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# SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS:

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## A Review of the Literature

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February 1985



Program Services Unit  
Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation

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A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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## Preface

This paper presents both a synthesis and annotated review of recent literature on the use of social skills training among juvenile offenders.

This review is the second in a series to be produced by the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation, Program Services Unit. All reviews issued will be periodically updated and reissued, with the intent of providing a useful resource to those involved in the treatment of juvenile offenders.

We would like to acknowledge the effort of Denise Lishner in developing this review.

Other reviews:

The Sex Offender: A Review of the Literature (October, 1984)

## SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE REVIEW

### SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Social skills training programs are becoming a popular means of treatment for court-adjudicated youths (Hazel, et al., 1982). Viewing skill deficits as a parameter of juvenile offender dysfunctioning and skills training as treatment is a new rehabilitation strategy (Collingwood and Genthner, 1980). Delinquent behavior is seen in this context as a manifestation of situation-specific behavioral deficits (Freedman, et al., 1978). The general assumption is that juvenile offenders lack the necessary skills for appropriate interaction with others or for the achievement of denied goals through legitimate means (Hazel, et al., 1982). It is further suggested that social skills may be an important antecedent to involvement, attachment and commitment (Guthmann and Steiger, 1984), without which the likelihood of deviant behavior increases.

Studies have demonstrated meaningful differences on various measures of social skills performance when comparing criminal and non-criminal groups (Hogan, 1969; Kurtines and Hogan, 1972); delinquents and non-delinquents (Freedman, et al., 1978; Spence, 1981); non-offenders, first offenders and repeat offenders (Deardorff, et al., 1975; Kendall, Deardorff and Finch, 1977); and learning disabled, normal and delinquent groups (Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon, 1982). Young offenders are generally less socially skilled than non-offenders (Freedman, et al., 1978; Ollendick and Elliott, 1978; Spence, 1981). Researchers have explored the relationship between delays in the acquisition of social competence skills and social deviation (Chandler, 1973; Martin, 1968) and a developmental lag has been demonstrated for delinquents on indices of moral reasoning and role-taking (Hains and Miller, 1980; Jurkovic and Prentice, 1977).

Youths' interaction skills are a major determinant of police decisions (Black and Reiss, 1970; Piliavin and Briar, 1964), court decisions on whether a youth remains in the community or is institutionalized (Gross, 1967) and job success (Fulton, 1975). It is suggested that learning disabled delinquents are often adjudicated due to their socially inappropriate actions when apprehended (Burnett, 1982). Spence (1981) cautions that it is not clear whether adolescents deficient in social skills are more likely to engage in delinquent activities or whether juveniles lacking in social skills receive less favorable dispositions from police and courts.

Various procedures have been devised to assess the skill performance of adolescents to discriminate between offender and non-offender groups. In a study comparing first, repeat, and non-offenders on Hogan's empathy scale and the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) socialization scale, groups were found to differ significantly on socialization but not on empathy (Kendall, Deardorff and Finch, 1977). The authors concluded that individuals likely to develop criminal behavior patterns could be isolated at a young age using the CPI Socialization Scale.

Freedman, et al. (1978) suggest that the probability that a teen will be classified as a delinquent increases as a function of three factors:

1. Extent to which teen lacks skills to deal with everyday problems.
2. Frequency with which teen encounters such problems.
3. Extent to which incompetent solutions take forms of illegal behavior.

These same researchers developed the Adolescent Problems Inventory (API) to test the hypothesis that adjudicated male delinquents would show situation-specific skill deficits when their performance was compared to matched non-delinquents (Freedman, et al., 1978). The API is a 44-item assessment instrument which awards points for competent responses to items reflecting typical adolescent problem situations. In a sample of institutionalized delinquents, non-delinquent peers and non-delinquent adolescent leaders, the leaders and non-delinquents significantly outperformed the delinquents, and low disruptive delinquents had significantly higher total scores than did high disruptive delinquents (Freedman et al., 1978). Discriminant analysis was 89 percent correct when used to classify subjects in the derivation sample and 100 percent in identifying delinquents. A validation study compared responses of institutionalized delinquent boys with frequent behavioral problems and those with few behavioral problems within an institution and the former group was judged to respond less skillfully. A third validation study replicated previous group differences between delinquents and matched non-delinquents, and indicated that performance was affected by type of directions given and test format (Freedman, et al., 1978). Therefore caution should be used in the interpretation of social skills tests as performance may be influenced by reading abilities and testing conditions.

