

Juvenile Delinquency

Considering Risk Factors Through the Lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

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People often wonder what factors can lead to delinquency and how to prevent it. The main focus in this paper is how early childhood life and parenting can affect these factors that lead to delinquency.

Main factors to take into consideration while parenting are the parenting style, family composition, family stability, adverse childhood experiences, neighborhood, peers, schooling, and the child itself. All of these things are critical when it comes to children and delinquency. There are many other factors and that can influence child delinquency, but parenting and early childhood development are the key ones. In addition to family styles, other family factors are discussed. My research also touches on family compositions such as single parent homes, married parents, and split families. Stability in the home, and the surrounding environment and its relationship to child delinquency are discussed as well. These are all important factors that need to be considered in order to reduce and prevent delinquency. For the purposes of this paper, delinquency is considered a minor crime that is normally committed by youth such as vandalism, drug use, and fraud.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Many of the risk factors for delinquency are closely related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist who came up with a hierarchy of needs to explain how people are motivated. These needs build on one another, as shown in Figure 1. He theorized that humans are motivated by a hierarchy of needs and they cannot get to the higher levels unless their most basic needs are met first. Motivation is important because it helps people to do good. Unmotivated people are more likely to turn to delinquency. The first level in

his hierarchy is physiological. These are the most basic needs that every human has.

Physiological needs include food, air, water, warmth and rest. Humans are not able to reach the next level if these basic needs are not met.

The second level is security, both emotional and physical. This level can usually be fulfilled by the family and society. According to Maslow, people need to feel safe before they are motivated enough to move to the next level.

The third level is love and belonging. To be able to advance to the next level, people need to feel like they are part of something. Feeling love and belonging is a necessity when it comes to human motivation. These needs are met by friendships and healthy relationships. People must feel trust and acceptance. They also need to not only receive affection, but also give it.

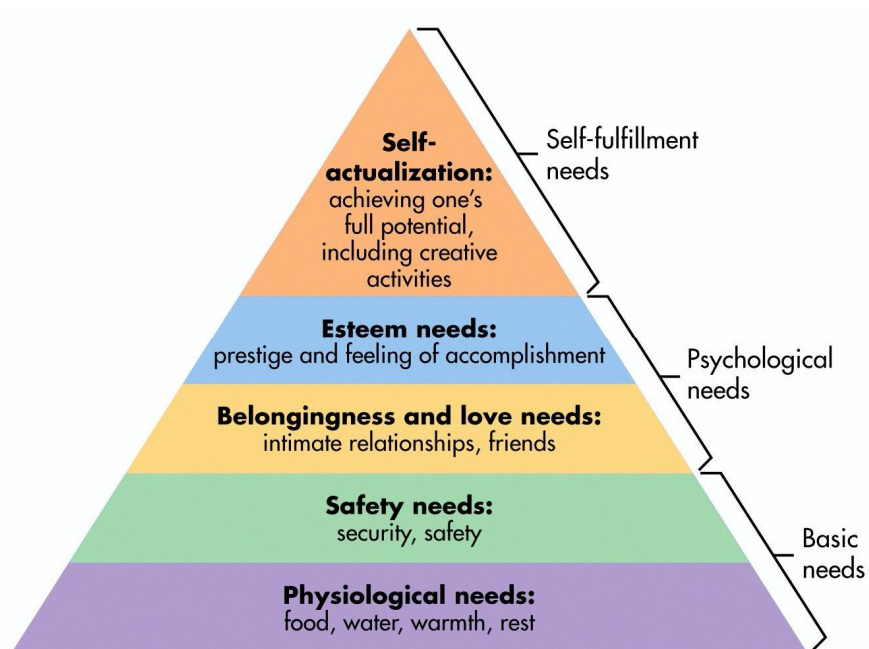
The next level is esteem. Only when a person first feels safe, secure, and loved can they move to the idea of accomplishment. All humans need to experience a feeling of accomplishment. Maslow separates this level into two categories: esteem for oneself and desire for respect of others. Esteem for oneself includes feelings of dignity, achievement, mastery, and independence. In order to fulfill someone's esteem, they need to feel respected. Not only should the person love themselves, but they should also feel loved by others.

