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## The Use of Coping Skills in the Juvenile Justice System

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The Use of Coping Skills in the Juvenile Justice System

by

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I want to thank the professors that have assisted me these past two years. They gave important feedback to help me finalize this paper.

### **Dedications**

I would like to dedicate this paper to my family, boyfriend and coworkers. They have continued to push me during the tough times. My coworkers shared valuable information for my capstone and took this work to heart as much as I do.

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### **Abstract**

The juvenile justice system doesn't have the proper rehabilitation tools. Inside private companies, there are different coping skills, methods and practices that continue to change with society. A few years down the road, people will continue to adapt but need to know the best options to do so. Ethically, a company will fail without structure. Each one has their own set of morals in need of a leader and group of followers. History has proven the inaccuracy in punishment and false documentation. By constant change and confidence, society can avoid these issues and make stronger delinquent counseling programs. Inside these programs, there are juveniles who have charges related to firearms. Every year, legislation continues to modify the laws of gun owners. This progress will help gun violence, teach children and keep the public safe. Juveniles will receive the proper skills to integrate back into society and leave behind a life of crime.

Keywords: change, rehabilitation, coping skills, program ethics

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Issues with Coping Skills and Laws**

Juveniles have been seen and disciplined as adults. Their minimal crimes need different forms of care and rehabilitation. Different coping skills and virtual techniques have proven to make a positive impact. Some have struggled due to COVID but new methods have been released. Individuals inside these programs need to start taking care of the youth and making sure they stay out of the system as adults. Current studies created a passion for counselors. Sections of people are part of a company that takes in youth with mental illnesses and a history of criminal tendencies. Over the past two years those individuals noticed a lack of passion and empathy. Coworkers have given up or simply ignore the transitions. These actions pushed others to want to be a better, well rounded, counselor. Professionally, people want to change and learn how to instruct clients better. This research will help expand counselors' libraries along with the supervisors. It will show interest in helping these clients for a better career down the road. Counseling for juveniles began in Illinois around the late 1800s. From here, the great depression and other events lead to change. Women were mainly the clinicians for kids, thus started to change in the mid 1900s. Coping was not introduced until 1940 by a psychoanalyst in Germany. She noticed how unloved, uninvolved, and undetermined counselors are towards the kids. People in the criminal setting started to adapt these methods as well. During this change the question of why kept rising up. Adolescents go through multitudes of psychological changes. There are peer influences, family struggles, mental health, death and more. Psychological organizations needed a change in structure and so did the kids. A major challenge the country is facing deals with COVID. Having virtual sessions continues to be a struggle for some of the workers in any field. Clients also like that in person reaction instead. They know someone is listening to them and can

see it. Strengths of the company are outlines, personal interactions, and different activity options. Clients can earn rewards, like the park or the zoo. Others aren't as developed and struggle with technology and communication with parents. If the company changes the plan and creates more coping skills, parents will be able to practice this at home. Some started off doing group home meetings and real-life actions. Companies in states like Florida and Wisconsin started doing these and people strive while having fun. Twice a week, they do live productions relating to real life scenarios. A section of clients then share this with their families in a manner they will remember. It is all about remembering what is good and bad, but in a way where teens will recall.

### **Improper Rehabilitation**

Companies have had issues with stealing, false documentation, family interferences and constant change inside the government. An ethics code continues through this process so the community does not lose these core values. After a certain timeframe, the program needs to make updates to the caseload. Problems occur in documenting, trust, and community relations when others cannot follow the change curve. Many of these companies rely on reputation. If a client has a negative time, this will be shared. If the parents do not like how the company works with their child, the neighborhood or town will know. It's the "social media" of detention facilities. COVID has also created a terrible impact on counseling. These clients range from 12-17, the younger group loses focus instantly. Two-hour sessions are not ideal over zoom and many times, no words are exchanged. The ethical expectations and success rate has lowered. Along with relationships and forgetting to report proper documentation. People are forgetting why there needs to be counselors for the juveniles. The system already skews in a negative way, so these challenges do not show promise for transformation. Since the juvenile system has a



contradicting image, there is already less faith. Youth experiences higher counts of mental illnesses, academic failures, and family problems. These seem to worsen or never improve the way the county or state want. Parents and families have faith in these specific programs. Singular people noticed, along with others, there are too many recurring challenges that are not necessary. Juveniles are not getting proper cares and/or attention. This caused an uproar of motivation to figure out these ethical problems and how it needs to be rebuilt. At some point, the public will have trust in the system, but for now, work has to be put in by supervisors, counselors and ISP's. Professionally, the company will grow from the downward spiral it's already in. For this to happen, employees need to be held accountable for their ethical actions. It first starts with expectations being presented by the department or supervisor. Scare tactics could work, if not, show disciplinary actions from breaking the rules. As a leader/administrator, there will be several action plans put in place. In 1938, there was a federal law in place that specifically kept juveniles separate from adult crime. In the 1970s juveniles focused more on getting help rather than punishing them for their crimes. All of this is still fairly new to the public and the system. We are continuing to adapt for oncoming mental illnesses and finding the fine line between severe and acceptable. It is ethical for courts to rehabilitate juveniles from an unhealthy lifestyle. The first "rehabilitative" program for juveniles was not created until 1899. The main focus was to separate kids and adults from mental illness. Now there are over 100 programs that specialize in specific disabilities. But why are the numbers continuing to rise? There is more violent and petty theft in teenagers, along with vandalism. Court systems are not focusing on the health, wellbeing, or upbringing of these children. Programs like Innovative were put in place to keep the youth out of detention centers and show them possible change. Once the system focuses on help rather than punishment, citizens can see progress. A major weakness for families and the court system is

funding. In this area, the funds are by Dakota county, and Hennepin County now wants to refer kids towards us. Each child has a cap and costs money for that certain county. That requires hiring more ISP (specialists), adding caseloads to counselors, more funding for food, etc. It's a large cost some businesses cannot afford. Second problem are the severe juveniles that suffer from multiple issues. There have been reports of one individual who bites, stabs and throws at a target when he doesn't get his way. This put employees and other members in the center at risk. Yes, it is more money for the company, but a higher liability. A positive approach to these behaviors is space. Until there is immediate danger, back up and recall the cues each client is giving. Staying focused goes a long way before a situation escalates.