To examine the relationship between social competence and delinquency among adolescent girls, the Problem Inventory for Adolescent Girls (PIAG) was developed (Gaffney and McFall, 1981). When comparing the performance of matched groups of delinquent and non-delinquent girls (N=58), a significant difference was found on overall performance with delinquents more incompetent than competent. Significant differences were found on four of the 52 items. PIAG correctly classified 85 percent of the subjects as delinquents or non-delinquents. Guthmann and Steiger (1984) found that some of the PIAG items did not adequately distinguish between groups. Scoring procedures were adjusted and normalized to indicate not only the degree of skill but also the specific areas of deficiency, making this a more useful diagnostic tool.

To identify specific behavioral components which correlated with adults' subjective ratings of adolescent social behavior, 18 institutionalized male delinquents and 18 matched non-offenders were videotaped and later rated in a behavioral analysis consisting of four social competence scales (Spence, 1981). The offender group was rated significantly less favorably on scales for social skills performance, social anxiety, and employability, with no differences found on friendliness.

Hazel, et al., (1981) produced an instrument assessing a range of social skills needed by adolescents, consisting of eight checklists. Skills were tested on this instrument through roleplay situations. The instrument was found to be reliable and sensitive to pre/post changes in skills (Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon, 1982). This instrument was employed in a study comparing normal adolescents, learning disabled adolescents, and court adjudicated delinquents (Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon 1982). Normal youths performed significantly better than the other two groups on seven of eight skills. Learning disabled adolescents performed slightly better than juvenile delinquents on six skills but significantly better on only one skill. The learning disabled group could be correctly classified by social skills half of the time and was heterogeneous in regard to social skills.

Social Skills Training (SST) has been defined as directly teaching clients interpersonal skills necessary for everyday living (Authier, et al., 1981). Social competence is a composite of learned skills (Hazel, et al., 1982). Rooted in social psychology and behaviorial therapy, SST focuses on reeducation in critical social interactions (Authier, et al., 1981). Spence and Marziller (1981) define SST as a therapeutic package consisting of modeling, role-play, feedback, social reinforcement and task assignment which aims to teach a range of social and interpersonal skills. Social skills training can be broadly focused (general communication skills) or narrowly focused (situation or problem specific).

A variety of training approaches are subsumed under the SST label. Carkhuff (1970) formulated the Human Resources Development (HRD) model based on training of specific skills deficits. Incarcerated youths trained in HRD demonstrated reduced recidivism and runaway outcomes (Carkhuff, 1974). Kifer, et al., (1974) focused on new adaptive behaviors to resolve conflicts through arbitration (behaviorial contracting) or modification of communication processes (verbal instruction, practice and feedback). Their approach utilizes classroom sessions, role play, discussion, practice and simulation. Hazel, et al., (1982) identified eight social skills covering a wide range of situations, and specific behaviors and behaviorial steps to be taught. Their approach emphasizes instruction, shaping, modeling, practice and reinforcement.

Past treatment programs for offenders generally focused on casework rather than specific skills training, and few programs proved effective (Romig, 1978). Experimental skills training programs were successful when implemented with non-assertive college students (McFall and Twentyman, 1973), shy males (Twentyman and McFall, 1975), alcoholics (Sobell and Sobell, 1973) and veterans (Ivey and Authier, 1978). Few rigorous evaluations have validated the effectiveness of SST with juvenile offenders (Guthmann and Steiger, 1984). Short-term effectiveness with various populations has been demonstrated, but longer term benefits have not yet been established (Spence and Marziller, 1981). Evaluative studies of SST programs targeting offenders often suffer from methodological problems such as lack of a control group or an inadequate follow-up period.

In an experimental study which measured and attempted to remediate deficits in role-taking skills of 45 delinquent boys (Chandler, 1973), experimental training subjects improved significantly more than placebo and control groups in role-taking ability and had the most dramatic reduction in offenses. A program offering negotiation skills, role play, discussion, practice and simulation to delinquents and their parents resulted in substantial increases in the use of negotiation behaviors (Kifer, et al. 1974). Sarason (1976) found that youths exposed to SST committed fewer reoffenses compared to groups of adjudicated youths who did not receive training. Unfortunately, the lack of a control group prevents the conclusion that the improvements resulted from the training.

