

Being a Pro: Safer Society Presentation



1/26/22 3:00 PM EST

Norbert Ralph, PhD, MPH ©
Center for Prosocial Development
San Leandro, CA © 1/15/23

Limitations of Presentation

- Methodological limitations and nuances of research presented are important but beyond the scope of this modest presentation. See PDF'd articles for further discussion.
- Some research here, including the author's, is from small sample of convenience populations, and results need to be replicated.
- The presentation may be influenced by "confirmation bias" factors reflecting the presenter's perspectives, including his research on prosocial reasoning.
- Terms "prosocial" and "psychosocial" regarding maturity are used interchangeably.
- The presenter does not have any financial interest or benefit directly or indirectly from any products or methods discussed here, including Being a Pro.

Presenter: Norbert Ralph, PhD, MPH

- Clinical psychologist, private practice, San Leandro, CA
- Neuropsychologist & Epidemiologist
- Formally Coordinator, Sexual Responsibility Program, C&C of San Francisco
- 19 years providing counseling and crisis services to Juvenile Hall, San Francisco
- Trainer of Trainers, Aggression Replacement Training, California Institute for Mental Health
- Certified Practitioner, Moral Reconciliation Therapy
- Formerly Associate Clinical Professor at UC Davis School of Medicine, and Biostatistician and Lecturer at UC Berkeley
- Adolescent representative, California Sex Offender Management Board
- 40+ years of clinical practice with low-income children/teens
- 40+ published articles, books, blogs
- Contact information: Ph: 510-403-1830/Email. dr.n.b.ralph@gmail.com
- Website: norbertralph.com

Publications by Dr. Ralph

- "Prosocial Treatment Models with Juveniles who Sexually Offend." Perspectives, Fall, 2010.
- "Prosocial Models of Treatment with Sexually Aggressive Youth." N. Ralph. In B. Schwartz, Ed., The Sex Offender, Vol. 7, Civic Research Institute, 2012.
- "Evidence-based Practice with Juveniles." ATSA Forum, 2012.
- "Competency Status and Juveniles with Pending Sexual Offense Charges." Perspectives, 2012.
- "A Prosocial Collaborative Model for Juveniles who Sexually Offend." ATSA Forum, 2012.
- "Guidelines for the Assessment and Treatment of Sexually Abusive Adolescents, CCOSO", 2013 (co-author).
- "A Follow Up Study of a Prosocial Intervention for Juveniles who Sexually Offend." Sex Offender Treatment, 2015.
- "A Longitudinal Study of Factors Predicting Outcomes in a Residential Program for Treating Juveniles Who Sexually Offend." Sex Offender Treatment, 2015.
- "An instrument for assessing prosocial reasoning in probation youth." Sex Offender Treatment, 2016.
- "Being a Pro: The Prosocial Model for Problem/Solving", Safer Society Press, 2016.
- "Moral Reasoning in Juveniles Who Sexually Offend". ATSA Forum, 2017.
- "Prosocial Treatment Methods for Juveniles who Sexually Offended." ATSA Forum, 2017.

- "A Validation Study of a Prosocial Reasoning Intervention for Juveniles Under Probation Supervision." Sex Offender Treatment, 2017.
- "Evidence-based practice for juveniles in 2017." Sexual Abuse (Blog), 2017.
- "Practical Prosocial Methods for Assessment and Treatment of Juveniles with Sexual Offending Behaviors." In Sexually Abusive Behavior in Youth: A Handbook of Theory, Assessment, and Treatment. B. Schwartz, Editor, Civic Research Institute, 2017.
- "The Other Recidivism." Sexual Abuse (Blog), 2019.
- "Treatment Options and Outcomes for the Other Recidivism." Sexual Abuse (Blog), 2019.
- "The Utility of the JSORRAT-II." NAPN Blog post. 2019.
- "Neuropsychological and developmental factors in juvenile transfer hearings: prosocial perspectives." Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy. 2019..
- "A Replication of a Prosocial Reasoning Intervention for Juveniles." Sex Offender Treatment. 2019.
- "Developmental perspectives on "lying and manipulation" in juveniles who sexually offended." Sexual Abuse (Blog), 2020.
- "Some reflections on prosocial goals and plans for juveniles who sexually offended." Sexual Abuse (Blog), 2022.
- "Adolescent Guidelines." California Sex Offender Management Board, 2022. (co-author).
- Most are available through my website as downloadable PDFs (norbertralph.com).