### **Conclusion**

Current trends and future plans all relate to retention and reporting. There are policy enhancements so programs can effectively treat/improve the life of a delinquent. First, determine what side of the spectrum they are on. Second, treatment by qualified individuals. Third, offer community groups and special activities to keep their kinds busy. Small steps will go a long way in specific units so there can be a change in the system as a whole.

## **Chapter 2: Literature**

### **Administration of Juvenile Coping Skills**

#### **Types of Coping Skills**

There isn't a specific number of coping skills. They range based on categories and what the main target is for the individual. First, it is good to look at the overview of adolescents. Adolescence is a great time of change on so many levels. The most dramatic is the stage of puberty. There is significant growth physically, spiritually and emotionally. Many kids have someone there during this time as support but some are unlucky and don't. The main factor

adolescents need help with is stress. If they do not deal with the stress in their youth, they will not be able to as an adult. One way to help this is active coping starting at the age of 15. “It shows to have mediating effects for impulsivity and internalizing problems” (Markova, 2015, pg. 36). There are a variety of different coping theories Skinner has discovered. Skinner found support seeking, problem solving, and distraction are the most helpful forms of coping skills for adolescents. Support seeking is something that can also be used at home with parents, family members and other people. When people are there as a “shoulder” for the child, they react in a positive way. It’s giving them the reassurance someone is there when you need them. Problem solving is the most commonly used by many professionals. People break down the situation at hand, give different scenarios and decide on the best one. Distraction isn’t the best because problems are being pushed aside instead of dealing with them in the moment. The more aggressive juveniles use this method since they are very “in the moment” when it comes to reactions. The goal of these coping strategies are the deviant and non deviant finding ways to manage stress. “Children with deviant behavior are more likely to use disengagement coping” (Markova, 2015, pg. 38). This style reflects on how the individual responds to stressors by focusing their negative emotions rather than the stressor itself. The goal is to alleviate the negative emotions so they don’t increase at that moment. It's better to face these right away otherwise the situation will escalate. There are simple coping skills anyone can use with adolescents on the road or at home. Something simple like a homemade stress ball can relieve issues. Yes, they can be easily forgotten but it's an instant release of anger. Another idea is making a worry stone. These are made out of clay, hardened and smoothed down to create a softening feel. They are used during times of high stress and confusion. Therapist’s have used a method titled the five scenes. The person lists/thinks two things for each of the organizations

senses. The two things they will see are, smell, taste, hear and feel. This activity can be very intense when used to explore traumatic events. Something simple like creating a coping skills book can be beneficial. Younger kids would draw more of their emotions rather than write. Many teenagers like to insert positive quotes and carry this with them during school. CBT dictates our thoughts and behaviors, which will put together how we are feeling. When a negative problem occurs, encourage an adolescent to create a list of positive behavior choices. The trick to create the list when the child is calm then try to use during the crisis. Children have a difficult time thinking rationally and believe nothing will work for them. There are more skills than the ones given but these are good starters for someone with less experience.

### **Family Interactions**

Getting families involved through the process of the juvenile justice system is crucial. This often leads to positive outcomes for youth, including those with behavioral needs. Treatment interventions are known to be the most effective because the parent and child are actively engaging. “To facilitate involvement, families need information, training and support at all stages of their child's experience in the juvenile justice system” (Garfinkel, 2010, pg. 52). Court personnel seem mindful of parents who are a strong presence in the juvenile court. People focus on parents being the problem. They caused the child to commit the acts when that is not the case. Studies show family involvement moderate the current situation and have better outcomes. Going back to the different types of coping skills the main problem is stress. “Research suggests that exposure to a variety of different types of stressors is associated with mood and anxiety disorders in youth” (Henry, 2015, pg. 2). Kids with these disorders need the family structure to be reassured someone is there. Instead of focusing on the extreme associations, it is better to look at minor, everyday stressful life events like; puberty, and getting

in trouble in school. These are the heightened risks of disorders. Having a “strong relationship between family can create less internal stress” (Henry, 2015, pg. 5). There are methods and programs parents can use to strengthen these odds for their child. Programs that work with families to develop effective parenting skills, promote school success, and provide reinforcement and greater supervision have shown success in reducing problem behavior and increasing school achievement.

One program is called function family therapy (FFT). This is a program created for high risk youth that addresses complex and multidimensional problems that are flexible. The goal is to get through the three phases presented for the child to pass. The next idea is family integrated transitions (FIT). This provides individual and family services to juveniles who have the occurring mental health disorders. It’s a transition back into the community. “All focus on working with families and youth served with severe emotional disturbance and histories of involvement with the juvenile justice system (Garfunkel, 2010, pg. 52). Looking at the family perspective is different from the child’s perspective. Families generally require a range of services whether those are psychological or practical support. Parents seek help but end up being frustrated with their child's behavioral needs that are not getting addressed. There have been cases where parents cannot manage and end up having the behaviors escalate. In cases like these, they refer them to a group home or a placement until their child gets the help they need. Sometimes they are encouraged so they can get the specific help parents cannot provide. There are coping skills out there as an alternative to sending them away. There are some great therapies but sometimes simple tasks at home are enough. Parents can use a reward system for their behavior. This is like a behavior chart but for teens. It is better to treat them with a night out or new piece of technology they would like. There are physical skills parents can use that interest

the child more. People should try to involve sports, artwork, or games into different ways of handling emotions. This does take time but it shows involvement and care delinquents need.