The top of the Hierarchy of needs is self-actualization. In order to reach it, all the other needs discussed must be met. To reach self actualization, people first need to love themselves. Self-actualization is when someone reaches their full potential. When people are able to self-actualize, they seek personal growth, creativity, and peak experiences. They are finally able to accept themselves and others for what they are. Maslow describes it as “the desire to accomplish everything that one can, to become the most that one can be” (McLeod, 2020). Some main characteristics of self-actualizers are the ability to perceive reality efficiently and being able to

tolerate uncertainty. Self-actualizers are also usually spontaneous in thought and action, problem centered as opposed to self-centered, and able to look at life objectively. They also have strong moral and ethical standards.

Figure 1

Maslow's Original Hierarchy of Needs



Note: From Simply Psychology, by S. Mcleod, 2020

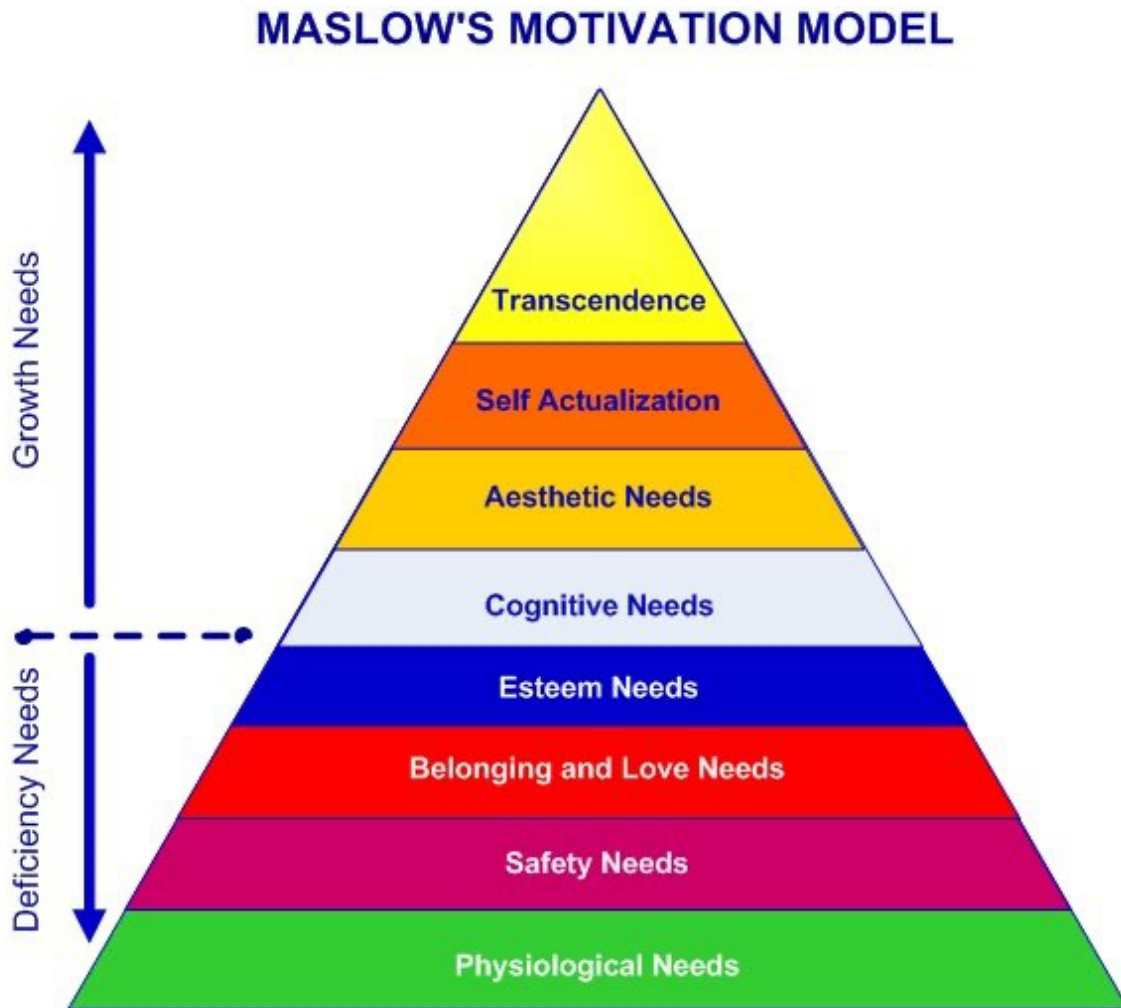
(<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html#gsc.tab=0>). Copyright 2020 by S. Mcleod.