Quick Summary

- *If I was asked to give a quick summary, here is my best shot.*
- Many factors influence probation-involved youth, including trauma, family and neighborhood factors, comorbid conditions, race, and ethnicity.
- Research indicates that an important factor is the developmental and time-limited nature of delinquent behaviors for youth, including sexual offenses, and how that is directly related to brain and physical development. Psychosocial immaturity is a risk factor for general delinquency and sexual offenses.
- There are practical and reliable ways to assess this factor. Evidence-based treatment methods are associated with reduced recidivism, including Being a Pro.

Quick Summary

- Being a Pro has been used with positive results with clinics, counties, and states.
- Designed to be a "Turn Key" treatment model used by solo practitioners, clinics, counties, or states. Being implemented statewide in Kentucky.
- Workbook format makes for easy use, as also online training and "baked-in" outcome measures.
- The "Parts":
 - Workbook available through Safer Society, 10 sessions.
 - Training video available.
 - Available as PDFs: 1. Counselor Manual, 2. Research & Theory Manual, and 3. Pre- and Post-Tests-used in outcome studies.

Primary Focus

- Use of these methods has a significant "bang for the buck," can be readily implemented, give practitioners a useful model for understanding delinquency, and can promote the dual goals of:
 - **1. Reducing recidivism.**
 - **2. Promoting a prosocial lifestyle for youth.**
- Being a Pro and related models can help increase psychosocial and moral reasoning maturity, promoting these goals.
- Aggression Replacement Training and Moral Reconciliation Therapy are important other models to promote psychosocial maturity.
- Whether our role is as a probation/parole officer, correctional officer, or therapist, I believe we all work with the same goal of helping these youth mature, though often not as fast as we'd like.
- Hypothesis: Good residential programs or treatment models (MST, DBT, TF-CBT, Mindfulness, Good Lives, Moral Reconciliation Therapy, Thinking for a Change) are effective in part b/c they increase prosocial development and maturity.

Primary Focus

- *“If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else.” -- Yogi Berra*
- Being a Pro can be of practical help by:
- Giving counselors and youth a clear "commonsense" model of what the youth and counselor are working on during counseling sessions.
- This prosocial and developmental perspective or "lens" is helpful to develop a shared vocabulary and set of goals in working with youth even after treatment is completed.
- The training, fidelity and quality assurance checks, and measurement of treatment outcomes of the Being a Pro method, help make for more effective programs where results can be documented. This helps not only program administrators but also counselors and programs understand the effects of their treatment.
- Bottom line: Youth on probation are more likely to have prosocial reasoning delays, including those with sexual offenses. The counseling relationship and the exercises in Being a Pro stretch the youth to consider one more prosocial perspective or behavior to promote psychosocial maturity.

Prosocial Paradigm

- The **Prosocial** model (PM) ID's the harmful behaviors due partly to deficits in prosocial reasoning and behavioral deficits (e.g., social perception, moral reasoning, emotional regulation & social skills). (Multifactorial causes).
- Intervention goals are to increase the youth's level of prosocial reasoning by helping them identify ways their current approach "isn't working for them", and challenge their approach with one that will work better, "What else might you do?"
- **Best practices:** Use intensive probation supervision AND skill building & increase prosocial reasoning. Also, case management.
- Landenberger & Lipsey, (2005); Lipsey, et al., (2010); Ralph (2012a).