### **Worldwide**

Some people don't notice juvenile justice from a global perspective. "Within the past 25 years, youth systems in Europe have undergone considerable changes, particularly in Europe" (Zimring, 2015, para. 2). Germany, Netherlands and Croatia can have juveniles stay until they are 21 based on the situation. They tend to divert more juveniles and young adults from court processing and look at rehabilitation approaches to delinquency and youth behavior. "These countries also have greater confidentiality protections for youth and young adults, and rely less incarcerating" (Crime and Justice Research Alliance, 2018, para.). There is great confidentiality for juveniles and high minimum age laws that can or cannot be applied. European countries also look at the idea of responsibility. A positive aspect of having the juvenile take responsibility for their actions has expanded the victim-offender ratio. This means juveniles do not reoffend when they focus on them taking responsibility. The United States finds this "challenging" but Europe finds it to be an important focus. Parts of their rehabilitation methods include everyday life skills. While in a center or juvenile detention jail, they are still able to function like teenagers and grow into adults. They are given opportunities to leave the area (limited and with another person), so they do not feel confined. The delinquents also continue their schooling while being at the center. Learning basic skills like math, reading and writing to prepare them for when they are out. Some are allowed to leave for actual school depending on what was sentenced to them. Inside the facility other resources are taught as well. Basics like cooking, cleaning, social skills and laundry are being taught. All focus on healthier ways to promote a change in youth instead

of throwing them in a facility hoping for a change. They find it crucial for the U.S. to adapt these strategies to serve juveniles that are developmentally appropriate.

### **Workplace**

Personally, people have worked with 13 different kids and each showed several levels of improvement. Counselors went out and asked 10 of them what skills they enjoyed and what they wanted to see differently. One was honest and shared how they hate the program. This individual had many outbursts and destroyed personal property. He doesn't believe he will ever get better. It's difficult to see and watch but this made many sessions difficult. Besides him, there were different parts being looked at. Counselors research what criminal acts each delinquent did related to the coping skills provided. The kids who were involved in the lesser offenses like, running away appreciated one on one interactions. Coping skills that were used involved strategic planning, emotional building, and physical papers. Helping this group was easier than the kids who had tougher offenses. Three of the girls expressed how much they want to change, want to leave the area and start over. The same group also liked to express their feelings and write about personal experiences, what they did wrong and the feedback role models shared. Each document would then be taken and handed to the company supervisor. These are then used during their review to assess changes and if they finished the program early. Out of the 4 counselors, their clientele has not graduated early or succeeded the programs expectations. Some came close but still needed to finish the program ordered by the court.

Majority of the delinquents committed higher offended crimes. These are drug use, underage drinking, stealing and fighting. People were reported to have been stabbed, chairs thrown at them, and was almost drowned by a few of their clients. Even with these problems, coping skills were proven to make an impact on them. What needed to be used was more

physical activities and ones that challenge them. Others tried to incorporate sports like football and baseball with decision making. This worked more with the males than the females. Females enjoy arts and crafts along with emotional boards. Many people used videos on Youtube that involved each emotion and how to act them out. They would give a positive reaction, then a negative reaction. The next step was to share which one was the correct answer. After this, people would have to collect a report to present to a company supervisor for these types of delinquents. In reviews, personal opinions had to be voiced since there was more physical interaction than written papers. Behavior analysts deal with tougher kids but it makes the job worth going to. It didn't only challenge them, but challenged the workers as individuals. From a large number of experience, coping skills worked. People need to start with these rather than attacking the problem at hand and expecting youth to change in an instant. This is a learning process for them, the workers, and families. It takes a lot of patience, but in the end the results are worth it.

## **Conclusion**

Juveniles are a topic not many people have a definite answer for. Now professionals need to focus on what is the best way people can deal with them. Find way to help them strive for better. Other countries like Germany focus on the idea of rehabilitation versus tougher methods. In either instance it is always smart to think of different coping skills. These can include something simple like a stress ball to family therapy. There have been positive outcomes using the coping skills provided by analysts and mental professionals. Personally, the 13 delinquents have worked to excel by using these methods. The process is a learning curve but can change the outcome of the child growing in the criminal justice system. The answer is always yes, we want to lessen them committing adult crimes but it is hard to figure out how. At



the local center along with others in the area find it best to start small. Use coping skills as a method to controlling their emotions so they have a better chance processing the situation at hand.

### **Ethical Application of the System**

#### **Actions**

To start there needs to be an ethical code of honesty. It's quite simple and something for every employee to manage. With this code there will be consequences. Some of them are members having to perform extra work, people needing to have a partner system, or being watched during documentation. Some raise privacy issues but the courts want legible work and need it for prosecution. Lying in this organization can add up and create a huge loss for the company. Groups would not receive funding from the county if it's proven to have gone on too long. Parents will cancel all counseling meetings and remove their children. There are hidden costs with the coworkers and upper management. Trust will not exist and the leadership could be questioned. These occur based on selfish reasons. An example would be leaving out information or saying the meeting didn't go well because you are tired. This has occurred more than once and has to be stopped. Another illegal example is having a fellow coworker do the paperwork for you. The courts gave strict rules for each counselor to be reliable for their clients. When caught it will be on file and the next incident ends in termination. To solve the corruption, everything needs to start with the supervisors. Honest leaders are critical when it comes to problems in the workplace. Employees go to them first hoping problems will get solved and there will be reassurance. Discuss ways to be open about the smaller problems. Individuals will know if they can go to their supervisors or not. By the time more complicated issues arise, it'll be easier to find someone to report to. Practice the code of honesty; make it an everyday routine or weekly

discussion. Having a fresh start can create healthier work habits. Next is to ask the employees, how do you feel? There is the possibility of false documentation because of unfair treatment. People are less likely to support the organization and will not care if they are fired. Talk with their section of counselors and ask them; what do you think about the treatment here?

