in this issue and, as we encouraged you to do last time, we hope you all take the opportunity to read beyond the articles that at first glimpse appear to be the most relevant to your own practice. That way *Practice* will achieve its aim of exchanging knowledge and ideas that lead to better practice.

Police are often the first agency to come into contact with a young person when they are thought to have committed a crime. The actions that police take can have a key influence on the path that young people take. Senior Sergeant Kevin Kneebone's article tells us how Police have made youth one of their top priorities. He discusses the "alternative actions" that Police are able to take when working with young people.

We have three papers in this issue describing the specialist work of Corrections staff with young offenders (in Corrections we use this term to describe offenders under the age of 20). Corrections operates three specialist youth units which house offenders aged nineteen years or younger, and are situated within Waikeria Prison, Hawke's Bay Regional Prison and Christchurch Men's Prison. Maddy Butler-Munro's paper outlines the integral part that case managers play in the rehabilitation and reintegration of the young people who pass through these units. Debra Creswell and Vinnie Campbell explain how probation officers can work effectively with young offenders and illustrate how one probation team have developed a youth-centric approach to practice. Gordon Sinclair summarises the characteristics of rehabilitation programmes that work for young offenders. These characteristics are applied to the interventions we use in Corrections.

Some young offenders commit very serious crimes. Clare-Ann Fortune's paper describes the individual, family and offence characteristics of youth who sexually abuse, looks at the effectiveness of specialist community-based treatment programmes for sexually abusive youth in New Zealand, and outlines some key practice implications for those working with sexually abusive youth.

As this issue shows, youth offending is an area that attracts some skilled and passionate people, and I have no doubt that focusing on this area will contribute significantly towards Corrections' goal of reducing re-offending by 25 percent by 2017.

David Wales
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Early development and youth offending: Practical implications for intervention with, and reintegration of young prisoners

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Adolescents who make their way into adult criminal justice systems, especially those placed in our prisons, are statistically unusual. The vast majority of young people who come to the attention of the police for criminal offences are dealt with informally, or within the various provisions available in the youth justice system; only those with particularly serious or persistent offending appear in adult courts and very few spend time in prison.

However, the relative rarity with which adolescents enter New Zealand's prisons contrasts starkly with the fact that in Western nations, adolescents are responsible for a much greater frequency of crime than any other age group. Most people offend in this relatively brief period of their lives – five to ten years depending on how it is defined – and most commit most of the crimes they will ever commit. So a youth who offends is certainly no rarity. Yet within this age band in which offending appears almost normative, there are distinct patterns of offending and offender characteristics that may have important implications for the management of those few youths whose offending leads them into the adult criminal justice system. Of particular relevance for the management of these youths, is discerning which of them will do what most youth offenders do – desist spontaneously by their mid-20s – and which are at much greater risk of continuing to be reconvicted into their 40s and 50s (Farrington, Ttofi, & Coid, 2009). Can we identify who will stop of their own accord vs. those who may take decades to do so, and if so, can we intervene with the latter to help accelerate their development toward a better, more crime-free life?

> *"...a youth who offends is certainly no rarity."*

Life-course persistent and adolescence-limited offenders: The theory

In 1993, Professor Terrie Moffitt, a renowned American clinical psychologist now based in the UK, launched a very influential developmental taxonomy of youth offending. As an Associate Director of our Dunedin longitudinal study, she used data from that study in part to test the theory. In essence, what Moffitt proposed was that most people who offended in adolescence could be classified – by their histories and current characteristics – onto one of two developmental paths: named *life-course persistent* and *adolescence-limited.* In adolescence, according to Moffitt, both types offend, but they come to their antisociality by different routes and will similarly enter adulthood with very different futures (Moffitt, 1993).

Moffitt's life-course persistent type (LCP) first demonstrates difficulties soon after birth or during the pre-school years, as a result of some combination

of genetic (parental temperament), pre-natal (e.g., maternal stress, drug use) and peri-natal (e.g., birth complications) factors. LCP babies and toddlers are difficult to parent: emotionally very changeable, easily stressed, lacking in persistence, and likely even at this time to take their distress out on others. This difficult temperament – recorded by researchers as early as three years of age, and labelled by Moffitt as "lack of control" – goes hand in hand with subtle cognitive deficits and hyperactivity (Henry, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1996). However, LCP babies, who clearly need the best parenting possible if they are to succeed, instead find themselves in a family environment replete with its own risk factors such as poverty, parental criminality and conflict, abuse, neglect, and lack of supervision. As childhood unfolds, these individual and environmental factors interact, resulting in developmental delays and difficulties across a growing number of spheres of the child's life, with a corresponding decrease in opportunities to learn pro-social skills (Moffitt, 2007). In other words, children already 'difficult' at home add to that poor school performance, ostracism by pro-social peers, and age-related changes in antisocial behaviour outside the home. By the time these children become teenagers, they are well behind academically and socially, and have established a history of conduct disorder. Criminal offending is simply an extension of already-developed antisocial habits.

Moffitt's second type, adolescence-limited offenders develop normally in the early and middle childhood years, only transitioning into antisociality in association with puberty and its related developmental issues. Historians of social development have noted that a rather large gap exists in modern societies between physical maturity and the point at which young people are given the keys to the door into adulthood. Moffitt (1993) described this maturity gap as the stimulus for the onset of adolescence-limited criminality. Moffitt theorised that for these young people, antisocial behaviour demonstrates autonomy from the adults in their lives, and causes stronger peer bonds, because breaking social rules is seen as personally and socially desirable. Moffitt even suggested that LCP teenagers, socially ostracised by the mainstream children until now, may become 'the new cool' for adolescence-limited offenders; since they are the poster children for defying parental and societal strictures and limitations.

Key parts of Moffitt's theory are supported by research (Moffitt, 2003, 2007). For example there is no doubt that those who persist with offending frequently and seriously in adulthood – our high RoC*RoI (Risk of Conviction/Risk of Imprisonment) offenders for example – will usually have started early, and it is these early starters who are most likely to have violent convictions (Moffitt, Caspi, Dickson, Silva, & Stanton, 1996). Furthermore, early difficult temperament, and difficulties with learning, memory, behavioural regulation and other cognitive functions predict adult criminal outcomes (Henry et al., 1996). But there are also several caveats to be aware of before we go on to consider the relevance of these differences for working with late adolescents in the adult criminal justice system.

First, the typology was a theoretical proposal. Researchers who have instead derived types using data-based strategies (i.e., deciding how many types based on the number the data actually show are there) have suggested that Moffitt's typology is an oversimplification; in reality more than two types of longitudinal offending patterns have been found, and the distinction between LCP and AL is more of a continuum, without the clear boundaries that Moffitt describes (Walters, in press). Second, Moffitt's labels have led to some confusion. LCP offenders do not offend at a high rate over the whole life course. Rather they reduce their offending over time and may even desist, but the process takes longer, extending for some well into middle age (Farrington et al., 2006). By contrast, the offending of AL offenders, especially if it is serious and subject to official sanctions, may well not actually be limited at all to adolescence, spilling well into adulthood for some offenders. For that reason 'early-starter' and 'late-starter' (e.g., Hodgins, Côté, & Toupin, 1998) might be better terms. For example, in a sample of high-risk prisoners examined by Dr Nick Wilson in the early 2000s (Wilson, 2004), one-third were identified as lacking significant antisocial conduct problems prior to the age of 13 years: in Moffitt terms, they were AL. Yet they were recruited into the study at an average age of 27. At that time, rather than having desisted, they were high RoC*RoI prisoners. When followed up about six years later, compared to those whose offending started in childhood, they had spent equivalent amounts of time in prison as adults. The only difference was that the two-thirds of the sample identified as LCP offenders had been convicted more often and had been given more (presumably shorter) prison sentences (Cahill, Polaschek, & Wilson, 2013). This unexpected presence of older AL offenders in our prisons may be caused by the phenomena known as 'snares' to which I will return below.

Practical implications

A number of practice implications follow from this research, although few of these have yet been examined scientifically. First, youth offenders in the adult prison system are usually there for serious and violent crimes, but as people they are heterogeneous. Ideally, early in their sentence, young prisoners' personal and interpersonal strengths and needs are being evaluated, and plans are drawn up for intervention. Using Moffitt's taxonomy to think about this heterogeneity may assist us in making decisions about where to focus resources, the level of need

and the range of needs to attend to. How far back do the difficulties go? Do they seem to be a reflection of the rebelliousness of adolescence, or suggest more long-term and fundamental difficulties (e.g., expulsion from early or middle schooling, early alcohol and drug use, early CYF involvement with the family, a history of childhood bullying and fighting, and so on). What do you know about the family? Does it show signs of normal functioning, or is it fragmented, absent, criminogenic, or struggling with other challenging issues?

Many young offenders enter the prison system after a period of months or even years of going 'off the rails' in the community. For adolescent-onset offenders, by definition, that history of social and personal maladjustment will have been briefer. Relative to LCP youths, they will usually have achieved more in school, and for longer, with poor school performance resulting more from disruptive and defiant behaviour alone. For LCP youths, school difficulties stretch back much further, and disruptive behaviour in school may have masked important difficulties with the process of learning itself, resulting from deficits in verbal, spatial and memory components of cognitive functioning (Raine et al., 2005). Thus their learning deficits, even in late adolescent – crucial both for education and for employment – are not simply a function of a 'bad childhood' and may require more intensive remediation.

AL offenders, because they also don't have as many early family risk factors, should also have greater social capital, even if they are currently estranged from it due to their behaviour. Their family and other potential social supports, if willing to be involved, will tend to have greater personal and material resources to offer, and are less likely to be criminal themselves. Often with LCP offenders, there are few or no protective family members to be drawn around the offender.

Contemporary temperamental factors may also distinguish adolescent offenders from each other, with implications for how well they will respond to help. AL offenders can be challenging in regard to their impulsive, unconventional and reckless characteristics, and are certainly capable of being defiant, disrespectful and obstructive, even into their 20s. Moffitt found that at age 26, both they and their external informants reported they were significantly more impulsive than LCP offenders, and although they had fewer overall offences than LCP men, they still had significantly more mental health problems, and problems with finances, and substance dependence than non-offenders (Moffitt, Caspi, Harrington, & Milne, 2002). However, LCP offenders had more severe difficulties in most of these same areas, and their early temperamental problems appear to translate in early adulthood to more severe hostility, alienation, emotional volatility, suspicion, callousness and cynicism (Moffitt et al., 1996; Moffitt, et al., 2002).

As a rule, more persistent areas of difficulty suggest the need for more intervention, and some types of difficulties may, by their history, need dealing with before others. Consideration of these observations suggests that LCP youth will share some needs superficially with AL youth, but the needs may be more complex and more severe (e.g., drug use may not ameliorate on its own but require treatment of emotional self-regulation difficulties first, more education may be needed with more specialised instructors before employment preparation can be considered).

And more thought may need to be given to sequencing different forms of assessment for LCP offenders because of this greater complexity of needs. So, difficulties with learning are likely to affect how much benefit offenders gain from more intensive offending-related interventions, and exceptionally poor emotional regulation – indicated in hot-headed outbursts of aggression, and possibly persistent drug use – may also be early intervention targets in their own right, if they prevent attendance at offending-focused or other programmes that require people to have some behavioural self-control (e.g., programmes in low-medium security).

> ***"Successfully living in the criminal neighbourhood of a prison unit for a number of years involves learning and skill acquisition that may increase criminal risk..."***

So, on the face of it AL offenders should need less help, should be able to help themselves more and should find it easier to desist after release from prison. Their historical risk factors firmly support this prediction. However, irrespective of their offending, being imprisoned in and of itself may negatively change the course of their development; it is an example of what Moffitt refers to as "snares", where the consequences of crime, "incarceration, addiction, or a truncated education without credentials" (Moffitt et al., 2002, p. 51) themselves create downstream consequences that make it harder to pull free from a criminal lifestyle.