Prosocial Counseling Relationship

- **Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others; it is the only means. -- Albert Einstein**
- The structured part of Being a Pro, the workbook, is complemented by the emphasis on creating a prosocial counseling relationship.
- The workbook is designed to be part of a counseling relationship and provide useful structure and scaffolding.
- An important way to promote prosocial development is by having a prosocial relationship and role models through the counseling relationship.
- This is an explicit part of the Being a Pro model, supported by the training video and PDF'd Counselor Manual, both available through Safer Society Press.

Therapist Factors

- **Therapist features that inhibit effectiveness**
- Aggressive confrontation
- Sarcastic
- Rejection
- Angry
- Discomfort with silence
- Boundary problems
- Unable to wait for answers

Marshall, et al. (2003). *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 8, 205-234.

Therapist Factors

• Therapist features that enhance effectiveness

- Empathic
- Directive
- Flexible
- Warm
- Encourages participation
- Respectful
- Rewarding
- Supportive
- Appropriate use of humor
- Appropriately self-disclosing
- Attentive
- Asks open-ended questions
- Confident
- Trustworthy
- Emotionally responsive
- Instills hope

Neuropsychological & Developmental Research



Neuropsychological & Developmental Research

- **Dr. Daniel Siegel, Clinical Professor, Psychiatry, UCLA.**
- Describes a model of brain development during adolescence.
- Adolescence systematically overestimate rewards relative to risks of behaviors.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