Leaders consider the feelings of the employees when creating my action plan. In our textbook it talks about ethics if care. “Is based on human relationships and needs, defines good as meeting the needs of others and preserving and enriching relationships” (Pollock, 2019, pg. 38). It doesn't lead to a definite solution but rather a different question. These could be what are we doing wrong, what matters most and what path do we need to take. Arthur J Gallager wrote an action guide that any business can learn from. There are many steps in creating a healthy environment. There is also a timing assessment that makes people go back and revisit. “The thirty, sixty, ninety rule is put into place to adjust the needs of the workplace” (Gallager, 2017, pg. 6). Actions people would take can benefit greatly from this plan. First there needs to be a shadow for each employee that has committed a severe unethical behavior. The first theory days are for leaders and supervisors. During this period, counselors will examine how well two can work with one client and if issues are reported more. Towards the end there will be a survey to see the success rate. If problems are the same, they will discontinue this action and go with plan B. Making it to 60 days will require a presentation towards the courts about this plan. The company would not keep this partner system but still need to make sure it's effective when it comes to reporting. As an administrator, it would be beneficial to list the pros and cons, success rate and opinions of our behavior counselors. “Ninety days reflects things the organization has always wanted to do and will continue” (Gallager, 2017, pg. 8). Some topics require a more in-depth planning and ways to modify for future members. So far, others have witnessed mixed

emotions about people shadowing others. They believe leaders/advisors do not trust them or have faith in a change. The company is being cautious and wants the best for our clients. If there are unethical problems, they need to be solved. Behavior organizations cannot ignore these issues any longer or the funding will be lost.

### **Community and Work**

The counselors try to avoid clients from going to the detention center. “There is credible research that suggests that the experience of detention may make it more likely that youth will continue to engage in delinquent behavior, and the detention experience may increase the odds that youth will recidivate, compromising public safety” (Holman, 2006, pg. 3). Detention centers are made to be temporary, at the moment of punishment. Specific behavior organizations focus on rehabilitation and growing back into society. If the youth continues to go down this path, they can no longer help them. Examples from previous clients are the effects of going to juvenile detention. Their anger/negative impulses increase from being confined. “Once young people are detained, they are more likely than non-detained youth to go deeper into the system” (Holman, 2006, pg. 5). There is little connection between centers and the community. It’s not heard on the radio, seen on tv or announced in a paper. Parents who have experienced a child in the system understand the risks. If an organization cannot create a credible outcome, they will lose the public's trust. Everything at home is different from them being at a facilities building. That’s why continuing training can be a challenge. Both parties don't agree or don't want to put in the time. Even when this happens parents will notice if their child has not improved. They go to the court hearings and have meetings set up with the case workers. Sometimes the clients documents are read off in front of the judge. Parents notice if an action does not sound like part of their pattern or they believe that day did not go as written. The courts will then come back to analysts and

start asking questions. Not only is there a chance of losing trust in the parent, but the county system as well. Once the courts get involved, the organization starts to hinder. Behavior places will need weekly check ins and spot markers on the employees who falsified documents. If an incident like this happens again, there is a chance they can lose kids, funding and the courts will struggle. Other criminal justice entities now have to put them in a facility, and/or find another organization that has the required amount of counselors needed.

“Community helps to create the correctional environment by their tact or direct endorsement of the informal subculture norm” (Pollock, 2019, pg. 422). The statement was directed towards inmates but it plays a large role for the community being affected by adolescents. When there are issues and supervisors do not take care of them, people believe the system is fraudulent. If they don’t care or if the state doesn’t, it sends a message of them throwing away the organizations principles. The public and families want to feel safe. Some adolescents have reputations in neighborhoods. One juvenile vandalized an elderly home and terrorized young kids which left a mark on these people. There needs to be new policies, like the one being researched following a list of recommendations. This policy aims to give a structured outline on possible issues that could occur in the company. There needs to be trust, respect, lawfulness, integrity, teamwork, accountability, communication and patience. All documents have to be filled out honestly and correctly. The system wants to ensure a safe and caring environment for all employees and clients. If an individual sees something unethical, trust in oneself to report the problem. The policy also outlines how a company should treat their clients and what the repercussions are. If any part of the code gets violated, public trust is lost. They expect a response from the courts, more so the parents. To reduce the culture of error or violence, we need to; “improve our training, provide independent oversight, increase access to the courts,

and strengthen professional standards” (Pollock, 2019, pg. 424). Having access to courts means company's employees being able to report if supervisors are not available. The change will create a safer environment for everyone. Peers will be influenced and parents can put their trust back into an organization.

### **Ethical Issues**

There are six ethical considerations but not all apply to the current work. The first one to point out is informed consent. This means the person participating is fully aware about the current session, gives the okay on knowing personal information, and willing to document for the court. Without this sign, many places cannot accept kids or need to treat them privately. It's also to decide whether they want to stay in counseling after so many sessions. Places cannot keep kids unless parents signed them away or the court system makes it mandatory to see someone. Having an informed consent signed can increase the benefits of the counseling process. Clients can open up more to the counselor about personal situations. The courts will have true/full stories of the incidents. Sometimes counselors will then learn there are signs of verbal or physical abuse in the household. Once there is enough evidence, the county can get involved and try to create a healthy environment for the child.

With COVID, many people have online counseling to create separate barriers. There have been reports from negative effects of online counseling. Some clients refuse to talk over the screen and can end up sitting for 2 hours in silence. The organization sometimes does need to consider how different this is for them. Majority, if not all, are used to sitting in the office, away from family and their own comfort zone. Once they are familiar with the place, a session will easily go downhill. Now the client has the upper hand on counselors. Case workers understand how tough it is right now to present important information. Court dates are getting pushed back

and the juvenile is in the behavioral program longer. The chances of recidivism rate will increase because of the unnecessary extension. With informed consent comes confidentiality. This means information they do not want known to the courts doesn't have to be. There are exceptions like physical, mental, or verbal harm to oneself/family. Any certified document cannot withhold their information. Places will need to be flexible and understanding as an organization. Clients say they are scared to tell people why they stole, hit, or participated in drug use. Sometimes it is peer influences subjecting them to commit these acts. Adolescents do not want to get their friends in trouble and would rather be accepted. Teen years are very difficult when it comes to fitting in. People will do just about anything to have a group of friends. There is also the motto of snitches get stitches. It can hold counselors back from giving credible evidence, but there are ways to accommodate and be flexible. They do not only serve the child but the community as well. Places have heard of common organization and have their own set of expectations. When a client gets taken to the store or a social event, it is anticipated that they are on their best behavior. Incidences do occur but if they get violent or verbal, they cannot go back. It's not only them there but other parents with kids or different groups of teens. People will never know if someone will be in danger.