Of these snares, imprisonment is one of the biggest, especially long or multiple short-term sentences. Successfully living in the criminal neighbourhood of

a prison unit for a number of years involves learning and skill acquisition that may increase criminal risk, especially for young people who, had they not been imprisoned, might otherwise have been able to return to the mainstream in early adulthood. And of course while learning those lessons that prisons teach well, offenders are not learning other basic adult skills: for example, how to manage finances, solve their own personal and interpersonal problems, gain and maintain employment, and parent children. For all prisoners, prison appears to hasten development in some respects but delay it in others. For example 'lifers' imprisoned as teenagers often are very skilled at managing themselves in environments where there is a constant risk of violence, and of being set up for more serious infractions. At the same time they are markedly socially immature in some respects, presumably because the constraints of prison have limited their ability to achieve normal social developmental milestones during this period, and also learn over time to become self-contained, and avoid attachments to others (Jamieson & Grounds, 2005; Liebling & Maruna, 2005). Furthermore, time in prison erodes social capital, estranging people from their former attachments and social controls in the community (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Reintegration support will be important in mitigating some of these effects of imprisonment, for AL offenders.

Ideally, reintegration starts at reception, and if it does so for AL offenders, it may be possible to maintain or begin immediate restoration of connections and pro-social networks the offender may have brought to prison, making eventual re-entry more straightforward. They are more likely to have an intact family with some capable pro-social members, possibly including parents who may be willing to be reconciled with them, potential employers and the like; they may even be middle-class in terms of socio-economic circumstances, giving the entire family system easier access to resources that could benefit the young person. These youths should enter prison with more social capital, and with help, be able to maintain that better over the sentence.

However, for early-onset offenders, there may be no 're' in reintegration. They may have come to prison directly from periods in secure youth justice facilities or extended contact with child protection services, and their extended family or whānau may have long since left the youth behind, or be so impoverished it can barely support itself, or contains so few pro-social members that it is difficult to find suitable links to re-establish. For these youths, although it may be possible over the longer term to engage them with healthy family members, family-level interventions may be needed to achieve this goal. In the meantime, these are the youths that will benefit from being "hooked up" with those long-term community support services that also do prison in-reach. Although their situation may appear relatively hopeless, it is not. Even one pro-social support person can be a protective factor for youth violence (Donker, Bulten, Thornberry, & Matsuda, 2012), and the long term prognosis, even for LCP offenders is an improving one.

Moffitt's trajectories, while quite well supported empirically, should not be treated as deterministic (e.g., we should not regard LCP offenders as doomed by their genes, or by their childhoods to a life of failure). Today we know that human development continues to unfold across the entire lifespan, and recent longitudinal research on formerly troubled youth offenders through to age 50 and beyond shows that offending continues to drop away and life functioning to improve for many years into adulthood (Farrington et al., 2006; Laub & Sampson, 2003) with most chronic offenders ultimately living satisfactorily in regard to work, relationships, alcohol and drug use, well-being and accommodation. This is a message of hope and it is based on samples where the men themselves just went about their own lives, with little or variable formal assistance. Perhaps if we can give a helping hand earlier, and with more attention to each individual's situations and current needs, young offenders who otherwise are high risk may make more progress sooner on pro-social adjustment.

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Youth who sexually abuse: Characteristics, treatment outcomes and practice implications

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Introduction

Over the last two to three decades there has been increasing awareness that, like adults, young people are also perpetrators of sexually abusive behaviours (Aylwin, et al., 2000; Boyd, Hagan, & Cho, 2000), with a subsequent growth in research in the area and increasing demands for specialised treatment programmes. There is also increasing awareness that young people who engage in sexually abusive behaviours are not just young 'versions' of adult offenders but present with a range of needs that are distinctive and should be viewed from a developmentally appropriate perspective.

This article will 1) describe the individual, family and offence characteristics of youth who sexually abuse, 2) explore the effectiveness of specialist community-based treatment programmes for sexually abusive youth in New Zealand (NZ) and finally 3) consider the practice implications for those working with sexually abusive youth. In addressing these three key points, data from a study which evaluated the three largest specialised community-based treatment programmes in New Zealand for sexually abusive youth will be drawn on (Fortune, 2007; Fortune & Lambie 2006) as well as the international literature.

Young people who engage in sexually abusive behaviours

Like young people who engage in general delinquency, those who engage in sexually abusive behaviours often present with multiple difficulties, across a range of areas (Day, Howells & Rickwood, 2004; Karnick & Steiner, 2007). NZ and international research has shown that sexually abusive young people (primarily referring to those aged 11 to 19 years[1]) present with a range of individual, family and offending factors. However, not all of the young people present with all of the same issues, suggesting a heterogeneous group of young people, and lending support to the notion that there is no single factor that 'causes' young people to engage in sexually abusive behaviours but, rather, that a range of contextual, situational and individual factors need to be considered (Barbaree & Langton, 2006; Rich, 2003).

Individuals

It is common for sexually abusive young people to have experienced some form of trauma (Becker & Hunter, 1997; Centre for Sex Offender Management, 1999; Ryan et al., 1996). Approximately 40 percent of young people referred to specialised community treatment programmes in NZ have experienced childhood sexual abuse, and 40 percent have experienced childhood physical abuse. These rates are in keeping with international research (Centre for Sex Offender Management, 1999; Flanagan & Hayman-White, 2000) but are higher than has been found in a NZ community

1 There is some variability in the age ranges included in studies of sexually abusive youth however; the Centre for Sex Offender Management (1999) suggests that the majority of sexually abusive youth are aged between 13-17 years. The New Zealand research referenced here (Fortune, 2007; Fortune & Lambie 2006) included a small number of 10-13 year olds (n = 35) in a total sample of 702, with the majority aged 14-19 years.

sample of young adults (Fergusson, Lynskey & Horwood, 1996).

Sexually abusive youth often experience low levels of social competence such as having poor social skills, struggling to establish peer relationships and being socially isolated (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). This may contribute to their befriending younger children as they are unable to form age appropriate friendships (Awad & Saunders, 1991; Becker, 1990).

Sexually abusive youth often present with externalising problems (e.g., significant behavioural problems) and experience a range of mental health difficulties such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), conduct difficulties, depression and anxiety (e.g., Centre for Sex Offender Management, 1999; Flanagan & Hayman-White, 2000). NZ data indicates approximately 60 percent of young people will have generalised behavioural problems and 65 percent will have experienced diagnosable mental health issues including substance use problems, symptoms associated with depression and/or anxiety, as well as attachment disorders, suicide ideation, and deliberate self-harm behaviours or attempted suicide (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). Rates of mental health problems are higher for young people with a history of sexually abusive behaviours compared with the NZ general adolescent population (Fortune & Lambie, 2006).

Although many sexually abusive youth may still be engaged with school or some other form of training, they have often experienced difficulties at school including truancy, expulsions and/or suspensions as well as learning difficulties (Fortune & Lambie, 2006; Snow & Powell, 2012). Potential strengths have also been noted including participation in sport and other recreational and hobby activities (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). These personal strengths could be enhanced as a potential means of reducing the risk of further delinquent behaviour and encouraging social and emotional resiliency (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Fergusson & Lynskey, 1996).

Family

In NZ the majority of young people who sexually abuse have experienced at least one out-of-home placement, with many experiencing multiple placements with extended family, and other non-familial care arrangements such as family friends, CYF foster care, and residential facilities (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). High levels of out-of-home placements have been associated with such factors as disruption and dysfunction within the family, including high rates of parental separation/divorce, parental loss and substance abuse (Ryan et al., 1996).

Consistent with international research (e.g., Boyd et al., 2000; Flanagan & Hayman-White, 2000) many NZ young people who sexually offend come from multi-problem and chaotic families. For example, they have family members with histories of sexual (19 percent) and nonsexual offending (14 percent), mental health issues (19 percent) and substance abuse (32 percent) and more than a third have been exposed to domestic violence (38 percent; Fortune & Lambie, 2006).

Research suggests that parents play an important role in a youth's daily activities and in their social and cognitive development, as well as in the development and maintenance of their sexually abusive behaviours (Ryan, 1997; Zankman & Bonomo, 2004). NZ research found that more than half the sexually abusive youths had parents who were separated or divorced (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). Parents who are coping with a number of other stressors may find it more difficult to support their child in treatment, while their openness to treatment could impact on a youth's attitude towards, and engagement in, treatment (Zankman & Bonomo, 2004).

Offending

Sexually abusive young people in NZ primarily victimise children 12 years or younger, but they also abuse other teenagers and can target both female and male victims (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). The majority abuse acquaintances or relatives, with very few victimising strangers (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). Most victims are abused on one occasion; however, there are some victims who are abused repeatedly over an extended period of time (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). Perpetrators engage in both 'hands on' or 'contact' offences (e.g., penetrative acts, oral contact, indecent assault) and 'hands off' offences (e.g., voyeurism, exposure; Fortune & Lambie, 2006). They may also utilise some form of strategy to encourage victim compliance and/or non-disclosure, including physical force, grooming behaviours and threats (Fortune & Lambie, 2006). International researchers have concluded that it is common for sexually abusive youth to also have nonsexual offending histories including dishonesty, property and animal cruelty offences (Ryan et al., 1996). NZ data supports this, with over 40 percent having reported histories of nonsexual offending (Fortune & Lambie, 2006).

Treatment and treatment outcomes

In NZ, specialist treatment for youth is still predominantly accessed through community-based programmes which cater for the majority of young people presenting with sexually abusive behaviours[2]. The three main specialist community-based treatment programmes in NZ are based in the main centres, with

2 Young people imprisoned for sexual offences are provided individual treatment by Department of Corrections' psychologists.

smaller satellite programmes in regional centres. The programmes accept mandated and non-mandated clients and provide assessment and therapeutic services to young people and their families through group, individual and family therapy. Most programmes use a psycho-educational, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach with relapse prevention. Programmes offer treatment for male youth (standard programmes usually target moderate to high risk youth who attend treatment for approximately 18 to 24 months) but also have specialist services[3] for young people with intellectual disabilities and developmental delay, children (aged 12 or younger) and female youth. Culturally appropriate services have also been developed which reflect tikanga Māori. These programmes are staffed by Māori clinicians and meet the needs of Māori children, youth and their whānau more fully.

Research has found that the specialised community-based treatment sex offender programmes in NZ reduce the risk of sexual, violent and general recidivism at follow-up for young people who successfully complete treatment (Fortune, 2007). Sexual recidivism is lowest amongst young people who complete a specialised community-based treatment programme for sexualised behaviours (2 percent sexual re-offending) compared to those who do not complete treatment (9 percent) and those who do not attend specialised community-based treatment (6 percent; Fortune, 2007). Although not a specific focus of specialised community-based sex offender treatment programmes in NZ, violent and general recidivism has also been found to be positively affected for those who complete treatment (Fortune, 2007). Sexually abusive young people who drop out of treatment prior to successful completion have been found to be at higher risk of sexual, general and violent recidivism compared with those who complete treatment (Edwards et al., 2005; Fortune, 2007). It is not known if this is a consequence of treatment or if they represent a group who were already at higher risk of re-offending (Fortune, 2007).