The levels discussed were part of Maslow's original hierarchy, shown in Figure 1 above. Since then there have been a couple additions. The first addition is cognitive needs. Those are knowledge, understanding curiosity and the need for meaning. The next addition is Aesthetic, which is the appreciation and search for beauty and balance. The last addition is transcendence,

which is values that go beyond personal self, like religion or other spiritual experiences. These additions can be seen in Figure 2 on the following page.

Figure 2

Updated Hierarchy of Needs



Note: From Simply Psychology, by S. Mcleod, 2020

(<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html#gsc.tab=0>). Copyright 2020 by S. Mcleod.

Disruptive Behavior to Delinquency

Disruptive behavior usually precedes the development of delinquency (Loeber, 2001). There are three different pathways of disruptive behavior that lead to delinquency. The first pathway is authority conflict. Authority conflict starts off with stubborn behavior, which eventually can turn into defiance and disobedience. That then can escalate to authority avoidance, which can include truancy, running away, and staying out late (Loeber, 2001). The second pathway is overt disruptive behavior. It can start out as minor aggression, for example, bullying and annoying others. If not dealt with, this can turn to physical and or gang fighting. This eventually can escalate to violence, including rape and attack. The third and final pathway is covert disruptive behavior. This starts as minor covert behavior such as shoplifting and frequent lying. Then it can turn into property damage, like vandalism and firesetting. After this, it can go to moderately serious delinquency. Fraud and pickpocketing are an example of this. Then finally, it goes to serious delinquency, such as auto theft and burglary. This information not only shows us the pathways to delinquency but it can also help to figure out how to prevent it.

Main factors to take into consideration while parenting are the parenting style, family composition, family stability, adverse childhood experiences, neighborhood, peers, schooling, and the child itself. All of these things are critical when it comes to children and delinquency. There are many other factors and that can influence child delinquency but parenting and early childhood development are the key ones.

Parenting Styles

The NLSY97 is a key source of information about parenting styles. The NLSY97 test, also known as the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, explores parenting styles and dynamics of reciprocal relationships (Lee, 2020). The data gathered from this test is used in a lot

of research. It samples 8,984 men and women born from 1980 through 1984, ages 12 to 16, living in the United States. The interviews are conducted annually from 1997 to 2011. The test collects information on labor market behavior and education, which includes data on the youth's family and community backgrounds. In the interview, people are asked about parenting styles, rules, and discipline.

Parenting style plays a key role in a child's life. There are four widely accepted classifications: Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, and Neglect. Parenting style has a big effect on child development and can be very influential in reducing and preventing child delinquency.

The first parenting style is Authoritarian. This style is the strictest and has the most rigid discipline. The parents who use this style are highly controlling and have less receptivity to the child's preference. The environment is structured with very little flexibility (Tapia, 2018). These parents rely on coercive control and are the highest level of authority. They set very high standards, which limit the autonomy of the child (Lee, 2020). Even with the high standards, it is shown that children associated with this parenting style have a low intellectual performance and a lack of social skills. This parenting style is more likely to lead to negative outcomes. Children raised with this style have been shown to be more distant, uncommunicative, and unresponsive. They are also usually more withdrawn, anxious, and unhappy. This style inhibits the child's personal growth and independence, which can lead to the child rebelling and turning to delinquency.

The Authoritative parenting style is less strict than Authoritarian. Parents who use this style set high but realistic standards, enforce limits, and at the same time encourage open communication and independence (Wood, 2018 p. 251). The signature characteristic in this type

of parenting is a balance between child autonomy and parent authority (Lee 2020).

Communication between the child and parents is bidirectional and the parents are usually even willing to discuss the rules and supply rationales (Wood, 2018 p. 251). Parents tend to clearly communicate expectations for mature behavior (Wright, 1995) and encourage adherence to their standards. This parenting style enhances the child's sense of social responsibility and offers the right amount of support, and warmth with constructive and flexible disciplinary arrangements (Tapia, 2018). It leads to children who are more mature, happy, self-reliant, self-controlled, assertive, socially competent, and responsible (Wood, 2018 p. 251). This style is also usually associated with higher academic performance, independence, higher self-esteem, and internalized moral standards. The Authoritative parenting style has been shown to be the most effective style in child socialization and adaptive behavioral outcomes (Tapia, 2018).