Other things to consider are these guys are simply kids. The age can range from 11-28 years old and we need to learn how to treat them properly. In facilities, there have been negative stories that impacted the individual's life. Young offenders are developmentally different from adults. That's why there are separate systems requiring outcomes to be changed. They need more rehabilitation punishments rather than aggressive forms. At Innovative, analysts strive for positive change and a better future. Again, here we understand the crime was wrong, but there is a higher chance for development. Looking at suicide, "youth have a higher suicide rate of all

inmates in jail”. In this case, people need to ignore the privacy they asked for and save that individual's life. In a facility, the number will continue to go up and it will carry into adult prison. By changing the ethical codes for creating better training; we can focus more on mental health rather than the action itself. When the company avoids the term juvenile, there will be a better chance of attacking the core problem.

### **Expectations and Training**

Comparing this to the news coverage on Police Officers, counselors need to be accountable for their own actions and those of others. It all starts with knowing the laws and obeying them. These existing laws make a foundation for the workplace. The organization can run smoothly and becomes dependable. When there are laws in place people will follow their work ethics more. They know consequences are higher and can leave a stronger impact. A way to ensure these expectations is to make it known. Dealing with the court system can be strict and challenging. If they talk to our workers personally, they could take it more seriously. Another method is to enforce the harsher consequences. After a couple people end up being terminated or on watch, others would second guess their actions as well.

Companies have to be aware of changing norms in their employees and clientel. A larger topic would be social issues highlighted in the news or opinions from family members. It states in a few of the handbooks, workers cannot talk about severe controversial issues like the president, BLM, abortion and others. These can make rough sessions and create bias’. If they ask a question, counselors can answer or simply say let's avoid this topic and move on with the session. It is hard to ensure when many clients are persistent and want specific answers. The system needs to set an example. Start by representing proper, and respectable behavior for everyone to see. If they can trust an individual to lean away from these topics, it's possible to

avoid fights. People inside and outside of the facility have seen clients argue and hit the counselors because views are not the same. The company has to make sure this doesn't happen not only for their employees safety but the client's future for a better life.

There needs to be extensive training on certain unethical issues. During sessions, people can talk about accountability for oneself and everyone else. Sometimes, people make a list of self accountability. Different examples include making a mission statement, board planning and more. Not only do behavior companies have one, but it is smart to modify one for personal use. An individual mission statement is their own core values and it defines why you do what you do. In this field, mainly people want to make a difference. It would be best to design a statement around this and end with individual growth. Counselors should keep this in their binder, car or one if the offices. Another way is to set micro goals. These are single actions created for the long-term goals. Have them short and simple instead of 10-year increments. They are more realistic and easier to reach. Something to consider is to not think about it as a to do list. Unless the simple task affects the larger goal at hand. Not only does the company need to be accountable, but employees need to be as well. Managers (supervisors) want to make sure employees are earning their salaries. Manage yourself and how you use your time. Each client has a billing cycle and if you end up going over give a reason why. Sometimes people lose track of time or a session went downhill. These situations happen, but there needs to be documentation proof. The most successful individuals study what they accomplished, make new sets or goals and want to make a change for the company. It starts with us administrators but our employees need to hold themselves at a standard as well. Lastly, seek the feedback and make improvements. It has been stated nobody is perfect and we all make mistakes. Don't be afraid to ask for help when it comes to using coping strategies with the clientele. Good leaders will seek out opinions



of their employees. That is what Innovative does in Wisconsin. Start by asking co-workers strengths and weaknesses. In return we expect honest and reliable answers. Every answer gets taken into consideration and the more feedback we receive, the chance of a better outcome will be higher. We will then take the feedback and discuss it in our monthly review board.

Afterwards, anything the court says we will share back. Not everything will get approved and we will explain why. This should not make someone perform less or hinder a child's chance for a better future. All we can do is review and keep our standards high.

### **Stewardship Principle**

The principle has three different types of responsibilities. First is to be accountable for resources and have an effective use for them. Second is to nurture talent and treat people with respect/uphold dignity. Third is to be mindful of intended and unintended consequences of decisions on various constituents. This applies to the current action plan because it represents many values counselors need to start stressing. Mainly accepting consequences of the decisions people have made. Documentation errors are the most common mistakes and many have been on purpose. Workers should start expressing this principle towards their team and convey the value of honesty.

Anyone in the criminal justice system can relate the stewardship principle to core values. Start looking at the United States of Justice and comparing these to the stewardship principle. One section talked about equal justice under the law. Upholding the laws our county gives us is our responsibility to follow. This alone outlines many values of the principles. They give us our resources to be successful in our sessions. There is funding, company vehicles, books and internet sources, documentation from previous sessions and more. By ignoring the laws given, we can lose any one of these privileges. Another section lists integrity and honesty; holding

ourselves to the most ethical standards. Any company or business should follow this. Anytime someone gives a reason to not trust them, the company will have to rethink their options. Like it states, everyone needs to uphold their dignity and have respect. If this means admitting to the wrongs, then do it. It's not only someone's job on the line but it is the client's chance of graduating the program. Lastly, people need to consider the individual receiving services. Treat them with respect and nurture what they do not have. Some if not the majority of adolescents come from broken homes. A couple kids are stuck in foster care and one has never met their birth family. These illegal actions are a way of asking for help. Let's respect what they went through and try to be an example they never had. It is unethical to praise the behaviors and lie on the documentation form. The stewardship principle is all about positivity, acknowledging mistakes and respect for others. Any style of illegal activity can influence the client and make the reporter lose credibility in front of court.