Specialised community-based treatment sex offender programmes in NZ have been found to produce positive results in comparison with international research (e.g., Edwards, et al, 2005; Worling, Littlejohn & Bookalam, 2010). In their meta-analysis of nine published and unpublished recidivism studies on sexually abusive youth aged 7-20 years (n = 2986), Reitzel and Carbonell (2006) concluded that, on average, sexual recidivism was 12.5 percent based on an average 59 month (4.9 years) follow-up period. Nonsexual offending recidivism was higher, ranging from 8 percent to 52 percent, even as high as 90 percent after 10 years. The authors reported that violent (nonsexual) recidivism was, on average, 25 percent, and 29 percent for general (nonviolent, nonsexual) recidivism. Overall, this meta-analysis indicated a statistically significant positive treatment effect on sexual recidivism.

Practice implications

Adolescence is a period of significant change in relation to social, biological and psychological development. For example, it is a period during which individuals experience multiple transitions, explore their individual identity, move away from their parents and are increasingly influenced by their peers. For those working with teenagers, taking a developmental perspective and considering a young person within the context of their wider systems (particularly family and peers but also education and community contexts), will assist in identifying and addressing their diverse needs and thus contribute to reducing their overall risk of re-offending.

Like young people who engage in general delinquency, those who engage in sexually abusive behaviours often present with multiple difficulties and have high levels of need across a range of areas including mental health, family, and education (Day, Howells & Rickwood, 2004; Fortune & Lambie, 2006; Karnick & Steiner, 2007). Thus, those working with these young people may have to develop a plan which meets their multiple needs, including those associated with the risk of sexual recidivism. Specialised community-based programmes for young people with sexualised behaviours focus on the provision of specialised sexual offender treatment. Therefore, professionals involved with these young people need to seek assistance to meet their additional needs from other services as appropriate (e.g., CYF, iwi services, mental health providers and Ministry of Education), which may include family therapy to improve parenting skills and family communication (Fortune & Lambie, 2006; Morgado & Vale-Dias, 2013).

Sexually abusive young people who drop out of treatment prior to successful completion have been found to be at higher risk of all forms of recidivism (Edwards et al., 2005; Fortune & Lambie, 2006). Those working with these youth need to be aware of the risks associated with youth dropping out of treatment. Protocols could be developed to try to keep these youth in treatment as long as possible, and/or appropriate services and supports could be targeted at them. International research indicates that mandated attendance means youth are more likely to stay in treatment (Becker, 1990; Flanagan & Hayman-White, 2000). This may have implications for the way statutory agencies deal with youth. For example, longer periods of supervision and a longer commitment to funding treatment may be warranted in order to have youth attend and complete treatment, which may decrease their risk of re-offending.

3 These may vary in length from the standard programme.

Conclusions

As outlined above, specialist community-based treatment for young people who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours has been found to be effective in reducing recidivism in NZ. Therefore it is worth supporting young people to access these services where appropriate. However, due to their age it is necessary to take a broad developmental systems perspective and consider the teenager in their wider context (e.g., family, peers), ensuring their multiple needs (e.g., educational, mental health) are met. This may require accessing more than a specialist community-based treatment and putting a broader based intervention plan in place.

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A new way of working with young people

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Senior Sergeant Kevin Kneebone is Prevention Manager Youth and Community Policing at the New Zealand Police National Headquarters. In his 22 year career in the New Zealand Police, he has had 18 years in youth and community policing and has developed and implemented training in Youth and Community Policing at the Royal New Zealand Police College. Senior Sergeant Kneebone was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in 2005 for services to youth and community policing.

"We live in a decaying age. Young people no longer respect their parents. They are rude and impatient. They frequently inhabit taverns and have no self control." Inscription, 6000-year-old Egyptian tomb, cited (Guardian 2009).

In my 22 years of policing, especially in the area of youth and community policing, I have heard people describe today's youth in a similar way to the inscription above. The reality is that the majority of our young people are doing really well. It is only a very small minority that cause society great concern.

For that small minority we need to reduce the number of risk factors and increase surrounding protective factors to stop them becoming involved in crime. In this way we can help to create safer environments for youth and communities.

In 2011 the New Zealand Police launched the National Operating Strategy, titled Prevention First (NZ Police 2011). Prevention First places prevention at the forefront of the New Zealand Police and people at the very centre. The strategy focuses on targeted policing – policing with a purpose based on good intelligence.

Under Prevention First, youth is one of the five priority areas for police, along with alcohol, family violence, road policing and organised crime. By working to address the underlying causes of offending and victimisation, we are aiming to keep vulnerable children and young people safe and decrease the number of young people represented in the criminal justice system.

To do this, Prevention First requires police to ensure that at-risk youth are identified early and prioritised for intervention and development programmes. The strategy aims for youth offenders to be dealt with swiftly, and encourages the use of alternative actions.

Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act 1989

The Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act (1989), commonly referred to as 'the Act', defines a child as a boy or girl under the age of 14 years, and a young person as a boy or girl of or over the age of 14 years but under 17. It does not include any person who is or has been married or in a civil union.

The Act is regarded worldwide as a ground-breaking piece of legislation that allows Police and other services and agencies to work with children, young people and their families when the child or young person offends. It aims to strengthen and build structure around a child or young person who is in need of care or protection, or who may have criminally offended. It places families at the centre, encouraging them to be involved.

When children or young people commit a crime, the Act is clear about its objectives and principles. Section 4(f) of the Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act (1989) states that when children or young people commit offences: "they are held accountable, and encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour; and they are dealt with in a way that acknowledges their needs and that will give them the opportunity to develop in responsible, beneficial, and socially acceptable ways".

If we consider this section alone and think about how we would like our own children, nieces, nephews, brothers or sisters to be dealt with if they got into trouble, wouldn't this be the ideal outcome?

Young people are often risk takers and recent research reveals that brain development remains incomplete among youth. Frontal lobe development – responsible for exercising sound judgment, wisdom and common sense – does not fully mature until age 25-30 (Becroft 2013).

Section 208(fa) of the Children Young Persons & Their Families Act (1989), which was an inclusion to The Act in 2010, states: "measures for dealing with offending by a child or young person should so far as practicable to do so address the causes underlying the child or young person's offending." Taking all this into consideration, the Act is effectively saying that we must treat children and young people differently and explore ways that will assist them in positive social development.

Alternative action

Section 208(a) of the Children, Young Persons & Their Families Act (1989) is a further principle, stipulating that unless the public interest requires otherwise, criminal proceedings should not be instituted against a child or young person if there is an alternative means of dealing with the matter.

Children and young people make up less than three percent of all the people charged in court in New Zealand. In 2011-12 Police Youth Aid used 'alternative action' to deal with 44 percent of all apprehensions involving children or young people (Ministry of Justice 2012).

Many of these children and young people will never come to the notice of police for offending again. Alternative actions are used for lower-level offending, to keep youth offenders out of the formal court process. They are designed to give police an effective way to reduce offending and re-offending of children and young people and present the opportunity for children and young people to avoid the formal justice system, as once entered it is hard to escape. Police national guidelines offer direction to officers in their decision-making during the process of alternative actions (Police 2011).

> *"Children and young people make up less than three percent of all the people charged in court in New Zealand."*

The decision to give a child or young person an alternative action is made by a police youth aid officer. The alternative action process involves the youth aid officer meeting with the child or young person and their parents or caregivers when an offence is alleged to have been committed by the child or young person. Together they develop a plan, which may include elements that aim to redress the harm done, make amends with the victim where appropriate, minimise current risk factors as well as strengthen protective factors, with the overall goal of reducing the likelihood of future offending.

The plan may include a letter of apology to the victim, reparation or financial restitution to the victim, or a donation to a nominated charity or community organisation. It may involve attending a programme or counselling to address offending-related needs, having the young person re-engage in school or training, or participating in pro-social activities such as sport. The plan may also include curfews or restrictions.

Do alternative actions work?

Yes. The early indications are that good alternative action plans, which are well thought out and have the support and buy in of the child or young person and their family creates a positive result for young people, their whānau and their community.

As police and communities work closer together for more effective outcomes for alternative actions, fewer young people are appearing before the court. The rate of children and young people being charged in court is the lowest it has been in 20 years. In 2010, 3,943 children and young people appeared before the court compared to 3,016 in 2012, a decrease of 23.5 percent (Ministry of Justice 2012).

Unfortunately there will always be a small percentage of children and young people who continue on a path of persistent offending. With a continued level of risk surrounding a child or young person, the more likely their chances of re-offending or the alternative action plan not working (McLaren 2011). It is therefore important to identify as many risk factors as possible that cause the child or young person's offending.

Police have identified one of the largest issues for young offenders is the lack of respectable role models, particularly males, in their lives (Police 2011). This is often linked to inadequate parenting where there is no desire to 'buy in' to the young person's life. Therefore, one of the largest protective factors to not re-offending is the positive influence of parents/caregivers or in some cases grandparents and wider whānau by playing an active and positive role in a young person's life.

When parental support and encouragement is given and boundaries are established in the young person's life, there is a real chance of turning things around. When parents/caregivers set rules and boundaries above and beyond those imposed by Youth Aid, there is a higher probability that the young person will not re-offend and will participate in more positive social activities (Police 2013).

Children and young people are not young adults. They require time and understanding. With the right resources going to the right children and young people and their families, at the right time, for the right reasons, the most effective responses can be created for them.

Police are continuing to develop additional and effective methods of working and collaborating with key agencies and additional partners to meet the needs of the children and young people of today. Ultimately, it is hoped that this new way of working will positively affect the overall goal of keeping vulnerable children and young people safe and decreasing the number of young people represented in the criminal justice system.

Additional information:

Common characteristics and risk factors of those who go on to become serious young offenders (McLaren 2011):

- anti-social peers
- disconnectedness with the community
- learning disabilities/conduct disorders
- family dysfunction/disadvantage
- lack of positive male role models
- abuse, neglect and previous involvement with Child, Youth and Family
- socio-economic disadvantages. Almost all violent offenders stem from this group
- between 70-80 percent have a drug and/or alcohol problem. A significant number are drug dependent/addicted
- more than 80 percent are male. However, the number of young women who offend, especially violently, seems to be increasing
- at least 50 percent are Māori. In areas of high Māori population, the Māori appearance rate at youth courts is closer to 90 percent
- poor school attendance and participation. An estimated 2,000 school-age students are lost to New Zealand's education system and are not enrolled at any school.

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Programmes for younger people

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Gordon is a Registered Clinical Psychologist and is Manager Interventions Design and Development. He has worked for the Department of Corrections for almost 20 years and prior to arriving in National Office was Principal Psychologist in Palmerston North. His career has included work with community-based and in-patient mental health services, teaching, and rehabilitation work with people who have physical heath problems. He has had an interest in group therapy programmes since qualifying as a psychologist.

What is it that makes young people so annoying, so frustrating, so mysterious, so challenging to work with and yet so rewarding and satisfying to help? When you talk with people who work with our younger offenders (defined here as those under 20 years old) most of the responses to these questions talk about how easy it is to see potential the young people do not see in themselves and how many of the barriers that are holding them back are ones they themselves have created and maintained.

There is no shortage of people who want to work with our young people (fortunately!) the challenge is how to focus those efforts into interventions that have the greatest likelihood of working and then cementing those changes in thinking and behaviours so that the young people have the highest chance of leading pro-social lives as they leave our care.

In New Zealand, approximately 22 percent of total apprehended offenders are young people. Most offending by young people is minor and short-term. For example, about 80 percent of youth who are apprehended come to the attention of Police only one to two times, and about half of all known offences committed by youth were rated as being of minimum seriousness. However, a minority of youth offenders (20 percent) commit serious and/or repeat offences. This minority commits about 80 percent of all youth offences. These are the young people who require the bulk of our attention (Becroft, 2009). Judge Becroft rightly reminds us of the need to use the principles of Risk, Need and Responsivity (Andrews and Bonta 2010) when approaching the problem of younger offenders.