The Permissive parenting style is the least strict of the parenting styles. Parents who are more permissive do not establish boundaries and rarely enforce the rules. The two main sub-categories are Permissive-indulgent parents and Permissive-neglectful parents. Parents who are permissive-indulgent are warm, highly supportive, approachable, and lenient. They believe that permissiveness is a way of not only expressing affection, but also maintaining their children's affection. They often avoid confrontation over misbehavior and instead use non-punitive measures to maintain discipline in the household. This style is usually associated with children who are more immature, impulsive, dependent, least self-controlled and self-reliant. Unlike Permissive-indulgent parents, Permissive-neglectful parents lack warmth and support. They allow their children to do whatever they want because they are not interested in their child's life. This style is most associated with drinking problems, promiscuous sex, delinquent behavior, and poor academic behavior in children. However, both of these permissive styles fail to define and

encourage mature behavior and just accept their child's autonomy. This style also leads to less socially desirable adjustment outcomes and a lot more problems.

Neglect is the last parenting style. Children under this style have no supervision. Parents overlook their child's accessibility to drugs, weapons, and pornography. There is minimal response to their child's needs and inappropriate responsibilities for their care. Parents with this style emotionally detach themselves from their children. This parenting style has been shown to have the greatest risk of having youths involved in delinquency.

Overall, the Authoritative parenting style has been shown to be the most effective in preventing delinquency because it is the most effective in child socialization and adaptive behavioral outcomes. Permissive comes in second, because while this style is highly supportive and accepting, it fails to set boundaries that teach children self control. Authoritarian is not the worst, but it also is not the best. This style seems like it would be the best option with constant supervision of children and rules, but this can actually cause the children to rebel. Neglect has been shown to be the worst because the bond between the parent and child is very weak and the children's basic needs are not being met. A lot of households have mixed parenting styles as well. Studies show that two Authoritarian parents are the strongest in reducing delinquency but one at least provides some protection. It has also been shown that having permissive fathers is more likely bad, and the same with Authoritarian mothers.

Family Composition

Cohabiting parents

Parents who are living together and maintain a healthy relationship can influence their children positively. They are better able to supervise their children and keep them from getting into delinquent behavior. Two parents have more time to spend with their children and can build

healthy, stable relationships with them. Cohabiting parents also tend to have a more stable income and are better able to support their families. This does not mean that it is not possible to have a delinquent child with this composition, but the chances are much lower than the other family compositions.

Broken homes have been shown to have a 10 to 15 percent higher chance of delinquency (Englehart, 2016). Separation earlier in the child's life has been more strongly related to delinquency. This may be true because of the instability and the child having to experience the deterioration of their parents' relationship. Parents who remarry after a divorce tend to have a more stable household. Children have better supervision and more stability. Children living with remarried parents are at less risk than children living with their single parents. Single parents have more unstable households. Often the children will have to alternate living with their parents. There is less supervision and parental control while living with one parent (Loeber, 1999).

Figuring out if single parent homes lead to childhood delinquency is very difficult. Statistically, there is a higher chance of delinquency in single-parent homes because children in single-parent homes have less supervision. Studies show that only a small percent of the children arrested have families that are intact. A study by Loeber et al discovered that children were more likely to escalate their delinquency as they pass through adolescence as opposed to children in two-parent homes, who are more likely to desist delinquent behavior as they mature. However, there are also studies that contradict the previous ones. Some found no association between single-parent households and child delinquency. Another found a relationship to heavy alcohol use but not to any other form of delinquency (Loeber, 1999). Research for this is difficult because of all the different parental practices and other family relations. The findings of a meta-

analysis done by Wells and Rankin suggest that the “effect of broken homes on delinquency is real and consistent, but of relatively low magnitude” (Wright, 1995). They found that delinquency in broken homes is 10 to 15 percent higher than intact homes. Single-parent households may not be directly linked to delinquency, but the factors that usually arise from it are related. Children in single-parent homes tend to be more susceptible to peer pressure and have more behavioral problems (Loeber, 1999). Since there is less supervision, children are more likely to come in contact with delinquent influences (Loeber, 1999).

Another factor that can arise from single-parent families is economic deprivation. This can lead to the child not having their basic needs. The parent may also be working more, leading to less supervision and socialization with the child. The neighborhood single-parent families are living in are also a factor. Connecting to economic deprivation, many single parents are not able to afford houses in better neighborhoods, so they move into poorer neighborhoods. These poor neighborhoods can have a negative effect on children because not only are there other bad influences living there, but they can also feel less safe, a key need on Maslow’s hierarchy, and a basic thing that people need to be motivated.