AN INSIDE-OUT GUIDE TO THE EMERGING

ADOLESCENT MIND, AGES 12-24

BRAINSTORM

THE POWER AND PURPOSE

OF THE TEENAGE BRAIN

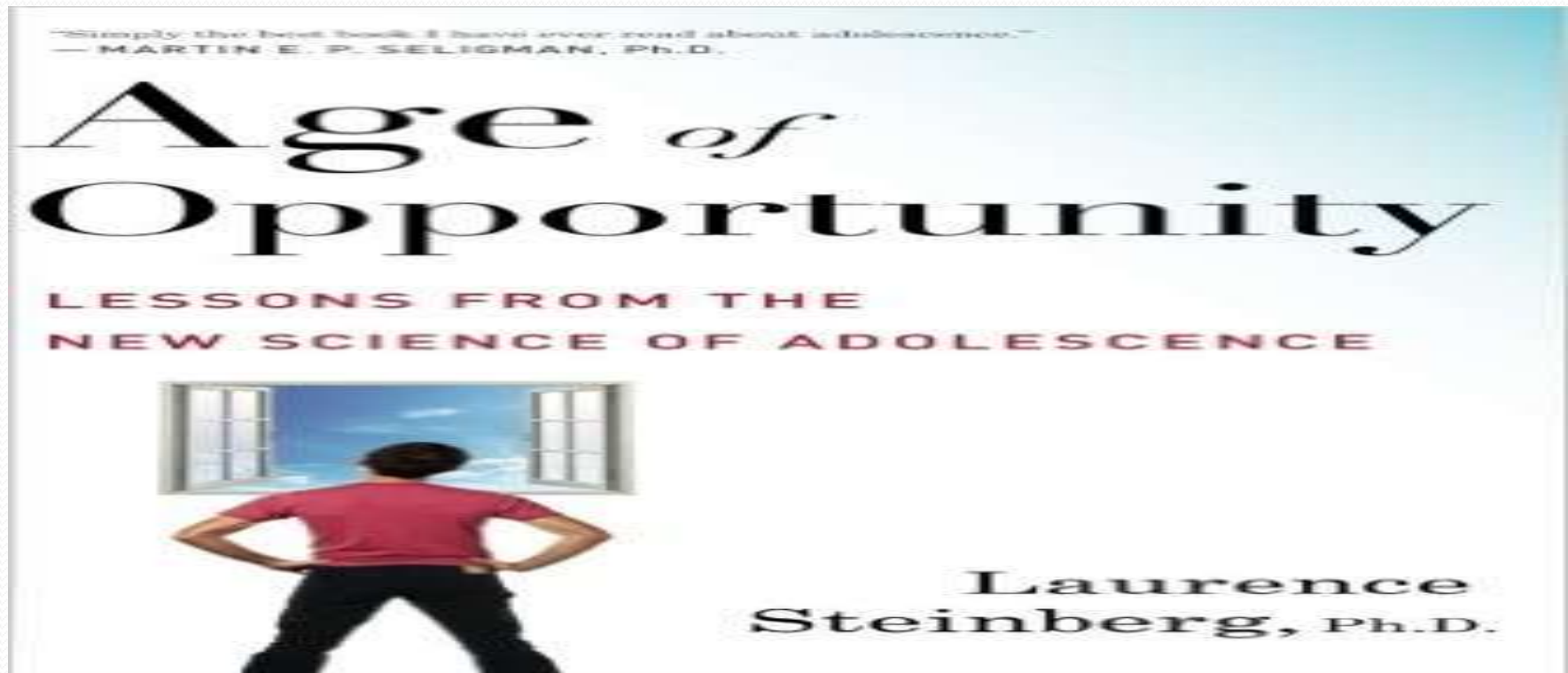


DANIEL J. SIEGEL, M.D.

- Teens seek out novelty and rewarding activities, and likely has a genetic/evolutionary basis.
 - Gene pool isn't enlarged by males who never ventured from home.
- Uses concept “Gist” to describe adolescence development in understanding the context of a situation that increases slowly during adolescence.