### **Legal/Legislative Issue of Firearm Laws**

There are eight facts people should know about current gun laws. One, you have to be 18 years of age or older to purchase a firearm (handgun). All other weapons you need to be 21. Certain people are also restricted from purchasing a firearm. Fugitives, people deemed a danger to society are among those who cannot. People with prior felonies convictions that include a prison sentence or misdemeanors of two years are prohibited. The Second Amendment serves "the right to bear arms". Shotguns, rifles, and machine guns with silencers are regulated. A newer update is having a background check done to purchase a firearm. This is where many of them get bought illegally because they will not be able to pass. Serial numbers will be sawed off and unregistered to make the weapon untraceable in case of an accident or murder. With these rules, policies are still being changed and the individuals gun rights are being threatened. Some states

want to reconsider and ban firearms from the public. Everyone agrees it is important to have policies because it prevents horrible events happening among the public. Increased gun ownership leads to higher levels of crime, suicide, and other negative outcomes. Two police officers from Saint Mary's stated even though suicide by firearm is not the most common, it's the most lethal.. Another complication is leaving weapons out inside the home. A child or friend could find the weapon without the proper knowledge of arming or disarming. At risk youth find ways into their parents' gun safe because everything is not being properly stored. In some states, like Colorado, it is unlawful to provide a gun to a juvenile. The only exceptions to this rule are safety courses and hunting. If a child does get caught with a firearm, they can be tried as an adult. A recent issue that spikes sales would be the COVID crises. Families were purchasing different forms of weaponry and could risk having easy access for their children. Individuals were scared and prepared in case everything became worse. Ammo is behind by a month and weaponry is behind by a couple months. Schools are starting to open but the mental health crisis is high. Juveniles have been stuck in their facility or at home. Returning to a public setting while having greater access to firearms can increase violence. The government needs to look at what is next for juvenile firearm offenses and how other individuals are protected in their presence.

### **Legislation**

Gun violence is a chronic problem in the United States. "Nationally in 2012, 11,622 people were killed by assault with a firearm" (Carr, 2018, pg. 1). Many more were injured and treated in emergency rooms due to assaults by firearms. The study was designed to email possible linkage between adolescent exposure versus non exposure. It's a problem that disproportionately affects young men and is associated with high injury. Young men with a history of criminal offending witness and/or are the victims of gun violence are more likely to

engage in future violence. No other study has examined the independent effects of exposure to carrying a weapon. Violent victimization and/or witnessing violence are strong predictors of gun carrying violence among young males. Adolescents may also believe this is the only way they can protect themselves. Even Though this was outside of the current study, they pushed for researchers to consider it. “Former president Obama, congressional leaders, and international health agencies have called for increased efforts to understand the mechanisms that lead young men to illegally carry guns” (Beardsley, 2018, pg. 274). Legislation has changed the policies a handful of times within the past ten years because of the public eye and shootings.

In 2018 Trump looked at three laws to be passed about gun laws. March 11, 2018 Trump administration announces support to raise the age from 18 to 21. The next day he released a four pillar plan about improving gun safety in schools. Improving school security, “training school personnel to use firearms on a voluntary basis and encourage military veterans/law enforcement to pursue a career in education” (National Security & Defense). Also, strengthening background checks, and having the authority to remove a firearm if they deem a threat. Third would be improving mental healthcare. The final tear was establishing a federal commission on school safety. Since then there has been a stop school violence act and the house passed a firearms legislation law. STOP was created to ensure security by providing students and teachers with the tools they need to recognize acts of violence. The BJA provides grants to states and local governments. The money is used for; “training school personnel and educating students on preventing violence. Develop and operate technologies, such as anonymous reporting systems. Develop and operate school threat assessments and intervention teams. Support any other measures that may provide a significant improvement in training: (STOP School Violence Program, 2018). Reducing injuries and deaths from firearms is an essential priority for

adolescent health. Risk factors relate to age and increase during teen years and decrease in young adulthood. Therefore, the special characteristics of adolescent development must be considered when developing new laws. The supreme court is very active in solving the issues of firearms but the public is still not satisfied.

### **Public Opinions**

Polls have shown the public support for gun laws is rising. The common opinion has seemed to be at odds with one another. The U.S has contrasting activist groups. Individuals who stand strong being the second amendment and do not want any of their gun rights taken away. Then there are the pacifists. Not only do they not believe in violence but are against any sort of weapons. They want to abolish rights or have a stricter law on them. “Americans who say they believe in controlling gun violence is more important than protecting gun rights or who they say favor strict gun laws” (Cohn, 2019, para. 11). The views of gun laws have risen since mass shootings hit the media more frequently and stories that share “death with an unregistered firearm”. They want gun laws to be on the main priority list when it comes to the next election. The assumption is “pro-gun voters are more politically active and likelier to vote on the issue, than anti-gun voters may not be quite as true as it use to be” (Cohn, 2019, para. 16). Americans are also in support of red flag laws. It allows family members or law enforcement to petition a judge to temporarily remove guns from a person who is seen to be at risk to themselves or others. If a juvenile is seen to be at risk, a family will lose all access to their weapons. It is unclear at this point where it will go, but supporting this law has increased over half percent. A recent study in Indiana has shown “firearm seizure legislation was associated with reductions in state-level firearm rates” (Kivisto, 2018, pg. 861). Indiana may have prevented over 300 firearm suicides and 44 violent shooting crimes. Some limitations are to be considered, like only being

able to operate at a state level. There are four other states that have recently passed rise-based firearm seizure laws. Although the specifics of each piece vary, all of these laws allow firearm seizures that are limited. To date, “19 other states have proposed such legislation and such federal policies are being considered” (Kivisto, 2018, pg. 855). These findings suggest firearm seizures are associated with reductions in firearm rates. In order to accomplish future laws, voices need to be educated and heard. This topic has changed for the better over the years and will continue to make adjustments.