Family Stability

Stability is very important for children who are developing. Children who experience transitions such as marital discord or parental bereavement are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior than children who experience no transitions (Englehart, 2016). Delinquency or deviance “arises when an individual’s bond to society is fractured” (Englehart, 2016). Children who grow up in unstable households tend to gain unfavorable behavioral outcomes. They are more likely to engage in risky behavior, which includes drugs, alcohol, and sexual activity. Not only does instability disrupt the family’s ability to monitor and discipline the child,

but it also strains the parent-child bond, reducing the child's attachment to the family and society. Studies show that family structure transitions that occur early in childhood are more detrimental than later transitions (Englehart, 2016)

The presence of marital discord has been shown to be a better predictor of delinquency than family composition. Family relationships, not just separation, affect delinquency. The main elements of marital discord are a greater frequency of parental disagreements, less differentiation between parents and children who make decisions, diminishing positive effects, and more negative effects (mentally and emotionally), misinterpreted communication, and little to no willingness to compromise (Wright, 1995). These all cause children to be stressed and can be harmful. Exposure to frequent conflict between parents can lead to greater problems. Children as young as two can be influenced by it. According to (Wright, 1995) divorce or splitting of parents followed by a stable family constellation is not associated with increased risk, but divorce followed by additional changes in family configuration significantly increases risk. Marital discord shapes how children act as well. Social learning theory argues that children learn to have more aggressive behavior as they watch their parents display it. Children then potentially imitate it as an acceptable means of achieving their goals. It is shown that the majority of children who experience marital discord do not become delinquent, but most delinquents have experienced it. Watching a family slowly deteriorate can cause many problems for children that could be dangerous to their health and future outcomes

Loss of a Parent

Along with family discord and separation, the death of a parent can be very traumatic to a child. Two things can happen afterwards: family members can be drawn together, strengthening family relations, or the family can disintegrate, ultimately leading to undisciplined children and

delinquency. When the family is drawn together after a loss, children have better supervision and more guidance. The chances of delinquency are lessened but not eliminated. If the family disintegrates, however, delinquency chances are heightened because of the lack of supervision and attachment to the family.

Parental death can also cause behavioral problems as well as social-psychological adjustment deficits. The first is premature school withdrawals. Many children who were parentally bereaved drop out of school, which leads to diminished academic accomplishments, lingering economic disadvantages, and for females, a hesitancy to mature as they progress into adulthood (Feigelman, 2017). Children who drop out of school can be denied important things such as credit, phone, or utility services.

Parental bereavement puts children's mental health at risk as well. Children are more vulnerable to things such as grief, distress, and dysphoria when they experience the death of a parent. They are also at greater risk of depression, attempted suicide, and premature death. The emotional toll of the loss of a parent can lead to lower grades in school, low self-esteem, and drug and alcohol abuse. All of these things can lead to a greater involvement in youth delinquency and even more violent crimes.

Moving

Along with instability in family make up, moving can either be beneficial or unhealthy for a child. Moving from an advantaged neighborhood to a disadvantaged one can cause many problems, all of which are already associated with disadvantaged neighborhoods. Moving from a disadvantaged neighborhood to an advantaged one has pro's and con's when it comes to children and delinquency.

Moving out of a disadvantaged neighborhood can be healthy for younger children, but for teens it can actually be risky. Families with children around the ages of 15 to 18 who moved to more advantaged neighborhoods actually reported lower school performance and more hyperactive behavior in their teens than those who stayed in disadvantaged neighborhoods. This happens because children perceive themselves in a lower light academically when they move from a poor neighborhood to a more advantaged one. They feel insecure. Unlike older children, children who move when they are nine and under have been shown to have fewer behavior problems.

One possible reason for this unexpected negative outcome could be that parents who move to more advantaged neighborhoods tend to use less stringent monitoring. They feel more secure, so they tend to let their children have more freedom. This is detrimental to youth and can have unfavorable effects on teen's behavior. It allows them greater freedom to explore things like cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and engagement in sexual activity. It is also possible that the negative outcome is related to a disruption of stability and establishment of relationships, which are more difficult to re-establish in later childhood, affecting a child's sense of love, belonging, and self-esteem.

