

From Punitive Juvenile Justice to Positive Youth Justice



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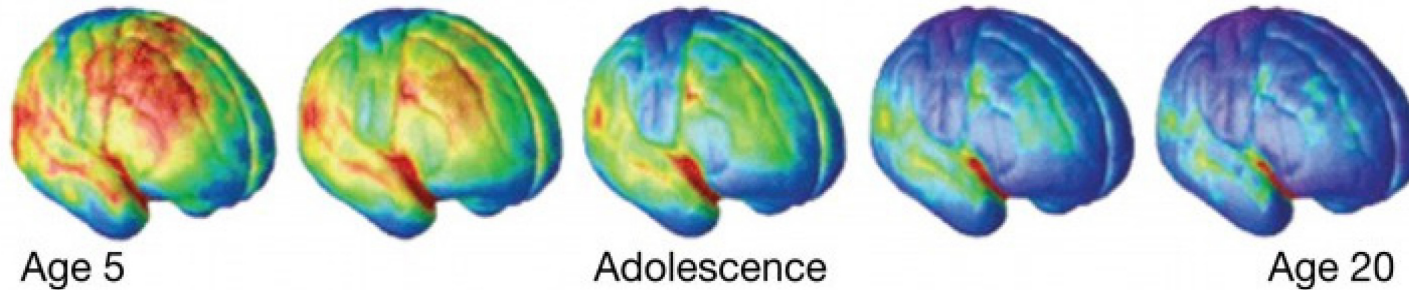


Brain Development



90 Percent of a Child's
Brain Develops by Age 5

BUT - brain development continues well into your twenties



Our Personal Development Doesn't Stop We are constantly changing



Your turn

1. You at age 15. Write down some attributes.
2. Major changes in yourself since then – e.g., how you make choices, how you deal with disappointment or failure, how you relate to friends, how your goals have changed. Write them down.
3. Now through March 2027. Your ideal picture. Are you seeing something that you can translate into goals? Goals that are attainable in the next 5 years?
4. What can you do now to move you toward those goals?

Your personal development is ongoing. You can't control everything, but you can influence **it**, and **you can reset the process if you screw up.**

Describe a successful 30-year-old



The Juvenile Justice System

America's Juvenile Justice System was originally created as a Child Welfare System

Driving Forces:

- Immigration of Irish and Italians
- Urban poverty
- Disdain for poor parents
- Desire to avoid adult penalties

Black and Brown kids excluded



The Juvenile Court: A reaction to the Criminal Court

The Child	The Criminal
Social Welfare	Social Control
Treat children	Punish Criminals
Determinism	Choice
Offender	Offense
Dependence	Independence
Forward looking	Backward looking
Welfare	Just deserts
Discretion	Rules
Procedural informality	Formality

It soon adopted a crime control perspective

Violent Crime a major concern as civil unrest rose in the 1960's

Racial bias? Decrease the court's discretion and mandate more formality

- But more formality produced a court more like that of the criminal courts
- And a greater likelihood of seeing delinquents as criminals



A Juvenile Justice System? Why?

“Crime-free is not fully prepared.”

- What are the goals of our programs?
- Why are we engaging kids in rehabilitation programs?
- What do we want our delinquent kids to look like in 5 to 10 years?



Ways of seeing kids

Traditional Perspectives	
BAD	MAD
SAD	CAN'T ADD

Positive Development Perspective

- Achievement motivation
- School engagement
- Positive peer relationships
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Restraint
- Interpersonal competence
- Cultural competence
- Self esteem
- Personal power
- Sense of Purpose

Effects of Early Childhood Trauma on Adolescents

Trauma can produce
Developmental
delays

- Feel depressed and alone
- Discuss the traumatic events in detail
- Eating disorders
- Self-harming behaviors such as cutting
- Start using alcohol or drugs
- Sexually active
- Feel like they are going crazy
- Feel different from everyone else
- Take too many risks
- Sleep disturbances
- Don't want to go to places that remind them of the event
- Say they have no feelings about the event
- Show changes in behavior

Racism and Trauma

Stress response systems activated at high levels for long periods can have a significant wear-and-tear effect on their **developing brains** and other **biological systems**. Recent research shows that this can have lifelong effects on **learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health**.



This research suggests that constant coping with systemic racism and everyday discrimination is a potent activator of the stress response. This may help us understand the early origins of **racial disparities in chronic illness across the lifespan**.

Dilemmas for Juvenile Justice

- How can we REDUCE SOURCES OF STRESS and at the same time take kids away from their families and communities and confine them with other delinquent kids?
- Is the juvenile justice system another SOURCE OF STRESS? Another SOURCE OF TRAUMA?
- Can the juvenile justice system decrease the risk of harm to kids in unsafe neighborhoods?
- If a high proportion of delinquent youths have experienced significant trauma, how can we help them heal, so that positive development can continue?