### **Adolescent Shootings**

Firearms are the weapon of choice in most homicides or violent related crimes. Thus has become a concern over the past decade for juvenile delinquents. “Statistics show that all the world's children under the age of 14 who died from gun homicide in 2016, 91% were Americans” (Goddard, 2019, para. 1). That statistic shook legislation to come up with solutions to reduce the death toll. Youth ages 15-24 experienced a higher rate of violence with a firearm. There were roughly 3,000 homicides with a firearm committed in 204 by known 12-24 year olds. Overall, these trends show the concern of firearm safety. Since Columbine, there has been an increase in mass shootings with psychological outcomes. School shootings specifically leave communities pushing to focus the psychological trauma of students, teachers and administrators. Having extensive news publicity has made the people aware of the threat from school shootings and has resulted in negative outcomes. Experts believe the media has been on the list as to why shootings have increased. By covering multiple stories, this will give ideas to the next generation of adolescents. “This is often called the media contagion effect, and it happens with suicides, terrorist attacks and mass shootings” (Pew, 2019, para. 1). Shooters get enormous attention: their

name, photo and history are posted for everyone to see. This “frame” is something most mass shooters desire for a copycat. Teens end up wanting to be better than the previous attack and will become known by using social media. In addition, “communities developed online that treats the shooters like heroes and creates fans and followers who obsess about the shooter” (Pew, 2019, para. 7). As long as the media continues to focus their stories on the attacker, it is likely copycats will continue. “Between 2010 and 2017, some mass shooters got more media attention in the month following the attack than the most famous celebrities” (Pew, 2019, para. 10). American Psychological Association recommends that mass media deny shooters the game they desire by not sharing details about them. Continuing these online social groups as media coverage will result in a higher death rate, higher juvenile crime rate, and schools constantly creating new safety procedures. Education supporters need to take the lead and find out whether their outlet has a policy for covering mass shootings. They should also ask about student coverage who are in lockdowns or record videos from the scene of violence. It’s clear to some people that the main focus is to get famous. Specific organizations will accept these high end juvenile offenders and they can end up putting themselves at risk. Different associations do not have the training or capabilities to offer protection. Creating a new safety program can change the attitude for counselors when performing specific coping skill duties.

### **What Already Reduces Shootings**

Increased police presence in schools has led to different ways of dealing with adolescent behaviors. Police Officers can detect behaviors ahead of time to minimize the chances of an attack. Students can also contact a member of law enforcement right away to ensure their safety at school. Active shooter drills have prepared kids on how to act during high stress situations.

Drills vary from school to school and in some of them there are mental health concerns.

Legislation is trying to revisit and revise a new plan in preparing the youth for firearm safety. In the meantime, there are a variety of ways in improving the safety of children. Start by practicing communication so members will receive as much information as possible. To improve this tool, start by having multiple personal community members trained in the problem. Another method making students a part of the team without scaring them. Empower adolescents to actively participate in the different aspects of emergency response. At organizations, there are specific training sessions that prepare people for a severe action. Counselors, CO's and supervisors take a defense class teaching open hand and extended hand uses. These are ways to detain the juvenile without having to use severe physical force. Adolescents with firearm history require more attention than a simple defense class. Companies have been doing the double up procedures in result of this change. They want to have two or more individuals per kid in hope a situation will not escalate. It has been discussed for counselors to carry some sort of weaponry protection but has not been passed. The concerns are misusing a firearm, a child finding a way to obtain it and the possible chance of losing the weapon. Youth in the juvenile justice system also have high rates of substance abuse, disruptive disorders, and anxiety disorders. Improving their services can be a challenge when they have episodes. Sometimes these become very violent and disruptive. Many people have expressed safety concerns and continue to push for new methods on handling high crime juveniles.

### **Programs that work**

Creative arts therapy uses drama, music and visual arts treatments. Each discipline has been applied in psychotherapy and counseling with individuals of all ages for more than 70 years. While art is a form of play, it can encourage individuals to express themselves through



painting. “Art therapies are different because they integrate knowledge with principles of psychotherapy and related fields” (Malchiodi, 2014, para. 4). It also gives adolescents the chance to engage in group-oriented extracurricular activities. Counselors will be able to integrate juveniles back into society while discovering their own coping skill. Creative therapy can also help lessen many of the symptoms with PTSD, depression and anxiety. Non-verbal children will have the chance to process the crime they just committed. “In addition, the sense of pleasure and mastery derived from creating physical form may improve positive affect and decrease negative effects” (Hylton, 2019, pg. 2). The aftermath of school shootings also affects innocent kids, teachers and parents. They have the potential to commit a crime based on unsettling feelings. Using creative therapy will target mental health outcomes before everything accelerates. “A study of 42 adolescents enrolled in either a school-based creative arts therapy program or controlled condition found reductions in behavioral difficulties and emotional symptoms” (Hylton, 2019, pg. 2). Participants were adolescents ranging from 13-18 years old. Their symptoms reduced and they were able to process any form of violent feelings. Creative therapy is a well-tolerated treatment to improve the mental health status of traumatized and/or confused children. Continuing similar therapies can save a juveniles chance of entering the system.

A second program that works is in Miami Florida. This is called JEOP (Juvenile Weapons Offenders Program): a potential model to reduce firearm crime recidivism. Several programs aim at reducing recurrent gun violence in adolescents. “Miami-Dade County has provided a unique multidisciplinary intervention encompassing 100 hours of violence education, behavioral modification, and social mentoring” ( Soe-Lin, 2020, pg. 1). Since starting this program, JWOP has one of the lowest recidivism rates for reoffense for firearm and non-firearm offenses. Adolescents are referred into this program by court mandate. There are three segments

inside of the program children need to pass. First; “focuses on developing awareness on traumatic consequences of firearms injury” (Soe-Lin, 2020, pg. 2). Participants will witness what happens to families when someone dies from a gun and well as visits a funeral home. They will have to plan their own funeral and write their own eulogy. The end goal is to educate adolescents on the consequences a criminal record has. The middle segment focuses on personal awareness. “Classes in this segment cover risk taking behaviors, drug substance abuse and sexually transmitted diseases” (Soe-Lin, 2020, pg. 2). They can also meet adults who were sent to jail as adolescents. This portion is more physical than mental. Adolescents will experience what happens if their action went a different way. It’s a beyond scared straight tactic, but has multiple sections to it. The third segment focuses on the choices, decision making and mental part of the program. Participants can learn CPR and how to create a resume. In order to graduate, juveniles must prepare a speech as well as finish any extra assigned curriculum. They are encouraged to stay in touch for their ongoing skill development. In all three segments there are different methods of coping skills. At risk youth will now be able to tackle their emotions, come up with behavior plans and communicate with others well. This model could serve as an expansion for communities across the U.S.