Risk is reasonably easy to quantify, so we know who we should be attending to. Any young person who achieves a criminal conviction is worthy of our attention as they are potentially rehearsing for a long criminal career. The earlier you start any behaviour, the longer you can continue. Need is also relatively simply quantified. The rehabilitation needs of criminal youth are similar to that found in other populations we deal with, but there are also needs that are useful to attend to because of the developmental stage of the younger person. Education should continue, normal developmental tasks should not be interrupted unnecessarily and some behaviours and attitudes are just a product of being young, not markers for a future serial killer, so we should respond in ways that are normal – that is, ignore them if safe to do so, or apply consequences the same as occurs in real world situations. We should reserve our most skilled attention for those behaviours that are going to encourage future criminality. Young people are also developing physically and their brains continue to develop some critical functions until about age 25. So the person who you see in the office may look entirely adult, but there are subtle and important changes that are occurring so that developmentally it would be best to regard them as not yet an adult (Macarthur Foundation).

The final category, responsivity, is critical to the success of any intervention. Simply put, responsivity refers to the need to match the intervention with the learning style and behavioural characteristics of the participant. By doing this you increase the credibility of the intervention's message (it becomes more believable) and the chances that the skills taught will be retained increases. For youth, who spend a great deal of their time doubting and being skeptical and rejecting those things presented to them by people who are not their peers, this is a critical success factor for an intervention. It means the provider of the intervention has the skills necessary to deliver the intervention. There is no point in having the best intervention available if it is delivered by people who are not credible to those people they are dealing with (untrained, unresponsive to the participants), or they behave in ways that undermine the content (not teaching the skills or misteaching the skills). Additionally, misusing the process in any group (using untherapeutic techniques such as sarcasm, irony, humiliation or coercion) will readily defeat the therapeutic effect (France, 1993). So the people delivering the programme are as much a part of the intervention as the programme itself. Research in the

therapeutic area suggests that the primary impact from a therapeutic programme comes from the characteristics of the group leaders (Clark, 2010).

As well as a reliance on the Risk, Needs and Responsivity (RNR) principles, programmes that have good outcomes for young people also share the general characteristics of good programmes for the wider offender population. These general features include a programme logic that has been built from what we know in the literature, and an assessment of individual need so that the programme can be targeted towards goals that are meaningful for each participant. The programme will teach skills that can be applied in the everyday world and those skills are rehearsed both in the group and between group sessions. Participants will get feedback about their progress in the group so that they can practice to a point where mastery of the skill is possible. Additionally, they will have an after care programme that will help them to practice and generalise their new skills and support them to embed a pro-social lifestyle.

"As well as a reliance on the Risk, Needs and Responsivity (RNR) principles, programmes that have good outcomes for young people also share the general characteristics of good programmes for the wider offender population."

As with all of our interventions, programmes for youth need to be delivered to a high quality. Programme fidelity and integrity should be regularly measured and monitored (Andrews and Dowden 2005).

For younger people, programmes will be most effective if they have the additional features (after Ludbrook 2010), including:

A strength-based approach which is used to understand the underlying reasons for the adolescent's offending in terms of attempts to achieve primary human needs. This understanding will then build on the young person's ability to achieve these needs in pro-social ways. That is, there are many ways to meet the needs we have, and criminal behaviour is just one of the choices. Other choices can be just as satisfying if they are supported in making these choices by their peers and the adults in their lives. The influence of the peer group can be both a strength and a weakness. Specific out-of-programme support may be needed to assist the participant to target appropriate peers and to learn to interact with them (Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998).

The programme should anticipate that the motivation of a participant will fluctuate over the time they are participating. Programmes (and providers!) should build in resilience to this variability as it is a normal part of being young. Low motivation should trigger motivational strategies from the providers, not an exit from the programme. Allied to this, staff characteristics, particularly an ability to build and maintain a therapeutic alliance, will impact on client retention and treatment success (Clark, 2010). Staff training and education can also influence treatment outcomes positively and negatively so we need to be careful in this area.

People who work with younger offenders need a specific skill set. As well as the foundation of enjoying working with younger people, skills required include being able to communicate a genuine belief that individual change is possible, resilience to the ambivalence about change that younger people can display and emotional maturity so that coping and problem solving is modelled.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is demonstrated as effective for younger people, including minority and majority populations. This means that the programme should use skills and principles found in the CBT literature and providers should have knowledge in this area. However, younger people vary more than the older population in their readiness to start 'thinking about thinking' and reflecting on their emotional state. Consequently, a programme will need to revisit this area multiple times and in a variety of ways. It will always be appropriate to incorporate culturally responsive elements into therapy so that the skills taught are more easily understood.

Recalling the importance of Responsivity with the younger person, how the programme is delivered should be adapted to account for identified youth offender characteristics. Well known are the level of cognitive functioning, any potential learning disabilities, and co-morbid mental health issues. It is worth noting, though, that these issues are not unique to the younger offender population. The characteristics associated with young people include a need for active learning rather than sitting quietly, regular breaks from group learning, active not passive ways of presenting content, and tolerance for 'parallel activity' while the therapeutic programme is running (such as doodling, lying on the floor, moving around the room).

Sometimes it is difficult to remember that young offenders can bring protective factors with them and

we need to harness those or look to develop them. Not all participants will have the same pattern of skill deficits. Very few young people have a complete absence of potential protective factors and a good assessment will find these no matter how rudimentary they may be. These areas may include: more pro-social thinking styles, strong attachments to pro-social adults, strong pro-social supports, pro-social involvement in such activities as sports or hobbies, strong commitment to school, positive attitude towards intervention and authority, and resilient personality traits. Where possible a restorative component should be considered for the intervention.

When considering which needs to target, any that are not classic offender rehabilitation needs (for example ones related to health, education or accommodation) may be barriers to treatment or participation. They should be addressed as far as it is reasonable to do so. Note that this might mean working with other organisations whose role it is to meet those needs.

Relapse prevention strategies should be developed all through the programme. As the programme can only be part of the solution for the younger offender, it should leave them with a resource of skills they have learned, and also a way to remind themselves about these skills for as long as possible. Motivation to use a skill may emerge some time after the programme has ended. For example, consider the younger offender who does not feel that motivated to use good communication skills with his whānau, but really wants to when he has a girlfriend.

Any programme that is going to have a sustained result for youth should integrate what has come before for the participant and what will come after. The people that care for the younger person after the programme has ended should have a sound understanding of the concepts, processes and skills taught as they will be part of the relapse prevention resource. A good programme allows the participant to leave the programme ready for what happens next and is integrated with the services that will surround the participant.

The good news is that using what we know now about younger offenders will allow us to build interventions for them that are effective and promote lasting changes. One of the important issues to remember when working with this population is that anything we provide needs to be connected to the wider network of services used by the young person. The vast majority of the young people we come into contact with will leave our service at some time. Any structured intervention we provide (especially programmes) can influence their change in offending behaviours, but is unlikely to be successful unless it is part of a sustained and coordinated effort from all the people who come into contact with the young person. We have a responsibility to ensure when young people leave our care they have as many new skills as possible, but also that the transition to the people who will care for them next is managed seamlessly and with integrity.

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Working effectively with youth

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Debra Cresswell has been with the Department of Corrections community probation service for three years based in Waitakere. She has spent many years involved with youth in a sport context. She holds a degree in sport management, and a masters in business. Over the past two years she has worked extensively with high risk male youth offenders on home detention, the last 12 months as a member of the Youth Offenders Team. She is particularly interested in innovative thinking around managing high risk youth offenders.

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Author biography

Vinnie Campbell is a Senior Practice Advisor working in the Practice Leadership Team in National Office. He has been in the permanent role since February 2013 having been previously seconded to the position in 2011. Prior to that he was employed as a probation officer and kaiwhakahaere in the Bay of Plenty area. His particular interest lies in Māori practice, with a particular focus on enhancing staff confidence and capability to work more effectively with Māori offenders, whānau and their communities.

Background

Young adulthood, 18-25 years, is a stage of life that ranges between the early teen years and adulthood, usually characterised by very different biological, psychological and social processes and norms to adults (Baer & Peterson, 2002). The key psychological events during this stage are centred on the development of autonomy, identity and social skills that assist youth as they transition into adulthood. Unfortunately, this can often be a time of upheaval distinguished by strained parent-adolescent relationships, mood swings, high levels of risky behaviour, substance abuse, sex, dangerous driving and violence. This is exacerbated by the highly social way in which many youth live their lives. Not all adolescents experience the challenges and issues mentioned above as they transition into adulthood but there are significant numbers that do – none more so than Māori youth (Becroft 2010).

According to the Ministry of Social Development (2011), young people make up 19 percent of the New Zealand population, but this proportion is expected to fall as the population ages. The number of young people aged between 12-24 years living in New Zealand has increased from 757,000 at the time of the 2006 Census to approximately 818,000 in 2011.

Key issues facing young people in New Zealand today are not new, but they have been made worse by a declining economy in recent years. Some areas where continued focus is still needed are:

- addressing youth unemployment
- youth disengagement from society's norms and authority figures, especially for the low skilled
- better identifying and treating youth mental health issues
- providing better co-ordination across the youth justice sector.

The responsibility for addressing these challenges cuts across a number of agencies in New Zealand, including Corrections. Agencies such as Child, Youth and Family (CYF) and other community-based organisations are participating in cross sector approaches to rehabilitate and/or reintegrate young offenders, and Corrections is developing more initiatives, such as brief interventions for working with youth, that will more effectively address youth offending and re-offending rates.

Why work differently with youth?

The New Zealand Department of Corrections has made a commitment to achieve a 25 percent reduction in re-offending by 2017. A key contributor in attaining that goal will be how effective front line staff are when working with offenders under the age of 20 years. This group re-offend at a higher rate than any other group managed by Corrections. According to Department statistics, as at 30 June 2013 there were 30,999 offenders serving community-based sentences and orders. Of this number, 2,238 (7.2 percent of the offender population) are under the age of 20 years. Twenty six percent of these youth offenders are serving sentences of community work (and/or) community detention and a rehabilitation sentence or order. Forty percent are serving community work and or community detention, and 34 percent are serving solely rehabilitation sentences or orders.

Key to achieving lasting change for young offenders / prisoners is a youth focused training and development package for staff. This should be based on the assumption that young offenders need to be managed differently from adult offenders as they are still in the process of developing physically, mentally and emotionally. Such a package is currently being designed and is in its early stages. Some areas throughout New Zealand have already designed and implemented

local initiatives to work more effectively with youth. The Waitakere Youth Offender Team (YOT) is a community probation team who have taken both a theoretical and innovative approach to this age old problem.

Waitakere youth-centric approach / team kawa

The Waitakere Youth Offender Team, set up about 12 months ago, encompasses the Waitakere and North Shore Community Probation Service Centres. The team developed a kawa or way of working which now forms the foundation underpinning their professional youth-centric practice. The kawa aims to ensure that:

- working with young high risk offenders will require intensive oversight, direction and support
- youth offenders are managed differently from adult offenders
- an offender-centric approach is taken, where more time is spent working with and supporting young offenders. Contact is often at home, to enable engagement with other support people in the residence
- frequent contact, over and above mandatory standards will be undertaken, particularly for home detention. Sometimes this requires flexible working hours outside of normal work hours. It might involve attending courses as support people, attending graduations and on occasion picking up / dropping off from night courses, such as for young dad's groups
- creative and innovative solutions are found, in terms of sanctions, activities / report-in locations
- continuous reflection of the way we practice, trying different ways of operating, identifying what is working and what isn't
- the team will work collectively across the Department and involve all outside stakeholders where appropriate.