A study to assess the effectiveness of videotaped models and role play on the interpersonal adjustment of delinquents in a group home demonstrated improvements in home adjustment ratings over baseline for experimentals, but improvement was not maintained at follow up (Thelen, Fry, Dollinger and Paul, 1976). To test the effectiveness of a social skills package teaching alternate ways of responding, 27 incarcerated male delinquents were randomly assigned to social skills, discussion and control groups (Ollendick and Hersen, 1979). The social skills group improved significantly more than the other two groups on a number of behavioral indicators. While incidence of disruptive behavior did not show significant change, the mean difference scores favored the social skills group in all but one case. Long term effectiveness of Social Skills Training was not assessed.

The PREP Project (Preparation through Responsive Education Programs) was implemented in three different school settings to address the needs of disruptive and skill deficient students (Filipczak and Wodarski, 1979). Classroom skills training focused on personal behavior management, small group interaction and leadership, family interaction and other skills. Rewards were provided for appropriate behaviors and inappropriate behaviors were ignored. Significant improvement was found for PREP students (volunteer experimentals) in social behavior areas as measured by suspensions, citizenship ratings and teacher ratings, while overall outcome for grades was mixed.

A program offering assessments, SST, parent training in monitoring and behavioral contacts, and follow-up assignments was implemented with middle range delinquents (Collingwood and Genthner, 1980). Youths who completed the program were compared with those referred who did not participate. The experimental group was less likely to be arrested, and if they were, committed fewer and less serious crimes and were less likely to have court action taken. Youths rated after completion of training demonstrated significant improvement in ratings of functioning at home, school and at free time.



Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon-Wildgen (1982) assessed the pre-training and interpersonal skills of normal and court adjudicated youths on eight social skills and found that delinquents performed significantly poorer on all eight skills, especially resisting peer pressure, but that they learned these as a result of a skills training program. Data also indicated less recidivism among program participants as compared to controls (Hazel, et al., 1981).

In a study to determine whether SST can produce specific and lasting changes in the social behavior of delinquents, 76 matched adolescent male offenders were randomly selected to SST, no treatment or placebo groups (Spence and Marziller, 1981). The SST group participated in 12 one-hour sessions in small groups to learn simple and complex interaction skills. Results indicated improvements by experimentals in some but not all targeted skills, and these were maintained at three month follow-up. Self-report data indicated a decrease in the total number of problems and improved self-perceived social competence, but little change on videotaped interviews, self-report offenses, police convictions or social work ratings. The evaluators concluded that the study failed to show generalized changes in social skills and does not support lasting and significant improvements in everyday competency from SST (Spence and Marziller, 1981).

A ten-week training course in human behavior was offered to 20 males ages 15-24 on probation, and encouraged youths to apply skills to personal experiences and practice them in the community (Garber, et al., n.d.). Significant differences were found between experimentals and a matched control group (N=10) on three of 22 Tennessee self-concept measures and four of 14 personal orientation inventory items. No significant differences were found on the self-disclosure scale or the relationship inventory. The program appeared to improve sense of self-worth, feelings of inadequacy, self-concept and self-evaluation, but did not impact other dimensions.

In an evaluation study comparing a skills training approach with a non-directive method of group counseling (Klarreich, 1981), 60 matched juvenile offenders volunteering to participate were randomly selected to SST, group counseling, or no treatment groups. Experimentals received training in group problem solving, conflict resolution, self-concept and other skills. The results indicated significantly greater increases in self-satisfaction for experimentals than the other two groups, but less favorable results in other self-concept variables. Klarreich (1981) concludes that the skills training group demonstrated slightly greater impact than the group counseling group but not enough to justify its greater effectiveness.

The efficacy of training learning disabled adolescents in social and problem solving skills was evaluated by conducting a group skills training program with adolescents from an alternative high school, non-learning disabled youths at the same school, and court-adjudicated youths on probation (Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon, 1982). Six skills were taught over a ten-week period in a multiple baseline design across skills. All three groups of subjects showed increased skill levels following training

and could generalize these skills to new situations, but learning disabled adolescents demonstrated only a slight gain on cognitive problem solving skills when compared to other subjects. The authors interpret the similarity of the three groups' pretraining skill levels as an indication that low social skills may be one factor in being labeled a troublemaker.