Parental Criminality

One final factor of family stability is a parent's criminal background. Parent criminality also has an effect on child delinquency. Children who have a criminal parent are at a greater risk of becoming delinquents themselves. Children with two criminal parents are at extremely high risk. This does not mean that parents openly encourage their children to be delinquent. In fact, many criminal parents try to hide their criminality from their children. Rather, parental criminality can disrupt the family's social control, which increases the chance of delinquency in

children. Parents going to jail can also cause many problems. If the children were unaware of the parent's criminality, it can change their view of their parents and even hurt them. This also takes a parent out of the house so there is less supervision. All the problems that can stem from single parenting can arise, increasing the chance of delinquency. Sometimes, however, a parent going to jail can also be better for the children if the parent was violent or psychologically abusive. The loss of an abusive parent can remove the source that was originally pushing the child out and creating stress.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experience or ACEs are “potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood” (Adverse Childhood Experiences, 2020) These events are added up to assess risk. Children with 0 to 3 traumatic experiences tend to be at less risk than children who encounter more. There are many experiences that can be factored in. The first is violence and abuse. This includes emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Then there is neglect, which is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs, which include housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care. Other factors are when a child witnesses violence in the home or community, suicide or attempted suicide by a family member, substance abuse, mental health problems, and instability.

There are many problems that these traumatic experiences can lead to. Some if these are injury, STIs, teen pregnancy, and even involvement in sex trafficking. They can also lead to physical issues like chronic diseases and even death from cancer, heart disease, and suicide. Most of all, these traumatic experiences will almost always lead to toxic stress, which is extended or prolonged stress. Toxic stress changes brain development and affects things such as attention, decision making, learning, and response to stress. It also causes difficulty forming

stable relationships and keeping steady jobs. This can also lead to depression and eventually even be passed down to children. Traumatic childhood experiences cause many problems that lead to delinquency.

Many people have tried to come up with ways to prevent these experiences. The first solution is to strengthen economic support to families. This would include strengthening household financial security and creating family-friendly work policies. The second solution is to promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity. One way to do that is by starting public education campaigns to raise awareness and to reach out to those in need. Next, would be to ensure a strong start for children. This includes teaching them useful skills needed in life and connecting youth to caring adults and activities. Intervening to lessen immediate and long-term harms would also be beneficial to preventing more trauma.

Maltreatment

Maltreatment or abuse also influences delinquency. There are many things that can lead parents to abuse or neglect their children. When studying maltreatment, the biggest factor that is looked at is the neighborhood. There are many factors that come from neighborhoods that can lead to child maltreatment. The first is poverty. Neighborhood poverty is one of the strongest predictors of neglect and child abuse. Next is housing stress and residential instability. Neighborhoods with more single family homes, vacant housing, and lower median residential property values have higher rates of physical abuse. Availability of alcohol and drugs is another key factor in child maltreatment. Neighborhood areas with more bars and drug possession incidents are related to higher rates of child maltreatment. There is a differential relationship between alcohol availability and the type of child maltreatment. Higher densities of off-premise alcohol outlets have higher rates of physical abuse while greater concentrations of bars and pubs

have a positive relationship with neglect (Freisthler 2006). Unemployment can also factor into child abuse. Children are at greater risk of physical abuse while living in neighborhoods with high rates of male unemployment.

Maltreatment can have many negative effects on children. There are many cognitive, emotional, and behavioral maladjustments that can arise in children who are exposed to violence. First of all, symptoms of PTSD have been linked to children who were physically abused. It is conceptualized as alternating phases of increased arousal, or anxiety, and emotional numbing with symptoms such as emotional disengagement and angry outbursts. Emotional dysregulation has also been linked to aggression. Post-trauma emotional dysregulation, such as numbing and arousal, can serve as a significant pathway between violence exposure and violent behavior (Weiler, 1996). Children who are constantly exposed to violence start to gain acceptance to violence. It is shown that youth who are victimized by violence tend to have higher pro-violence attitudes as opposed to youth who are not victimized by violence. Intervening long-term is likely to require consistent community based approaches. To help alleviate the symptoms of PTSD, children can also go through trauma treatment. These things could possibly help to stop delinquency and violent behavior before it is too late.

Psychopathy and antisocial personality disorder are disorders that have been positively associated with child abuse and neglect. Children who are abused and neglected negatively adapt or adjust their behavior. They start to display disorder, aggressiveness, and antisocial behavior. Children who experience this also become emotionally deprived. Many studies have found links between psychopathy and early emotional deprivation (Weiler 1996). Overall, child abuse and neglect increase a person's risk for psychopathy, which puts them at an increased risk for violent behavior.

Abuse and neglect not only shape children's behavior, but it also can lead to bodily changes. It changes their behavior by encouraging unfavorable styles of coping. For example, impulsive behavior can translate into inadequate school performance. Physical and sexual abuse often lead to bodily changes. Children can become desensitized to future painful or anxiety provoking experiences from being beaten. Desensitization can influence later behavior. It causes children to be less emotionally and physiologically responsive to the needs of others, making them callous, lacking in empathy, and lacking remorse and guilt. This is dangerous because it allows them to commit crimes without feeling guilty.