### **Chapter 3: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions**

#### **Practical Applications**

Counselors are under the human service tier for the criminal justice field. Workers have a three-tiered objective to fulfill: evaluate a client or community, their needs in the developmental plan and put the plan into action. Everything relating to coping skills follows all three steps. Different organizations are trying to use coping skills when it comes to behaviors. The adolescents will end up acting out when something is internally affecting them. This can be

family, friends, schoolwork or more. Connecting the stewardship principle is all about accountability. Each individual teen needs to understand what they did and why. In these programs, people are hoping they will finally observe and accept their mistakes. In other countries, like England, they have been very successful in their recidivism rates for juveniles. All their teachings express tough love and rehabilitation. They are still kids being treated like 30-year-old adults and will be at a higher risk in prisons. The severe cases do not end up in these programs. Small crimes like fighting, running away, etcetera become the main focus. At this point, there are underlying conditions causing them to act out. The human service workers develop the plans necessary in dealing with young adult behaviors. They will use coping skills when considering the needs of their client and the community. Coping skills assist with not only juveniles, but for parents to take home for environmental growth. With the world changing, technology, and how others socialize, coping will never be one direction answer. Everything changes together causing stress on the clients, supervisors, and the company. Instead of giving up, continue the journey of compassion. It's important to focus on fixing the stigma of the criminal justice system. Even after many years of hate, there is still hope. Adolescents have a higher chance of turning their lives around rather than adults. The counselors will have the focus begin here for at risk youth, then move onto a possible release.

In order for the criminal justice system to change, people need to understand code of ethics. Any and every organization has a set of rules people must follow. Probation officers, victim advocates and prison social workers require different ethics when it comes to their clients. Neither can falsify documents and need to make sure everyone is doing their part. As stated, ethics need to be followed or that's a consequence for the worker and innocent person involved. Specific to juveniles, they would never be released from the facility. They have a higher

probability of reoffending and/or getting involved in serious offenses. When they reach this level, it is a challenge in receiving the proper help. Firearm charges fall under this category.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Psychology can make an important contribution to policies that prevent severe violence. Juvenile offenders deal with trauma from the system. “An estimated 93% of youths involved in the system have a history of trauma” (Rousseau, 2020, para. 1). Following exposure, teens also experience emotional, psychological, or behavioral problems. This following research covered the importance of coping skills from all angles. One recommendation from Maschi is using trauma-informed assessments as an intervention tool. Start looking into screening instruments for probation officers to tailor to services. Another idea is looking at a supportive, empathetic approach. “Miller and Bornstein indicate that involvement in the legal system can sometimes produce positive results if the individual is able to learn coping skills” (Rousseau, 2020, para.5). Having more information about different relaxation techniques can benefit future counselors. Different therapies can also be looked into more for everyone to use. There are cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure therapy, EMDR, MASTR, role playing and art therapy. State legislation should consider expanding mental health treatments and assessments. Instead of focusing on one agenda, know there are multiple ways to keep an adolescent. Mental health disorders are more complicated in teens and difficult to treat in young people than adults. Therefore, it is important to use screening protocols to identify young people with immediate needs. I’d recommend professionals to promote awareness and define effective responses. Further research needs to consider all angles of the system and how many available options there are to juvenile parents. Not many people have information about aftercare and this could change the scene on what works and what doesn’t. Juveniles access to mental health services after being

released is an important part of comprehensive approaches. Releasing information about different service centers, community-based homes and recreational activities can create a more positive outcome. Coping skills are not easy to understand and one recommendation is to focus on social, emotional and behavioral challenges. Each new disorder brings a new set of difficulties. Having an extensive amount of options on certain disorders will make a more well rounded counselor

More serious offenses need to check developmental issues. Like discussed in this paper, gun violence requires different types of coping skills. There is no single profile that can reliably predict who will use a weapon in a violent act. “Instead, gun violence is associated with influences from individual, family, school, peer, community and cultural risks” (Cornell, 2013, para. 3). Research should start covering prevention efforts on developmental risk. Other articles have shown that severe mental illness contributes to gun violence. There’s a larger scale besides one person's actions on gun-related events. When researchers take a moment to discover the other variables, better coping skills can be attached to them. People don’t talk about what happens after a school shooting either. The media will cover the extreme outcomes like death and/or family suicide. There is a great amount of stress from counselors, individuals and the adolescents involved as well. One article published tips as to how to deal with mass shootings. Have professionals start taking apart each idea in case an event like this happens and authorities need to learn how to handle a person's feelings. Not every state is the same when it comes to youth gun laws. For a counselor to be successful, they need to understand what the rules are. States should create and publish their findings on behaviors relating to firearms. If an adolescent doesn’t receive the chance In a behavior program, that organization can learn why. Continue expanding on stipulations and how the U.S can come to a civil understanding.

**Conclusion**

Several studies have been carried out to investigate the effect of child maltreatment on juvenile justice involvement and future criminal life. Little is known about the impact of other forms of neglect of adolescents. This study showed how coping skills can make an impact on all forms of offenses, like firearm charges. Facilities need to start adapting to a rehabilitated style in order to save children from the criminal justice system. It will take work, ethical changes, strong leaders, and having everyone feel safe in order to become successful.

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