- Example: In a swimming pool children and teens may be all over the pool, but adults "stay in their lane" and don't intrude on the space of others.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ML68872pgi4>

Neuropsychological & Developmental Research

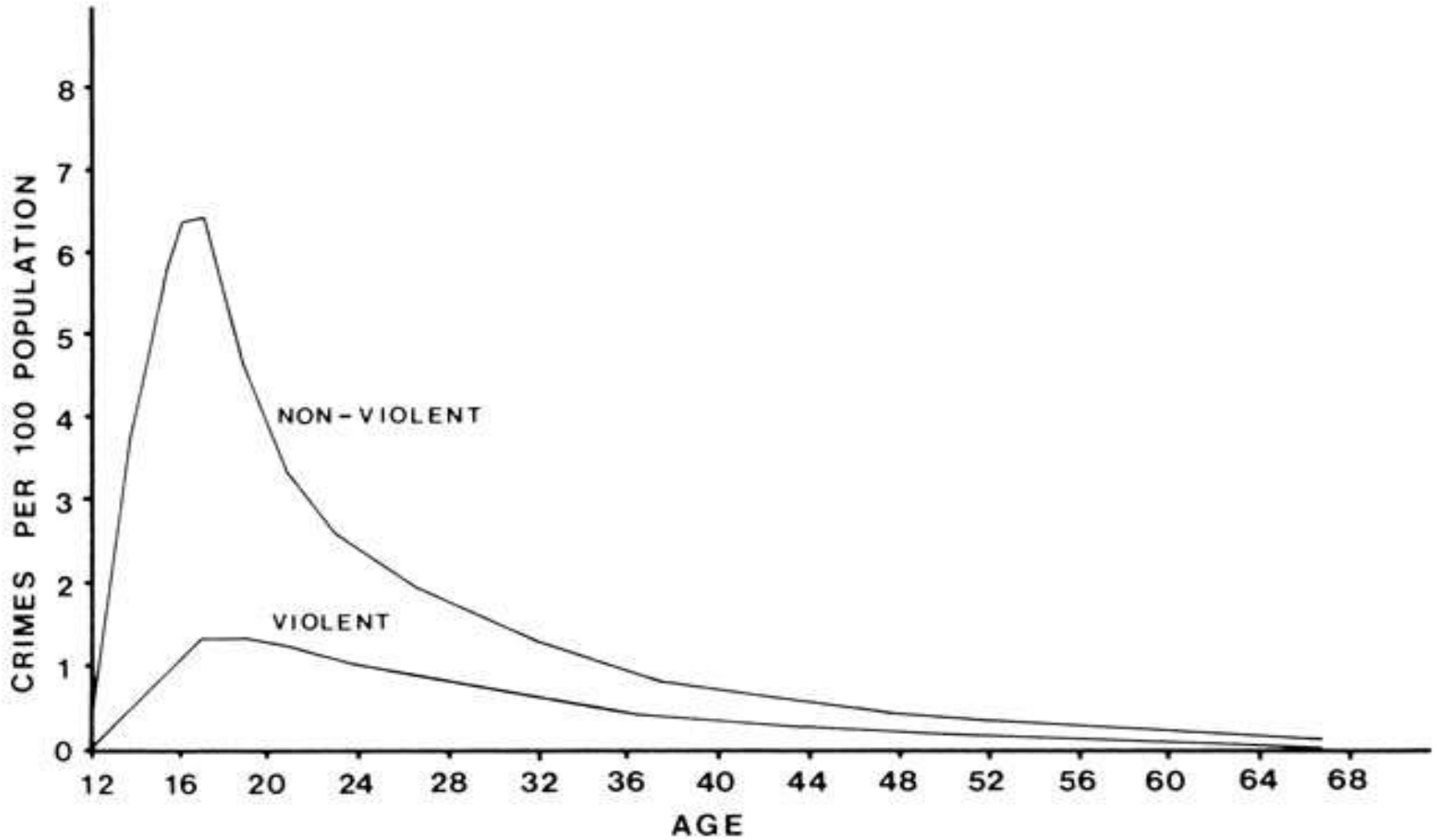
- Dr. Steinberg, in "*The Age of Opportunity*" describes adolescence as a critical period for prosocial development.
- Important period of brain changes and plasticity relevant to the development of prosocial behavior. Opportunity to develop the skills of a prosocial adult, or alternatively antisocial behaviors.