Tika, pono, aroha

Interwoven into the team's kawa and over-all approach to working effectively with young offenders are principles such as tika (correctness), pono (truthfulness) and aroha (empathy). Team members are expected to role model these principles and behaviours during every contact with the youth offender, their whānau, and communities. Our experience has found role modelling such principles is critical to building effective engagement.

> *"One particular mantra I find very useful, is 'if I don't know, I can't help'. For example, if Police call following an arrest; they are always able to speak to me. I will always visit my young offender in the cells the morning after arrest and I usually turn up at their court appearance to support so the offender knows that we care."* ***Debra Cresswell, Probation Officer***

These are practical examples of how these values are reflected at the front line. They also reflect the Working With Whānau Engagement Model[1] and motivational interviewing, two key tools in our efforts to reduce re-offending by young people.

Risk, need, responsivity – an evidence-based approach

Incorporated into the team's kawa and youth centred approach is the evidence-based approach developed from Andrews & Bonta's (2010) research on the psychology of criminal conduct, in particular the principles of risk, need, and responsivity. According to this research, interventions with youth should match their level of risk, the factors that contribute to their offending, and the way they are most likely to learn to change. Research shows that when the risk, need and responsivity principles have been applied together, the outcome is more successful. Where they have been applied independently of one another, the results were less successful.

This has important implications for Corrections staff when working with youth, particularly those who believe that all offenders should be treated the same. The evidence is quite clear that this is not the case. When staff are working with youth, they need to be aware that intensity of practice needs to match the assessed risk.

Integrated practice framework

Taking an evidence-based and practical youth-centred approach is consistent with community probation's integrated practice framework and practice leadership framework, which make it clear that everyone leads on practice and has a responsibility for their own practice development. The frameworks also illustrate practice as a collaborative process that involves all staff across the Department.

The team has committed to applying their knowledge and efforts to have the right person make the right decisions about the right offender at the right time. Their whole ethos and way of working is based around a kaupapa Māori strength-based approach which weaves Māori concepts, values and principles such as manaakitanga (caring for people) and whānaungatanga (making connections) for every young offender who comes into their care, regardless of their ethnicity.

1 The Working With Whānau Engagement Model was developed for Corrections and is based on a traditional Māori process of engagement, the pōwhiri as a metaphor for building effective engagement with Māori offenders, their whānau and communities; it focuses on collaboration and relationship building that revolves around sitting down and having conversations about a particular topic or issue.

Working within the integrated practice framework ensures the team are continually developing and reflecting on their practice and using the practice tools and practice support available to them. Working collaboratively with the young person's whānau (family), support persons, their community and other external providers and agencies ensures any risk issues are assessed, managed and mitigated accordingly, in a more holistic and effective way.

Cross agency collaboration

A key driver for the team was the need to provide a more seamless transition between youth services such as Child, Youth and Family (CYF), Work and Income, Youth Horizons Trust, Police, and Corrections. This has given the Department a unique opportunity to share information and to minimise duplication of services and resources. Sharing information between agencies has proven crucial to the transition for young offenders, particularly between youth and district courts. For example, CYF notify the team when a young offender is being transferred to a district court. This system enables the team to make contact with these offenders and their case managers/social workers prior to sentencing. This has occurred several times now, and has proved valuable in terms of effective engagement and building rapport with the offender and their whānau. Responding to their individual needs reminds us that it's 'about them, not us'. Practitioners should always consider that young offenders are still trying to find their own place in the world (this is often found by affiliating with gangs).

Engagement and support

Central to the Youth Offender Team's efforts is the role of practitioners and their commitment to remain a constant support in the young offenders' life while they are on a sentence or order. Often in the chaotic context of young people's lives, practitioners will be the only constant pro-social influence. We need to recognise this and take the opportunity to make a difference when the opportunity presents itself. Showing the young offender respect, demonstrating that they can trust us, that they can call if things are not going well or they just need to talk to someone, is critical to building effective engagement. How can we afford not to work in this way? What are the alternatives? Non-compliance, absconding or suicide attempts, bearing in mind young males are a high risk group for suicide.

As practitioners, we need to understand that young offenders may re-offend, and when they do, it's about letting them know that we will still be there to support and guide them. Helping them make good choices, and encouraging them to pick themselves up again (and again and again) can be motivational and empowering for the young offender and very satisfying for us as practitioners.

Judges and the judiciary

Providing information to the courts and the Parole Board is an important role for Corrections staff. For youth offenders in the Waitakere district, this work is usually carried out by the Youth Offender Team. This enables a more consistent approach where team members are able to do all the pre-work preparation such as attending whānau hui, family group conferences and youth court where possible. This enables the staff member to provide the judge or Parole Board with a well documented, balanced and in-depth report about the young offender's current circumstances, who supports them and appropriate sentence recommendations. This approach is consistent with the over-arching foundation to provide a youth-centric approach ensuring a less daunting and seamless transition through their journey with us. Unfortunately, all too often, the young offender has burnt all their bridges and has little or no family support, so it is the practitioner who is the one left to make a positive difference in their lives.

Two district court judges have noted the efforts of community probation staff to deal with youth offenders more effectively.

> *"I have to say this court in West Auckland is well served by the combination of social workers in the youth court jurisdiction and Ms [Deb] Cresswell – the probation officer … who has provided this report. I am not sure that there is that sort of arrangement in any other court in the country, however, this arrangement is an excellent one that allows this type of sentencing to occur with the minimum of disruption and breakdowns in communication, which is usually how this sort of sentencing occurs in other regions. So I do express the court's gratitude to both Mr Brumby and Ms Cresswell for the reports that are before the court today."* ***Judge Heemi Taumaunu***

> *"Not only has Mr Brumby (CYF) taken the trouble to come along, but Ms Cresswell (Probation Officer), who is in charge of the youth team offenders' part of probation, has taken the trouble to come along and they will, I am sure, be offering you support and oversight."* ***Judge Lisa Tremewan***

These quotes were published in *Connect*[2] in April 2013 and highlighted some of the good work the Waitakere Youth Offender Team is doing and how they are making a difference. It also gives a judge's perspective on the approach the team has taken to managing youth offenders. The following case study highlights how this approach has worked in practice.

2 Connect was an internal Corrections staff newsletter published fortnightly.

Case study: Tama

The positive results from a youth-centric offender management approach are illustrated in the following case study.

Tama (not his real name), came to community probation with a long youth justice history ranging from serious violence, including aggravated robbery, kidnapping, burglary, theft and escaping lawful custody. He was 18 years old, a young father with a permanent disability sustained when he was a child, and he was still under CYF guardianship until the age of 20. He came from an extremely dysfunctional family and his closest support person was his girlfriend.

Community probation had been advised that Tama was being transferred from the youth court to the district court for sentencing, and the judge had ordered a Provision of Advice to Court report to be written. The Youth Offender Team member assigned to the case organised a whānau hui and invited the CYF social worker to attend. As a result of the whānau hui, and after liaison with Tama's lawyer, a sentence of home detention (HD) was recommended, along with judicial monitoring. The rationale behind the HD recommendation was that HD would provide more stringent control of Tama's movements and a more intensive rehabilitative regime could be used. The judge agreed with the proviso that Tama would be managed by a Waitakere Youth Offender Team member.

Following sentencing there were numerous ups and downs, numerous breaches of his HD, an attempted suicide, depression, and address changes, which resulted in three short terms of imprisonment over five months, despite some very collaborative, intensive work. The Youth Offender Team member had been working tirelessly with the whānau, his girlfriend, CYF and the judiciary. She did not give up, she kept pressing ahead, visiting him regularly in jail, talking and planning on how he could make better decisions and somehow change his life. She demonstrated by her actions that she cared about what happened to him, and that he wasn't just another statistic, which eventually paid real dividends. The kawa, and the way the Youth Offender Team works enabled the practitioner to put in the required time and resources into Tama as they took up the slack in terms of picking up some of her caseload at crucial times.

On Tama's fifth court appearance for breach of HD, the Youth Offender Team member argued that progress was being made in small steps and asked for and received a nine-month suspended sentence.

During this time however, Tama experienced a personal tragedy and he went off the rails again, leaving his HD address without permission. Realising that there would now be consequences for his actions, Tama contacted his probation officer and he was subsequently arrested again and taken into custody. The judge was informed of the tragedy that had transpired and Tama was again given a sentence of HD. Although there were still incidents when he struggled to comply with his HD conditions from time to time, Tama's offending had dropped off. The probation officer was working hard with Tama, his girlfriend and the CYF social worker in terms of developing a relapse prevention plan, offence mapping and using other motivational tools such as the costs benefits exercise. Tama was a key contributor leading the whole process at this stage and although it took a lot of time and effort, he was slowly starting to take ownership of his behaviour.

Tama eventually completed a one-on-one counselling programme through the bicultural therapy model which aims to increases responsivity to Māori needs by enabling both tikanga Māori and Western psychology for self-development and whānau healing. He also went on to complete a ten week young father's course. He is currently attending an alcohol and drug programme, and was accepted into the Walsh Trust which helps with all aspects of life, including training for employment. Tama is now on post detention conditions. There continues to be the odd breach of his post detention conditions but, more importantly, Tama has not re-offended for ten months. For such a prolific violent young offender, this indeed is real progress.

This case highlights just one success story the Waitakere Youth Offender Team has managed to achieve. The whole collaborative, evidenced-based, youth-centric approach has proven to be a success. Tama's case serves as a reminder to all of us that change takes time, the changes may be small, but significant, that there will be lapses and relapses when working with youth, and that we must acknowledge that youth are physically, mentally, emotionally different from adults. But perhaps most importantly, practitioners need to have a belief that youth are able to change in the right environment. With a more holistic, less regimented approach, effective whānau and cross-agency relationships, we can make a difference.

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Case managers and the youth units

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Author biography

Madeline joined the Department of Corrections in early 2013 as a Business Analyst for the Case Management Service Design Team at National Office. She completed her degrees in Law and Human Geography at the University of Otago and is currently completing a Master of Laws, majoring in Human Rights, via distance leaning with the University of Auckland.

Youth case managers

Case managers play an integral part in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders who pass through the Department of Corrections' three youth units. These units house offenders aged nineteen years or younger, and are situated within Waikeria Prison, Hawke's Bay Regional Prison and Christchurch Men's Prison.

This article details the challenges that case managers working in these units face, by looking at the job through the case managers' eyes. Some success stories are described, and functional barriers that the youth units encounter, such as problems associated with location and remand, are identified. Lastly, insight is given into how case managers are overcoming these challenges.

Reducing youth re-offending

Reducing re-offending is a key aim for case managers. This aim is especially important in the youth units, because stopping a cycle of recidivism early will reduce the risk of an escalation in the severity of crimes committed, and lessen the chance of the offender returning to the justice system. The job of a youth case manager is thus pivotal to the Department's goal of reducing re-offending.

The challenges

Many of the young people in the youth units have already stood frequently before youth courts. For many, their journey to prison has been almost inevitable, and prison is a tragic end to some awfully cheerless stories. Resilience is, consequently, an unwritten requirement for case managers working with youth. Their first challenge when meeting with a fresh-faced offender is to isolate their own emotions from the job that needs to be done. For some case managers, the offenders are similar ages to their own children, so seeing these youngsters in prison can be especially trying. An outwardly positive attitude is commonly used by these case managers, to help them get the job done, as well as strong peer support within case management teams.

Group discussions at team 'practice sessions' and on-going training and support from case management leaders all assist in keeping case managers happy at work.