Behavior after maltreatment has been found to be different between genders as well. It is shown that girls who are physically abused are more likely than boys to be arrested for violent offenses. Girls who were abused were seven times more likely to commit a violent offense than non-abused girls. Boys, on the other hand, are more likely to commit property, violent, and felony offenses. Abused children are more likely to express their problems in a wide array of developmental domains. This includes social development and peer relations, mental health, school achievement, and later crime and antisocial behavior (Herrera, 2001).

Neighborhood

Neighborhood can play a key part in a child's life. There are a few different factors that can directly and indirectly lead to delinquency: community violence, disadvantaged socioeconomic conditions, and social disorganization. The first is exposure to community violence. This exposure tends to be associated with a particular pattern of negative outcomes. Exposure to violence can be a source of stress that can lead to an increase in both affective and behavioral problems. Children can pathologically adapt to violence. Children who are exposed to high levels of community violence experience emotional numbing or desensitization to it.

Exposure to this violence will lower psychological distress, but numbs people at the same time, which is maladaptive. Maladaptation is a connection between violence exposure and both aggressive behavior and psychological distress. Both psychological distress and aggressive behavior rise when there is more exposure to violence. After being desensitized, youth start to promote violent behavior. Violence starts to have a normative expectation of being “cool” while becoming more acceptable.

Neighborhoods characterized by disadvantaged socioeconomic conditions can also be indirectly related to child delinquency. Parents who live in poor but stable neighborhoods build up resentment, frustration, and isolation because they are unable to escape to safer and more advantaged places. Home environments have been shown to be the most influential on children and children. Parents in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods tend to show poor parenting, inadequate discipline and higher levels of parenting stress. Parenting stress is a psychological, negative reaction to parental obligations when parents lack the ability to fulfill their child’s needs (Wang, 2020). This stress has been found to be one of the most influential predictors of behavior problems. It also has been documented as a primary risk factor for child maltreatment, neglect, and exposure to multiple traumatic events, or ACE’s. High levels of parental stress, which are positively related to neighborhood disadvantages, lead to a more chaotic family life, which is harmful to the child. Children living in households with high levels of parental stress are three times more likely to experience four or more ACE’s by the age of 18 (Wang, 2020). For maltreated children, residential stability worsens the criminal outcomes. Maltreated children from more stable neighborhoods have higher rates than those from less stable neighborhoods because not only do they represent a “neighborhood of last resort” but also

a place of continual shame and stigma where the victims are reminded of their maltreatment (Schuck, 2005).

Socially disorganized neighborhoods can also play a role in child delinquency. These neighborhoods, with high levels of concentrated poverty, physical disorder, and residential instability would be the most ideal place for delinquency because they are often unable to maintain effective social controls and regulate risky behaviors. Neighborhood collective effectiveness is reduced in these neighborhoods which also increases the likeness of delinquency. Statistically, disadvantaged neighborhoods have the greatest effect on relationships between neglect and offending.

Peers

Friends and socialization are very important when it comes to child development. They are both a source of reinforcement for appropriate behavior and punishment for deviant behavior. Children first start developing friendship around the age three, starting on shared activities. While playing together, children think of themselves as friends. When children enter elementary school, their friendships start to be based on mutual trust. Around middle-childhood, they start forming peer groups, which become central to the child's happiness. These groups are usually composed of children of the same race, sex, and social class. Children who are rejected by peers are at greater risk of developing bullying behavior than the peers who are socially accepted. When children turn into adolescents, they start to separate from their parents, even if they have a good relationship with them. This turns the friends into a vital source of emotional support. Interaction with peers is critical because it not only is great for developing social skills, but also provides a standard of comparison for evaluating personal assets. It also gives teens a chance to try out different roles and observe the reactions of their friends to behavior and appearance. This

is why it is important for children to have good and healthy relationships with their peers. Children who spend their time with deviant peers have a higher chance of being deviant. Friends are a tremendous factor when it comes to delinquency.

School

School is another place that can be an influence to delinquency. Not only is school the place where children are influenced by their peers, but also where they receive their education. This could be either really good for them, or really bad. If the children are placed in a good school with higher standards, chances are it will be better for them. The school will have stricter rules, which prevent delinquency in the school. Children are more likely to have a better education as well, enabling them to go to college and maintain stable jobs. The students there will also be less likely to turn to delinquency.