Positive Youth Development

- Youths as emerging young adults and adults
 - A long-term view
- A belief that all youths can thrive
- Emphasis on strengths, competencies, attachments
- Constructing interventions that accelerate development



WHY focus on Positive Youth Development

- When youth exhibit positive outcomes, our communities are safer
- 6th to 12th graders who report a higher level of developmental assets also report engaging in fewer high-risk behaviors like alcohol abuse, violence, and school problems (e.g., skipping school, poor grades).
- Youth with essential, prosocial assets – attachment, engagement, and a strong sense of usefulness and belonging – are more likely to succeed socially and economically

Positive Youth Justice

(Butts et al., 2010)

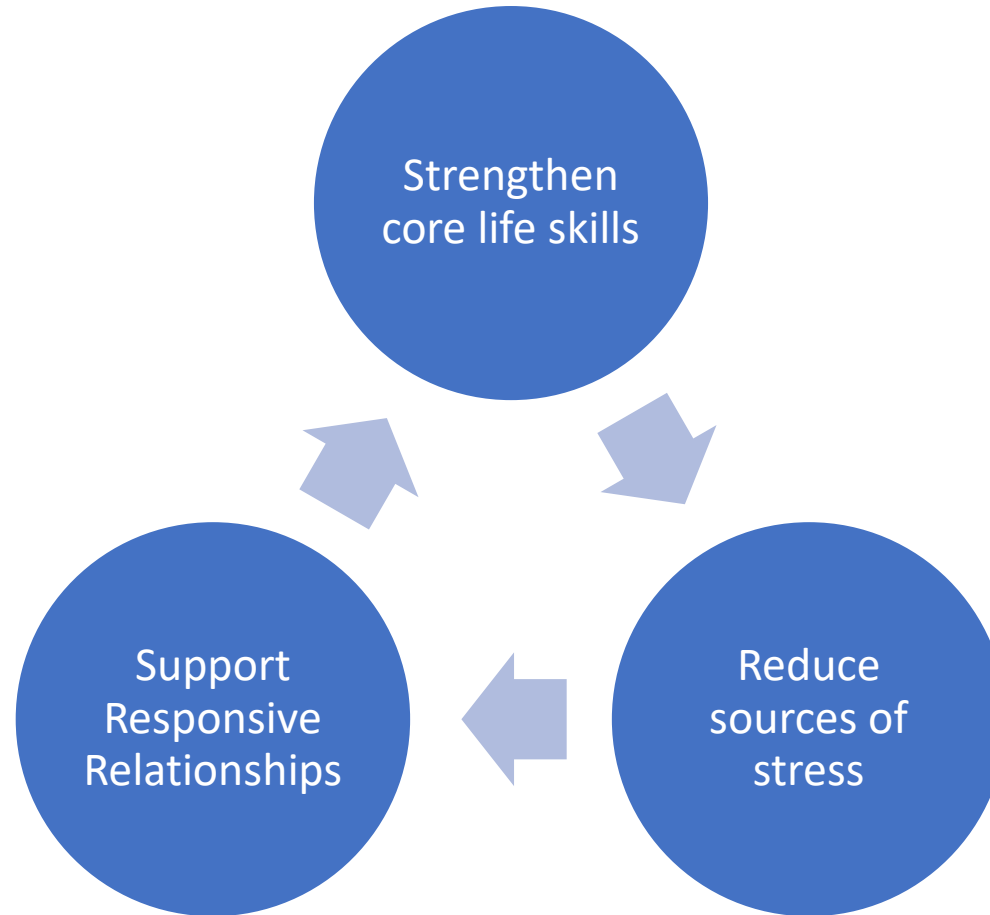
LEARNING/DOING

- Developing new skills and competencies
- Applying new skills
- Taking on new roles and responsibilities
- Developing personal efficacy and self-confidence

ATTACHING/BELONGING

- Attaching to family members
- Becoming an active member of a pro-social group
- Developing and enjoying a sense of belonging
- Placing a high value on being a service to others and being part of a larger community

Science-Based Principles to Improve Outcomes for Youths and Families



Attributes of Positive Youth Development Programs

- Promotes bonding
- Fosters resilience
- Promotes social competence
- Promotes emotional competence
- Promotes cognitive competence
- Promotes behavioral competence
- Promotes moral competence
- Fosters self-determination
- Fosters spirituality
- Fosters discovery and curiosity
- Fosters clear and positive identity
- Fosters belief in the future
- Provides recognition for positive behavior
- Provides opportunities for prosocial involvement
- Fosters prosocial norms

And they **MEASURE** multiple areas of progress in each youth.

Getting systems back on track

1. **Be fair.**

Promote respect for the law, prosocial values and racial, ethnic and gender equity by treating all young people fairly.

2. **Hold young people accountable without criminalizing normal adolescent behavior.**

Protect public safety by holding young people accountable with developmentally-appropriate responses to misbehavior.

3. **Value families.**

Treat families as valued partners and key contributors to their child's well-being and success.

4. **Collaborate.**

Establish cross- agency collaborations for planning, access to services and measuring outcomes.

5. **Measure outcomes and learn.**

Positive Youth Development: How is it different?

- A Positive Youth Development Approach views the youth as an active participant in the change process, not just a client or target of change
- The Key Strategy for a traditional JJ approach is control; for PYD, it is connecting the youth with community resources
 - career exploration
 - career-path work experience
 - community service as service learning
 - and job preparation.
- In traditional JJ work, the aim is to diminish a youth's problems or deficits
In PYD, it is to build on a youth's strengths and assets

Sources for more information

US Department of Justice: Youth.gov
<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>

Search Institute
<https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/developmental-assets-framework/>

National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice
<https://ncyoj.policyresearchinc.org/>

New York State Youth Justice Institute
<https://www.albany.edu/yji>

Reclaiming Futures
<https://www.reclaimingfutures.org/>

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

Child Trends
<https://www.childtrends.org/>

Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
Academy for Educational Development
www.aed.org/us/youth.html

Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago
<https://www.chapinhall.org/>

Emerging Adult Justice Project
Columbia Justice Lab, Columbia University
<https://www.eajustice.org/>

Pew Charitable Trusts
<https://www.pewtrusts.org>

Vera Institute of Justice
<https://www.vera.org/strengthening-families-communities>

Want references or more information?

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