Youth offenders have generally been victims themselves at some stage in their lives. The rehabilitation of these offenders hence requires case managers to have a good grasp of motivational interviewing techniques, and an ability to ask questions that delve into the roots of a youth offender's crime. Addressing the offence-related needs goes hand-in-hand with coaching the youths through their own stories of abuse and victimisation. Cheryl Jackett, a case manager working in the Hawke's Bay Regional Prison youth unit, generalised the situations of such youths by saying:

> *"Many of the youth in the youth unit have been the victims of years of abuse and neglect and have not had the opportunity to grow and thrive in a safe family environment. They have grown up having to learn how to look after themselves and have turned to their peers for support, and substance use to block out the reality of their lives."*

Steering these young people away from the poor peer influences, which Jackett describes, towards positive support networks, is difficult to build from scratch. Heightened by constraints of working within a prison environment, case managers are hugely reliant on the help of community probation staff and outside agencies, to ensure the path of a youth offender stays straight and narrow.

Reintegration needs are another core challenge for youth case managers. Matariki Maaka, a case manager working in the Waikeria Prison youth unit, nicely summed up the rationale for this problem:

> *"Unlike a lot of their mainstream cohorts, youth do not have a home set up and a partner waiting at the other end. Many of these boys have burnt their bridges with their families by the time they reach prison."*

Enabling youth offenders to reconnect with family where possible, or pursue new support networks, makes up a considerable part of a youth case manager's work. Insufficient family support generates two accommodation-related problems for the youth offender. One is the absence of an appropriate bail address for remand youth, potentially leading to a more prolonged period in prison, and the other is the lack of a home to return to once the offender is eventually released from the youth unit. Having a home is central to any reintegration plan, so researching accommodation options and liaising with external providers is part of a typical day for youth case managers.

The absence of a family or community support network is another problem that case managers face when trying to reintegrate youth offenders. Many youth have not got a reliable support network on the outside, so when case managers show that they care and want to help the youth, many youth feel more valued than they ever have before. Leanne Crossley, a case manager working in the youth unit at Christchurch Men's Prison, said that a youth offender once told her that prison was the most supportive environment he had ever experienced. Convincing the youth that the outside is better for them than prison, is thus another difficulty in the task of reintegrating youth offenders.

"Enabling youth offenders to reconnect with family where possible, or pursue new support networks, makes up a considerable part of a youth case manager's work."

Some success stories

The youth units are not all about challenges. Success stories emerge often and case managers revel in seeing the positive influence they have on youth offenders. For many youth, having case managers support them in overcoming reintegrative challenges, in turn generates a story of achievement.

Maaka spoke of a memorable case at Waikeria Prison, where a depressed and angry youth offender, who had seen a number of family relationships break down, succeeded in resolving his differences with his family. Maaka had encouraged the youth to contact his family, which in turn prompted open discussions between the youth and his closest kin. This led to the offer of a home for the offender on release, help to find employment and support in attending rehabilitative programmes once back in the community.

At Hawke's Bay Regional Prison, Jackett told of a youth offender who she is confident will not re-offend. The young offender was motivated to continue his education, so with the help of his case manager, he was placed on a Youth Guarantee Scheme. A hui was held in prison between the youth offender, the case manager, the youth unit principal corrections officer, the education provider, the forensic nurse, the community agency and the offender's family. The outcome was that the community agency supported the youth offender in prison, and post-release, by providing the youth with a mentor who assisted the youth with transitioning back into the community.

Such success stories are what ensure that youth case managers keep enjoying their jobs, and feel rewarded by their work. Crossley claimed that "success is evident in the slightest things when working with youth". It is this attitude that means that youth case managers are important players in reducing re-offending.

Geographical barriers

The locations of the three youth units are a key constraint for case managers, when planning for both the reintegration and the rehabilitation of the youth offender. This is a consequence of both geography and the low New Zealand population. The youth unit at Waikeria Prison is the home of a number of Auckland based youths, a whole two hours south of the 'big smoke'. Hawke's Bay Regional Prison houses an eclectic array of lower North Island teenagers, while Christchurch Men's Prison sees all youth offenders from the South Island.

Geographical barriers are therefore a common problem when planning for release. Contact is mostly made by phone, with family visits constrained by both distance and cost. As a result, offenders feel distanced from their home roots. Case managers are forced to improvise, on a case-by-case basis, to ensure each youth offender is eventually re-connected with support networks in their own communities. This is achieved through phone calls to family members, external providers and community probation. Understanding what the youth offender wants, what the youth offender needs, and what the community can offer, is central to driving solution-focused outcomes. More often than not, case managers create a support network that fits the requirements of the particular offender, despite barriers.

Specific issues for working with youth remandees

Youth units house a mixture of remand accused offenders, remand convicted offenders, and sentenced

offenders. On the face of it, these youths all have similar needs. However, because remandees are presumed innocent until the outcome of their trial, constraints exist with regards to what the case manager can offer the remandee. For instance, rehabilitation programmes focused specifically on offending are only available to convicted youth, and some education and employment options are only available to sentenced youth. The Department is looking to widen the availability of education and employment options for remandees in the future. However, in the interim, offender's plans are, in part, influenced by where the offender currently sits in the justice system, as opposed to what they require at that point in time.

Timeframes are also a constraint for case managers when working with youth who are on remand. Uncertainty as to how long the youth remandee may be in the unit means that case managers are required to improvise when writing plans. This uncertainty can also lead to urgent planning, when youth remandees are released earlier than expected, and their reintegrative needs are high. Taking the progression of the case as it comes, and working on a case-by-case basis, is consequently vital for effective management of these cases. Case managers establish contingency plans for remandees. The remandee may be sentenced to imprisonment, may receive a community sentence, or maybe released, so the case manager plans for all scenarios. This diverse planning, and quick thinking, drives solution-focused plans for all youth remandees.

Youth case managers and the future

This article has shown that case managers are successfully overcoming countless challenges when working with youth offenders. The positive pathways they develop for youth generally have good outcomes.

The future for case management looks bright. Case managers are using dynamic risk assessment and are moving towards a professional decision framework. Motivational interviewing techniques are being used with all offenders, and case managers are embracing a case-by-case approach, which sees each offender's particular needs and circumstances considered. All this work will inevitably translate into positive outcomes in the community.

Overcoming barriers is part of being a case manager. Using the new skills and tools being developed, and creating their own ways of overcoming the challenges identified in this article, is the way forward for youth case managers. Maaka, Jackett and Crossley, are all a testament to this fact.

An introduction to offending by youth

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Author biography

Glen Kilgour trained as a clinical psychologist at Waikato University, graduating in the early 1990s. He has worked in the Department since 1995 in a variety of roles including principal psychologist and, currently, the Principal Advisor for Special Treatment Unit Development in the Office of the Chief Psychologist. His interests include reducing violence, programme evaluation, group therapy, young offenders, continuous learning, staff development, and science fiction.

Youth offending is a societal problem that occupies the attention of politicians, policy makers, government departments, the media, and the communities impacted. Accordingly much attention has been given to the development of offending in youth and potential strategies for intervening with these populations. This article summarises some of this research with an outline of the extent of the problem in New Zealand, a brief summary of developmental issues, and an outline of the emergent knowledge about effective treatment and intervention.

The current situation

Beginning with the situation in New Zealand, an analysis of reconviction rates for a cohort of released prisoners identified that of all age groups those under 20 had the highest reconviction (88 percent) and reimprisonment (71 percent) rates within a 60-month period (Nadesu, 2009a). Furthermore the under-20 group was reimprisoned at double the rate of those over 40. Four hundred and sixty three offenders were under 20 at the time of release and within three months of release almost one quarter of these (107) committed further offences which ultimately resulted in reimprisonment. Additionally, 64 percent of youth offenders who were reimprisoned did so more than once over the 60-month period.

> *"... this ever-increasing population could not and should not be treated as 'miniature adults'."*

An initial analysis of offending patterns from a New Zealand cohort born in 1965 suggested an offending 'peak' after which seriousness and frequency generally tended to decline (Hughes, 2010). Hughes (2010) proposed that 'waiting until an offender is in their late 20s or older for intervening means we are only ever likely to prevent a small proportion of their lifetime harm' (pg5). In contrast, many serious young offenders are unlikely to be actively engaged in desisting from offending. One study found that individuals on probation who self-reported active engagement in offending over a one-month period were significantly younger overall than those without self-reported offending (Healy, 2010). Criminal thinking styles were more closely associated with the active offenders than those not currently reporting offending behaviour. These observations fit with observed higher offending rates with the younger population (Nadesu, 2009a). They highlight the need to incorporate motivational components into treatment, provide opportunities to 'hook' young offenders into social environments and give experiences that foster identity change and pathways to desistence.

A review of correctional programming for young offenders emphasised that this population should not be treated as 'miniature adults' (Blom-Cooper, 2003, pg 117). Particular and significant issues for the young offender population in custody include a higher rate of disruptive behaviour and emotional problems compared with adults. Additionally, the young offender is likely to have recently experienced one or more problems such as abuse, neglect, disrupted or chaotic care, and educational or health problems; necessitating a greater emphasis by custodial and non-custodial services to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing the young offender's needs (see also Ministry of Justice, 2010).

In reality, many youth offenders in New Zealand have been previously managed by social service agencies (see Maxwell, Kingi, Robertson, Morris, and Cunningham (2004) for an example of research on the youth justice and family group conference process). Recent New Zealand research by the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation (CSRE) and the Department of Corrections examined the 'flow rates' from Child, Youth and Family (CYF) to Corrections, identifying that within two birth cohort samples (from 1985 and 1989) those who had CYF child or youth records were heavily over-represented among Corrections' clients. Almost 60 percent of Corrections' clients in this research

sample had a prior CYF record with this increasing to 69 percent for incarcerated adults and 83 percent for teenage prisoners (Report to the Minister of Social Development and Employment, 2010).

It is likely that the youth-gang culture is related to desistance and readiness to change for young offenders. Rates of gang membership among 16 and 17 year-olds within New Zealand's prison-based Youth Units is very high – over 80 percent (Tamatea, personal communication, 9 February 2011). Additionally, gang membership for New Zealand offenders has also been associated with much poorer recidivism outcomes (Nadesu, 2009b).

The risk factors for youth offending

There is now a significant body of research that reliably identifies risk factors in the youth population for later adult offending. Leschied, Chiodo, Nowicki& Rodger (2008) completed a meta-analysis of 38 studies and summarised the findings including:

- the strongest associations with adult criminality were externalising behavioural concerns (including hyperactivity, aggression and conduct disorder)
- internalising behaviours (e.g., depressive symptoms, anxiety) were modest but significant predictors
- family factors (e.g., coercive and aggressive parenting, parental abuse or neglect, presence of violence in the home, parental conflict, child welfare status, parental separation, family stressors, and poor communication) were also modest but significant predictors
- the older that the child displayed an identified risk factor the more reliable that factor was in predicting adult criminal outcomes. Thus, risk factors present in adolescence were strong and reliable predictors of adult criminality and less predictive for younger children
- interestingly, there were no significant long term anti-social outcomes related to social and interpersonal problems, developmental disorders or school-related problems. This suggests factors such as school failure with the aggressive/antisocial groups are more secondary consequences of anti-sociality.

The development of offending behaviour in youth

Patterson and colleagues have undertaken extensive longitudinal research across the development and treatment of delinquency in youth over almost a 50-year time-span, in what is commonly referred to as the Oregon Model (Reid, Patterson & Snyder, 2002). Summarised key findings from this group include the following:

Delinquency generally follows one of two trajectories: 1) antisocial behaviour evident in preschool years and persisting, leading to early arrest, chronic and violent juvenile offending progressing to career adult criminality, and 2) late-adolescent, transient, primarily peer-related offending, with likely desistance of offending in adulthood. This has been similarly observed in further research, most notably by Terri Moffitt and colleagues in the Dunedin longitudinal study who coined the terms 'life-course persistent' offenders versus 'adolescent-limited' offenders to describe these two general groupings (Moffitt, 1993)[1]. It has been reported (Khron, Thronberry, Rivera & Le Blanc, 2001 cited in DeLisi, Beaver, Wright & Vaughn, 2008) that the early onset group were forty times more likely to become chronic offenders than the late onset group and committed between 40 and 700 percent more criminal acts.