Neuropsychological & Developmental Research



Figure 1: Age/Crime Curve



¹ Farrington D 1986. Age and crime, in Tonry M & Morris N (eds), Crime and justice: An annual review of research. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 189–250.

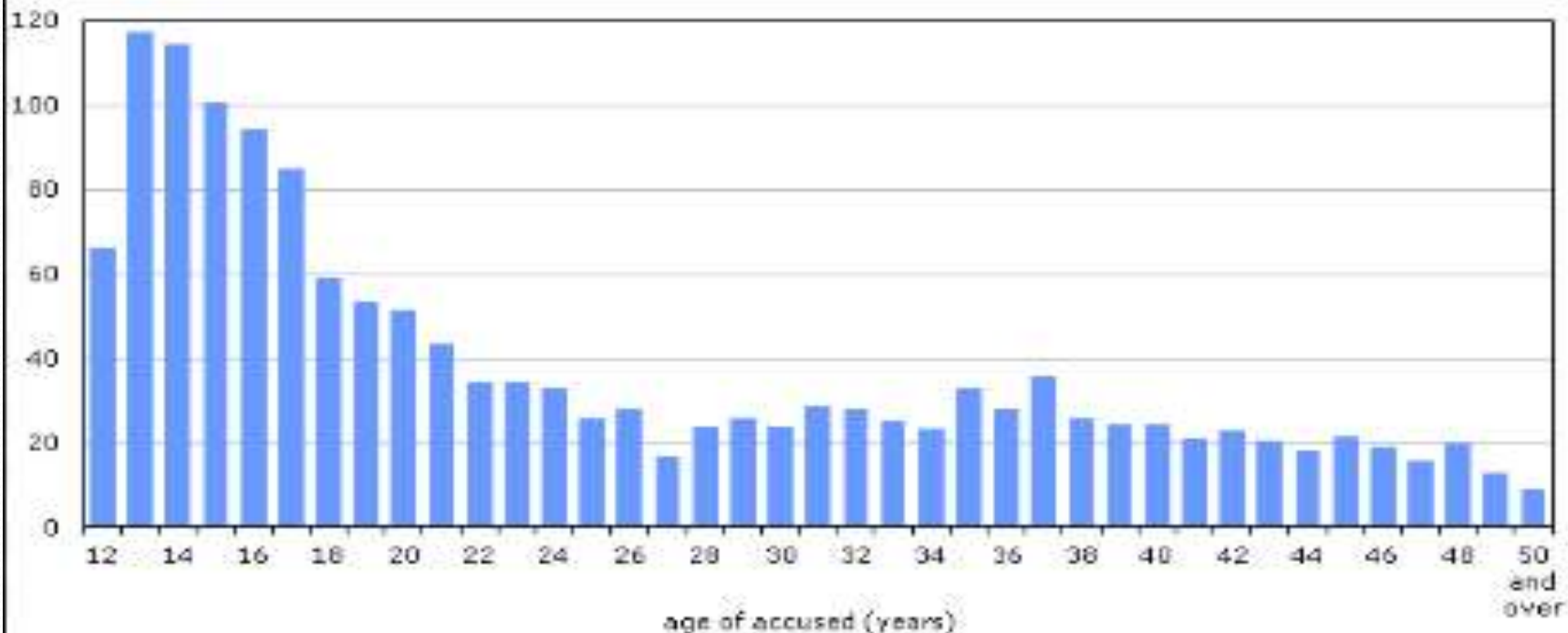
Figure 1: Canadian Sexual Age-Crime Curve, 2012

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14008-eng.htm>

Chart 7

Persons accused of sexual offences against children and youth, by age of accused, Canada, 2012

rate per 100,000 population



Note: The sexual offences in this chart include aggravated sexual assault (level 3), sexual assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (level 2), sexual assault (level 1), sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, sexual exploitation of a person with a disability, incest, corrupting children, making sexually explicit material available to children, luring a child via a computer, and intercourse, bestiality (commit/compel/incite), and voyeurism. Includes victims under the age of 18 only. Rates are based on a subset of incidents where there was a single accused person and a single victim. Excludes a small number of victims in Quebec whose age was unknown but miscoded as 0.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Psychosocial Development & Juvenile Recidivism

- Steinberg, Cauffman, and Monahan (2015) studied 1,300 serious juvenile offenders for seven years after conviction.
- Less than 10 percent became chronic offenders. Even for juveniles who were high-frequency offenders at the beginning of the study, the majority stopped offending by age 25.
- They developed a measure of psychosocial maturity which included impulse and aggression control, consideration of others, future orientation, personal responsibility, and resistance to peer influences which increased through all subgroups through age 25, consistent with current research regarding brain maturity (Steinberg, 2015).
- Less mature individuals were more likely to be persistent offenders, and even high-frequency offenders who psychosocially mature were more likely to desist from criminal behaviors.

Psychosocial Development & Juvenile Recidivism

- Cauffman, Skeem, Dmitrieva, and Cavanagh (2016) studied 202 male juvenile offenders and 134 male adult offenders, all in secure detention.
 - Using Hare Psychopathy Checklist and a measure of psychosocial maturity.
 - Greater risk of exaggerating psychopathic traits with juveniles compared to adults. They noted that 37% of juveniles who met the cut score for psychopathy continued to meet this criterion **two years later** compared to 53% of adults.
 - False positive errors appeared to be more common among the youngest and least psychosocially mature juveniles.
 - Increased psychosocial maturity, in turn, predicted decreased psychopathy scores in adolescents but not adults.