Children who attend failing schools have a higher chance of turning to delinquency. First of all, the education they receive is less beneficial. It will be more difficult for children who graduate from failing schools to maintain steady jobs and even attend college. Eventually, they see no choice but to turn to delinquency. Another factor that arises from failing schools are the children. Since they aren't getting a serious education, they are less likely to pay attention and instead, engage in other activities that are more deviant. Overall, school can play an important role in a child's life and tendency toward delinquency.

The Child

There is one main factor that is out of the parents' control: the child. Parents do not make children criminal; it is ultimately the child's choice. Criminal children make the choice to live a life they consider exciting and choose the life they want.

When a child chooses to live a criminal life, they tend to change their parents' parenting styles. They tend to manipulate their parents into getting what they want. The child starts doing forbidden things, forcing the parents to change their style. Usually the parents become much stricter, which usually makes things worse. If the parents decide to take the child to therapy, the child claims to be the victim, when in fact it is the parents who are the real victims.

The child's attachment to their parents also changes when they make this choice. To distance themselves, they will put up a communication barrier between themselves and their parents. When asked questions they always have minimal responses and try to hide away. They drift further and further apart. Then the child ultimately "dehumanizes" their parents and sees them only as tools to get from one place to another. By the end, there is little to no attachment to their parents. In the end, the child makes the choice toward delinquency.

Conclusion

Many of the strategies for preventing delinquency are common sense. Research shows that delinquency is tied to a child's core needs being met. Risk factors such as socioeconomic status tie directly to physiological needs. Living in high-crime neighborhoods and having criminal parents both challenge a child's safety needs, being the second most important category on the hierarchy. Family instability and marital discord are linked to problems in belonging, which is the third layer in the hierarchy. Esteem is directly challenged by parenting styles, specifically authoritarian and neglect. All of these things prevent children from reaching self-actualization, the highest point on the hierarchy.

In this paper, we discussed Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. He believed that in order for people to be motivated, they needed to have their basic needs met. Many topics in this paper show how this hierarchy relates to delinquency. When children's basic needs are not met, they

often demonstrate disruptive behavior, which eventually can escalate to delinquency if it is not dealt with.

Maltreatment has been shown to be a prominent predictor for child delinquency. It deprives children of their core needs. Without their core needs, they will never be able to feel security, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization until they are in a better environment. Maltreatment can lead to problems such as psychopathy, PTSD, and desensitization. These all stem from the lack of core needs.

Adverse childhood experiences challenge a child's safety and security. These experiences can scar them for life, and prevent them from ever feeling safe. There are ways to prevent these experiences which is ensuring a strong start for children. This can include strengthening economic support to families and teaching children useful skills that they can use to succeed.

Surroundings have an impact on children and influences delinquency, neighborhood being the leading predictor. Neighborhood challenges children's security. Peers are another influence on children. Interaction with friends is critical, especially for children. They can either boost a child's esteem, or harm it.

Family composition is detrimental to a child's feeling of belonging. Children who grow up with cohabitating parents are given more attention and that sense of belonging than children living in single-parent homes. Children who grow up in single parent homes usually do not get the attention and sense of love they need to move up the hierarchy of needs.

Instability has been shown to be a predictor of delinquency. All the types of instability affect a child's esteem and sense of belonging. For example, witnessing marital discord and watching a family deteriorate messes with a child's esteem. Parent bereavement, moving, and parent criminality also damage a child's esteem, which prevents them from self-actualizing.

Of the parenting styles, neglect was shown to put children at the highest risk of turning to delinquency. Neglect deprives children of their most basic needs, making it very difficult to move up the hierarchy. The authoritarian style is not as bad as neglect because the children's basic needs are met, but they do not get the feeling of belonging and the esteem they need. The next style is permissive;. This style provides all the basic needs that children need but fails to set boundaries and teach children certain rules that would benefit them in the future. The last is authoritative. This style typically has a balance between child autonomy and parental authority, providing them with all their basic needs and rules that are beneficial to them in the future. This style has been shown to be the most effective when it comes to preventing delinquency because it allows the child to reach self-actualization.

All of the factors discussed can influence the child's decision, but the choice is ultimately up to the child. When all the lower levels on the hierarchy are not met, it is more difficult for the child to make the right choices. Providing a child with nourishment, safety, love, stability, and an opportunity to be a meaningful part of a community will set them up for success and give them the chance to make the best and right decisions.

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