Coercive strategies are a key mechanism in the development of antisocial behaviour and are facilitated within family (parents, caregivers, siblings) and peer systems of the child from an early age. Coercion (a negative reinforcement process) is typified by one or more family members using hostile or aggressive behaviours to exert short-term control over others, who then inadvertently reinforce this aggression by acceding or backing down. A practical example might be the child who regularly tantrums in response to parental requests and the parent acts inconsistently in response; sometimes giving in but at other times responding harshly. The child learns that tantruming may sometimes be effective, and also learns (from the harsh behaviour modelled by the parent) that aggression can be useful in achieving compliance from others.

The more frequently that coercive strategies are used (compared with the rates of other non-coercive strategies) and the more frequently that conflict occurs within the family, the more likely that aggression is observed in later life. In other words, if conflict is relatively frequent in the family system, and coercion is used relatively frequently to manage this conflict then the youth is at greater risk for later criminal behaviour and aggression. At a simplistic level, and using the tantruming child described above, if a pattern of resistance to parental authority is established, this may later generalise into other environments (e.g., school, community). The child can develop beliefs hostile to attempts to manage their disruptive behaviour and can become identified as having an anti-authoritarian stance.

Aggressive children choose aggressive peers and are more likely to be rejected by non-aggressive peers. Aggressive peers help develop, reinforce, and maintain

1 For a more detailed discussion see Polaschek, D (2013) in this issue.

aggressive and delinquent behaviours. For example 'antisocial boys' mutually reinforce one another's 'rule-breaking talk' and this talk predicts later delinquency and substance abuse.

The parents and families of antisocial boys often have fewer effective (non-coercive, sustainable) parenting strategies, but are also often not involved and poor at monitoring or tracking the whereabouts of their children. This creates further opportunities for exposure and influence by other antisocial peers.

The families of at-risk and high-risk youth are often extremely challenging to work with, and are frequently involved with multiple agencies.

Parenting-based interventions showed some (limited) success with these families, but a better result is gained when using a case-management approach for each youth across agencies using a foster family as primary caregivers. Such an approach could consistently produce reduced financial costs compared to incarceration and reduced rates of recidivism.

When therapy included adolescent skills groups, although teenagers enjoyed these groups, they also showed significant increases in substance abuse. Similarly, boys placed in group-homes versus individualised placements, showed greater delinquency and arrest rates. Thus, treatment of antisocial youth in group settings appears to offset the gains of other attempts at intervention. This finding is important when considering therapy within custodial or residential groups (as discussed later).

Protective factors and desistance among youth offenders

Despite a relatively consistent view on the development of antisocial behaviour, it is still observed that many antisocial children do not become antisocial adults and not all chronic offenders offend in a similar pattern (Piquero, Sullivan & Farrington, 2010). For example Rennie and Dolan (2010) identified that youth released from custody were less likely to offend if they were older at first offence, and had more protective factors at the time of release (e.g., less history of psychopathology; presence of resilient personality traits including above average intelligence, cognitive skills, problem solving skills, calm mood, etc; prosocial involvement; strong social supports; strong attachments; positive attitudes to authority; and school commitment). Similarly, a further study observed a decrease in detected antisocial behaviour in serious adolescent offenders following court involvement (Mulvey, et al., 2010) noting:

"Much current law and policy assumes that the vast majority of offenders at the more serious end of the justice system are uniformly treading down the same path of continued high rate offending. The results here present quite the opposite picture. Even controlling for time incarcerated, the general trend among these offenders is to reduce their level of involvement in antisocial activities . . . Serious offenders, as defined by their committing offense, are clearly not uniformly 'bad actors'; instead, the vast majority of them have very limited involvement in antisocial activity in the years just before and right after their court involvement" (pg 470).

Stoutmaster-Loeber, Wei, Loeber and Masten (2004) examined desistance in two age groups (13-16 year olds and 17-19 year olds). High peer delinquency was a risk factor for continued antisocial behaviour across both age groups. Desistance in the 13-17 age group was associated with being accountable, believing one is likely to be caught, low physical punishment from caregiver, good relationships with peers, low peer substance abuse. Desistance in the 17-19 age group was associated with low non-physical aggression, believing one is likely to be caught, having many skills for getting employment, low peer substance use, and positive interactions with interviews – perhaps reflecting higher social skills.

Treating offending in youth populations

There have been numerous efforts to identify intervention targets among antisocial youth and a range of programmes that have been developed and evaluated.

The choice of what to target when designing programmes for young offenders can be complicated and confusing, in part due the language in, and complexity of, the available research. Andrews and Bonta (2010) distinguish between *predictor variables* (variables that predict criminal behaviour in longitudinal studies), *dynamic predictors* (where assessed change predicts change in subsequent criminal behaviour), *causal or functional variables* (behaviours that when targeted by interventions can result in changes in criminal behaviour) and *moderator variables* (behaviour or factors that may impact on change but not be directly responsible for it).

As an example, for any particular young offender 'substance abuse' might be a predictor, dynamic predictor, functional variable or moderator for crime, depending on the context of that individual's life and circumstances. Carrying the analogy further, the young otherwise prosocial first-time offender who gets drunk at a party (dynamic predictor and functional variable) and gets into a fight for the first time, may benefit from some brief substance-abuse intervention. A different youth who regularly commits crime when intoxicated (predictor variable) or not may not benefit from any substance-use intervention which does not first or concurrently address the underlying offence-

related needs such as antisocial peers and beliefs (functional variables).

These distinctions can also extend to classes of behaviour and variables. For example, school failure is generally associated with later offending (predictor variable) but targeting school performance alone is not likely to reduce delinquency because school dropout is more likely a result of other antisocial behaviour rather than the other way around.

While potentially confusing, the distinctions in the previous paragraphs are important when attempting to identify treatment targets. Failure to identify such targets can lead to uninformed, unhelpful strategies to intervention or an over-reliance on illusory 'common-sense'. Highlighting this point is the long history of unimpressive programmes targeting 'self-esteem' or pure 'social service' based interventions, which falsely assumed that because such variables are *associated* with offending that they are also highly functional.

In general the factors that have been reliably identified as being criminogenic (functional variables) and those that have not, have remained stable for some years, and are broadly applicable across age. Andrews &Bonta (2010) outline the promising targets for intervention based on risk and need factors (pg 500) and this table is worth replicating.

Table 1: Major risk/need factors and promising intermediate targets for reducing recidivism

Major risk	Dynamic need
History of antisocial behaviour	
Early and continued involvement in the number and variety of antisocial acts in a variety of settings.	Build up noncriminal alternative behaviour in risky situations.
Antisocial personality pattern	
Adventurous pleasure-seeking, weak self-control, restlessly aggressive.	Build problem-solving skills, self-management skills, anger management, and coping skills.
Antisocial cognitions	
Attitudes, values, beliefs and rationalisations supportive of crime and cognitive emotional states of anger, resentment, and defiance. Criminal/reformed criminal/anti-criminal identity.	Reduce antisocial cognition, recognise risky thinking and feeling, build up alternative less risky thinking and feeling, adopt reform/anti-criminal identity.
Antisocial associates	
Close association with criminal others and relative isolation from anti-criminal others, immediate social support for crime.	Reduce association with criminal others, enhance association with anti-criminal others.
Family/Marital	
Two key elements are nurturance/caring and monitoring/supervision.	Reduce conflict, build positive relationships, and enhance monitoring and supervision.
School/Work	
Low levels of performance and satisfactions in school and/or work.	Enhance performance, rewards and satisfactions.
Leisure/Recreation	
Low levels of involvement and satisfactions in anti-criminal leisure pursuits.	Enhance involvement, rewards and satisfactions.
Substance abuse	
Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs.	Reduce substance abuse, reduce the personal and interpersonal supports for substance-oriented behaviour, enhance alternatives to drug abuse.

Note: *The minor risk/need factors (and less promising intermediate targets for reducing recidivism) include the following: personal/emotional distress, major mental disorder, physical health issues, fear of official punishment, physical conditioning, low IQ, social class of origin, seriousness of current offense, other factors unrelated to offending.*

A risk and need analysis of the young offenders in New Zealand custodial youth units confirmed that the criminogenic needs above were frequently reported by the youth when using reliable and standardised assessment measures (Wilson and Rolleston, 2004). Percentage estimates of various needs included education/employment (78.5 percent), substance abuse (74 percent), peer relations (58 percent), personality/behaviour (42 percent), attitudes/orientation (32 percent), leisure/recreation (33 percent), and family (20 percent).

Bearing in mind the major targets for treatment identified above, there are many studies evaluating the effectiveness of correctional programmes for young offenders.

General programme outcomes

Lipsey (2009), in a very comprehensive meta-analytic review of interventions with juvenile offenders, attempted to compare effectiveness of programme types and approaches. Lipsey broadly observed that for similar intervention types the effects were not significantly different between different settings (e.g. community, after diversion, on probation or parole, in prison). The level of supervision did not appear to have any effect on later recidivism. The largest positive average effect sizes were for the highest risk cases (see also Lowenkamp, Makarios, Latessa, Lemke and Smith, 2010), although having a history of aggression or violence diminished those effects somewhat. Overall programmes with a discipline or deterrence approach showed little effect or actually increased recidivism. Behavioural and cognitive-behavioural interventions were the most effective of the skill-based approaches (greater than 20 percent effect size) while job-related interventions were the least effective (6 percent). Of the counselling based programmes, prosocial mentoring and therapist-led group interventions were the most effective (greater than 20 percent) and individual counselling and peer-led interventions the least (5 percent and 4 percent respectively). Multi-model interventions (a multi-modal curriculum or co-ordinated array of services often in residential settings) had limited effect (3 percent) with better results for case-management (20 percent) and brokered-service regimes (10 percent).

Interventions seemed equally effective across age groups, gender and – consistent with an earlier review by Wilson, Lipsey and Soydan (2003) – across majority/minority populations. Lipsey (2009) concluded that *"it does not take a magic bullet program to impact recidivism, only one that is well made and well aimed"* (pg 145) and emphasised the need for properly trained and supervised staff, close monitoring of service delivery, and corrective actions when quality becomes compromised.

Smith, Gendreau, & Swartz (2009) reviewed prior meta-analyses of offender programmes (including programmes for juvenile offenders) and endorsed the widely established and understood need for adherence to the 'what works' principles of risk (targeting higher risk), need (targeting factors known to be associated with offending), responsivity (using behavioural and cognitive/behavioural rather than non-behavioural interventions, and considering other offender characteristics when designing individualised interventions), and programme integrity.

The key attributes of integrity had earlier been identified in another meta-analysis (Andrews and Dowden, 2005). Those relevant to the implementation of programmes included:

- having a specific model or theory of criminal behaviour that is specific in regard to desired practice
- selecting workers who possess general interpersonal influence skills such as enthusiasm, caring, interest, and understanding
- training workers in the delivery of the programme
- providing clinical supervision from a person who has been trained in the delivery of the programme
- specifying desired practice through printed and/or taped manuals
- monitoring and assessing the intervention and/or intermediate gains via structured procedures
- having an adequate dosage of programme.
- Andrews and Dowden (2005) further recommended that programme developers consider establishing units sufficiently small to facilitate quality training and supervision of staff, and to include researchers in the design, delivery, management and evaluation for "any offender populations" (pg 184).
- There has been a growing acceptance of the responsivity issues associated with greater effectiveness. Blom-Cooper (2003) and more recently Andrews and Bonta (2010) have commented on many of these including:
- behavioural approaches are more effective than psycho-dynamic approaches
- military style discipline/physical activity ('boot camp' strategies) have found to be ineffective, and in many cases increase recidivism
- in contrast, programmes that combine physical activities with educational and offence-focussed therapy can facilitate a drop in re-offending
- motivational strategies may show promise, particularly with youth who are only spending short periods in custody
- interventions need to take in the different levels of educational achievement and the relatively poorer concentration and attention spans of youth over adults.