What is Effective for General Probation Youth? Lipsey (2009)

- Age, gender, or ethnicity did not influence effectiveness.
- Interventions were more effective with youth with higher levels of delinquency.
- More effective if implemented with **high fidelity** and targeted at appropriate youth.
- Not only "**name-brand**", but locally developed "**homebrew**" programs were effective. Both could be effective.
 - The key factor was are they well-designed, faithfully implemented, and targeted at appropriate youth.
- Separate research by Tennyson (2009), Goense, et al. (2016), and Baglivio et al. (2018), showed program fidelity and quality is strongly associated with positive program outcomes. The better the fidelity and quality of implementation, the greater reduction in recidivism.

Being a Pro Workbook



Being a Pro **The Prosocial Model for** **Problem-Solving** **Teen Workbook**

Written by Norbert Ralph, PhD, MPH

Being a Pro

- Children and younger teens don't think of the complexities of social situations and their choices/alternatives when faced with problems.
- They are more likely to just react. A simple way of describing this is as follows:
- **Problem → Reaction**
- This approach can be called the "Reactive Model." A problem comes along and we just react. For a lot of simple routine situations in life this works just fine.
- But every teen deals with situations that are not so routine and simple where this approach may not work.

Being a Pro

- The "Prosocial Model" is more likely to lead to positive outcomes. Research shows this fits with how older teens and nondelinquent teens think.
- Prosocial means that all the parties are more likely to have mutually positive outcomes and not violate any rules or laws.
- The Prosocial Model
- **Stop → Problem → Choices → Review**

The Prosocial Model

- STOP: Stop and think before acting.



- PROBLEM: Figure out what is going on in the situation.



- CHOICES: What are your choices?






- REVIEW: Review the outcome and look for improvements.