Specific programme outcomes

Family Therapy. Given the strong association with family variables and delinquency, interventions have often been targeted at supporting families to improve communication and parenting strategies. In a meta-analytic review of family-based interventions for juvenile offenders, Dowden and Andrews (2003) observed stronger effect sizes for programmes targeting higher (versus lower) risk cases and criminogenic needs (versus non-criminogenic), although no additive effect was observed for targeting both of these areas over one alone. They summarised by stating the meta-analysis "provided strong empirical support for the continued use of family forms of correctional intervention for dealing with juvenile delinquency" (pg 338).

Group therapy and 'deviancy training'. Offender treatment in groups has become the norm around the world, including New Zealand. However, concerns about the use of groups with young offenders is worth discussion. As highlighted earlier, the Oregon researchers' observation that group therapy with delinquent youth led to greater antisocial behaviour also led them to recommend that *"interventions with problem and delinquent teenagers should not be developed for group settings, including group sessions, camps, and other recreational, academic, or peer related activities"* (Reid, et al., 2002, pg 20). This 'deviancy training' or 'iatrogenic effect[2]' was outlined by Dishion, McCord & Poulin (1999) who observed that aggregating youth under some circumstances (e.g., smoking cessation, summer camps) could produce short and long-term increases in problem behaviour, particularly for the older, already deviant adolescent.

However, Weiss, et al. (2005) strongly challenged this study, providing a balanced critique of the research reviewed by Dishion, et al. (1999), and undertook their own meta-analytic review which did not support the hypothesis that group treatments were iatrogenic, although they found slightly less positive effect sizes than with individual therapy. Weiss, et al. (2005) argued that it was likely that the limited time spent in group therapy in the presence of deviant peers was unlikely to exert any greater negative influence than the significantly greater amount of time spent in other unstructured activities, which included peer contact. Additionally it was expected that therapist guidance would help manage the emergence of deviant actions occurring during group, although they noted a potential risk for adults becoming a catalyst for the development of a particularly strong antisocial group identity by providing a 'target' for individuals to demonstrate their antisocial values. In summary, the youth participating in therapy were probably more at risk from deviancy training due to the associations with other antisocial groups outside the therapy session than from within.

It is notable that the studies above did not have an emphasis on custodial settings, with Weiss, et al. (2005) only reporting a limited comparison between community and residential environments. However, given the well-established evidence that association with deviant peers increases the risk of further offending, there is no doubt that this presents significant challenges for the custodial management of youth who are necessarily housed together or with other adult offenders. Additionally, other research has supported the observation that young offenders housed together in custody can marginally increase the level of re-offending for some sub-groups (e.g., Mulvey et.al., 2010; Loughran et al., 2009) and that a reduction in offending for those who later form a stable relationship with a partner is likely to be due to a corresponding decrease in association with antisocial peers and the construction of new peer groups (Warr, 1998).

Anti-bullying interventions in custody. Young offenders are likely to continue to use coercive and aggressive strategies within custodial environments to obtain goals and resolve conflict (Blom-Cooper, 2003). A study of bullying among adult and young offenders (Ireland, 1999) observed that males and young offenders were more likely to report having bullied others than females and adults respectively, and that more than half of the sample reported bullying others in the past week. Bullies were more likely to come from a violent offender group and there was a strong cross-over between being a bully and a victim, particularly in the young offender population. While recognising that no anti-bullying strategy is going to be perfect, Ireland (2003) outlined a systematic approach to managing bullying within custody which included investigation, recognition and differential responses to the different groups in the bullying process (i.e., bully, victim, bully/victim, and non-involved).

Since then, Cregg and Payne (2010) have used an evidence-based structured measurement tool (Promoting Risk Intervention by Situational Management or 'PRISM') to evaluate a youth custodial setting and recommend environmental changes to reduce bullying and violence. This measure appeared effective at identifying areas of concern, and notable recommendations for reducing violence included environmental changes, increased co-operation of operational and non-operational staff groups, strategies to improve the quality of staff and offender relationships, and building staff morale through supervision and training.

2 An iatrogenic effect is one induced inadvertently by medical treatment and is used here in the broader sense to mean 'harm inadvertently caused by treatment'.

Pro-social role modelling. Pro-social role modelling has been outlined by Willmot (2003) as a strategy for countering anti-social attitudes among offenders. Willmot describes an Australian study in 1996 that trained probation officers in this behaviour. There were fewer breaches and lower rates of imprisonment after four years follow-up among the group exposed to pro-social role modelling by their probation officers than in the controls. The concept of staff as pro-social models has gradually found favour through correctional systems, with Willmot (2003) saying *"the effects of pro-social modelling are hard to quantify. However there is research to indicate that it also has a positive effect in reinforcing the positive effects of specific programmes, while conversely, anti-social behaviour by staff is likely to undermine effectiveness. It appears possible to teach pro-social modelling skills, and all staff could benefit from this training"* (pg 48).

Blom-Cooper (2003) noted that prison staff working with youth face particular challenges in balancing their 'order and control' role with the 'caring' role as a significant adult, and also recommended additional training for staff in understanding the needs of youth and the skills for working with them. In summary, the use of staff as pro-social role models to demonstrate and reinforce change is likely to be a necessary (but not sufficient) part of any therapeutic milieu and, conversely, unprofessional behaviour by staff is likely to damage treatment effectiveness.

Multisystemic treatment. Multisystemic treatment (or therapy), commonly referred to as MST, has gained a strong following among providers and agencies over the last 20-years as a model to address the complex physical, emotional, social, and educational needs of youth with antisocial behaviour problems. The philosophy of MST is to consider the child from a systemic perspective and design structured and informed interventions individualised to each child's particular ecology (Henggeler, Schoenwald, Borduin, Rowland and Cunningham, 1998). Individual caseworkers are assigned a relatively small number of high risk cases and respond to the day-to-day demands presented by these children and their families. Henggeler, et al. (1998) reported positive effect sizes and value for money, however, the Cochrane Collaboration (Littell, Campbell, Green and Toews, 2005) in their independent review observed that it was premature to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of MST with inconsistent results and a lack of robust controls. No harmful effects were observed.

Cultural factors. Although, as previously noted, when interventions have been shown to be effective they appear equally effective across majority and minority populations (Wilson, Lipsey and Soydan, 2003; Lipsey, 2009; Andrews and Bonta, 2010), given the high rates of Māori within the young offender population (Wilson and Rolleston, 2004) there is a need to develop programmes that are responsive to Māori youth.

Singh and White (2000) completed a thorough literature review of effective interventions for indigenous and ethnic minority youth. Acknowledging the lack of strong research in the area, they in essence endorsed many of the 'what works' principles and programmes along with four key components when working with Māori in particular:

- "a holistic approach incorporating different strategies
- involvement of significant others such as family and community
- staff who are sensitive, culturally appropriate, and with whom youth identify
- incorporation and emphasis of cultural material" (pg 10).

A framework for programme delivery. Polaschek (2010) highlighted the need to tailor cognitive-behavioural interventions along several dimensions including client characteristics (level of risk, readiness and responsivity), programme requirements (intensity, treatment targets, delivery methods, change processes and context, staffing, treatment integrity and requirements for monitoring the change process). She described three general strategies to programme delivery along the dimensions of offender risk and programme intensity, which, paraphrasing heavily, are as follows:

- Basic-level rehabilitation programmes for low-to-medium risk offenders with an assumed readiness for change, will be brief (40-70 hours) low intensity, usually with closed groups, focusing on a narrow range of dynamic risk factors, manualised, structured, psycho-educational and content driven, with delivery by facilitators who have good interpersonal skills and who may have some training in group process issues.
- Mid-level multi-factorial programmes are suited to higher risk clients with more and diverse treatment needs and responsivity barriers (especially readiness). These programmes will generally be between 100-300 hours, target multiple dynamic risk factors, include a variety of intervention components, and learning processes. The greater time in these closed programmes will allow flexibility for therapists to build a therapeutic alliance and vary group processes around the group's needs, including readiness (motivation), changes in thinking, and skill development. Programmes will be run by facilitators who are skilled, more deeply trained and well supervised. At this level programmes are more likely to be delivered in residential settings and in this environment homework becomes more possible. These

programmes may be designed for specific offender groups (e.g., sexual offending, violent offending) but, because higher risk clients are rarely specialist offenders (i.e., commit only one offence type) will still cover a broad range of offending needs.

- High-level comprehensive forensic therapy programmes "are characterised by: (a) targeting very high-risk offenders, or offenders at high risk of serious interpersonal crimes, (b) similar level of dosage delivered in group treatment sessions as for the mid-level programs, and (c) embedding of the program in a fully therapeutic environment or setting" (Polaschek, 2010, pg 10). In these programmes offenders are admitted into a relatively stable environment. Programmes are expensive, resource-intensive, and require highly trained staff working with a smaller number of clients. Programmes require extensive general rehabilitative content with an explicit focus on 'healthy lifestyles' running alongside therapy sessions (e.g. employment training, art classes, sports and physical training, cultural and spiritual programmes, literacy and education). Interventions will be run in purpose-built facilities, or facilities dedicated to therapy, with considerable communication between all staff to facilitate the change process, and the ability to manipulate the environment so clients receive consistent consequences for pro-social and anti-social behaviour. Clients are often not 'treatment ready' and "involuntary processes [that] may be used to get clients into these treatment environments" (Polaschek, 2010, pg 11).

Summarising the relevance of this framework to New Zealand custodial youth units, for example, very few young offenders currently placed within these units would fit into the first of Polaschek's categories above. The majority would fall within the mid-level range with a smaller but still significant number within the high-level group.

A note on cost. Aside from the emotional and social cost of offending, there have been numerous estimates of financial cost-effectiveness for correctional programming in overseas jurisdictions, and Willmot (2003) summarised that effective programmes in America have been estimated to return a financial saving of up to $5 for every dollar spent, where in contrast punishment-based programmes, such as boot-camps, yielded returns of around 75 cents for each dollar spent. No readily discernable cost estimates are available in New Zealand. However, a Treasury paper (Roper and Thompson, 2006), examining the 2003/04 period, estimated the total financial costs of crime (including core justice sector costs, health sector and benefit fraud costs, and private sector direct economic and social costs), across various offence types. This ranged between $1300 for a theft offence and $72,130 for a sexual offence, with offences against the person accounting for 45 percent of all financial costs (violence being the highest sub-category at 30 percent) and property offending following closely on 41 percent during the period examined.

Summary

In this paper I have outlined some of the risks and needs for young offenders and described some of the effective interventions for these groups. Given we know so much about youth offending it is perhaps surprising that this area remains so much of a challenge. However, we can glean that there are not-yet-fully-realised opportunities in the areas of:

- intervening as early as possible in the developmental pathway
- co-operating across government and private sector agencies to maximise efforts
- continuing to attend to the established principles of risk, need, responsivity, along with high integrity programmes
- training and supervising our staff well
- attending to the specialist and sometimes individualised needs particular to the emerging adult, including motivational, peer, familial, and mental health needs.

All this while minimising the risk associated with collecting youth together into cohorts that may be criminogenic. Sound easy? Let's do it.

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Information for contributors

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