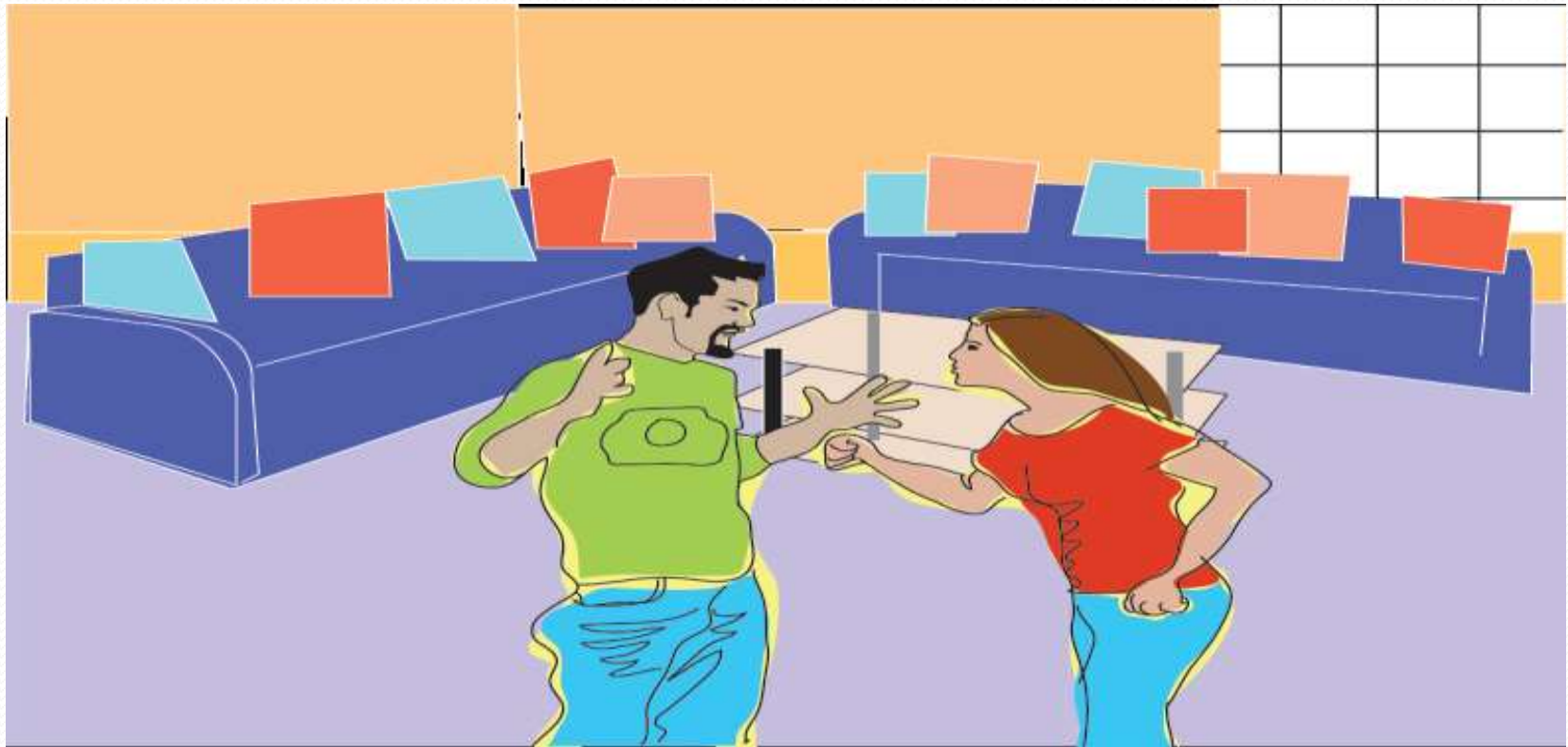
Example of Exercises

- WEEK 4: PROSOCIAL PROBLEMS
- **Story 4: Roger's Problem**
- **Roger is a 16-year-old who found \$200 in an envelope with a name, address, and phone number on it in front of a bank while walking home from school.**
- Why would Roger want to keep the \$200 and not tell anyone?
- How would he feel if he did this?
- What might happen?
- Why would Roger want to call the people listed on the envelope or police about the \$200.
- How would he feel then?
- What might happen then?

Examples of Exercises

- Part 2: Using the Prosocial Model with Problems.
- Let's use again the tools from the Prosocial Model described above for these problems. The relevant part of this would be as follows:
- STOP: Can you stop now to think about the problem?

- PROBLEM: Figure out what is going on in the situation.

- CHOICES: What are your choices?

- REVIEW: Review what you chose, the outcomes, and look for improvements.

Examples of Exercises



1. What happened before?
2. What was going on?
3. What are people thinking and feeling?
4. Any rules or laws apply?
5. What was the outcome?

Use of the *Being a Pro* Workbook

- The *Being a Pro* Workbook is designed to be used in individual therapy. The workbook is designed to use over 10 sessions.
- Week 1: Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Week 2 to 5: Chapters 2 through 5.
- Week 6 to 10: Activities for each week, which will be one Story Exercise, and the Pro-Log.

Outcome Studies

- Two peer-reviewed published studies, simple Pre/Post test analyses. Samples: n=24, and n=14.
- Samples of youth in outpatient or residential treatment for sexual offenses.
- First trial n=24. Results: 3/3 Counselor measures, 1/1 Youth measures, and 1/2 Performance measures showed change consistent with increased psychosocial maturity. Performance measure sampled teen social-emotional reasoning.
- Second Trial n=14. Results: Used only Counselor ratings, and 3/3 indicated an increase in psychosocial maturity.
 - **Changes found can be summarized as increasing:**
 - 1. **Cooperation with adults and rules,**
 - 2. **Emotional control and regulation,**
 - 3. **Resistance to peer pressure, and**
 - 4. **Planning and thinking ahead.**
 - Nearly identical to the Steinberg, Cauffman, and Monahan (2015) model of psychosocial maturity above.
- Limitations Pre/Post methodology but consistent with characteristics of effective programs described by Lipsey (2009) & my EBPC model.

Questions from Participants?