Critics of SST point to the difficulty in generalizing or applying learned skills to real life situations, models which are too narrowly defined or superficial, erosion of temporary effects over time, negative peer alliances resulting from isolation of delinquents in treatment groups, and absence of criteria for making appropriate choices in new situations. Future research directions which have been suggested (Hazel, et al., 1982) include skills training by group leaders, procedures to generalize and maintain social skills, training of parents in the same skills, the need for additional skills to be offered in conjunction with SST, and curriculum materials for difficult-to-teach youths.

## LITERATURE REVIEW: SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS

### A. Social Skills Training Methods, Approaches and Programs

1. Social Skills Training with Court - Adjudicated Youths  
J. Stephen Hazel, Jean B. Schumaker, James A. Sherman and  
J. Sheldon-Wildren

Child and Youth Services 5(1982) V.5. 3/4 pp. 117-137

Social skills training programs are becoming a popular means of treatment for court -adjudicated youths. Social competence is a composite of learned skills. The general assumption of social skills training programs for delinquents is that these youngsters do not have the necessary skills to interact appropriately with others. It has been theorized that adolescents who commit illegal acts do not have the skills necessary for achieving desired goals through legitimate means. Social skills training would increase youth's range of acceptable behaviors which can be used in obtaining desired rewards.

#### Issues

- a. What proportion of problems of this group are social in nature? Delinquent youth encounter difficult social situations (Freedman et al 1978). Youths' interaction skills are a major determinant of police decisions (Black and Reiss, 1970; Piliavin and Briar, 1964) and whether youth remains in community or is institutionalized (Gross 1967). Social skills also relate to job success (Fulton, 1975).
- b. Can relevant social skills useful in handling these problems be identified?

There are several approaches to identifying appropriate responses to problematic situations, including definitional criteria, determination of effective and appropriate responses (Goldfried and D'Zurilla, 1969; Freedman et al, 1978; Rosenthal, 1978); and the nonassertive-aggressive-assertive classification of responses (Lange and Jakubowski, 1976).

- c. Are court-adjudicated adolescents deficient in social skills as compared to normal youth?

Significant differences have been found on Adolescent Problem Inventory (Freedman et al, 1978) and role-playing inventory (Rosenthal, 1978).

- d. Can social skills be taught to juvenile offenders and will they reduce illegal behavior?

Social skills have been taught to this population (Le Croy, 1982; Kifer, Lewis, Green and Phillips, 1974; Ollendick and Hersen, 1979; Spence and Marziller, 1979). Lower recidivism rate found for experimental group than for control group (Sarason, 1976) but most studies are inadequate.

#### Developing a social skills program

Program integrated a problem-specific approach (focusing on situations) and general skills approach (teaching generalizable skills tied to specific problem areas, and determining appropriate responses). Identified eight social skills covering a wide range of situations and specific behavior and behavioral steps which needed to be taught. Approach emphasizes instruction, shaping, modeling, practice, and reinforcement. Youths were encouraged through various techniques to apply these skills to real life situations, making the skills generalizable. Practical issues include efficiency, feasibility, and flexibility. Resulting approach integrated several content and teaching methodologies, with eight social skills taught in separate training sessions, using ten-step format.

Over 300 youths have participated over the last four years. Schumaker, Hazel and Sheldon-Wildgen assessed pre-training interpersonal skills of normal and court adjudicated youths on eight social skills and found that delinquents performed significantly poorer on all eight skills, especially resisting peer pressure, but learned these skills as a result of the program (Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon-Wildgen, in press). Data also indicate less recidivism among program participants than controls (Hazel et al, 1981). Future research directions described, including skills training by group leaders, procedures to generalize and maintain social skills, training parents in same skills, need for additional skills, and curriculum materials for difficult-to-teach youths.

2. Social Skills Training: An initial assessment  
Jerry Authier, Kay Gustafson, A. James Fix, David Daughton  
Professional Psychology Vol. 12 No. 4, August 1981, 438-445

Social-skills training (SST) defined as directly teaching clients interpersonal skills necessary for everyday living. SST is as effective or more than traditional therapy. Possible problems include too narrowly defining the clients' problem, expecting the approach to be panacea, and possible lack of generalizability.

The psychoeducational model advocates the direct teaching of specific skills for everyday living, and makes goals and progress more measurable than in alternate clinical paradigms. Two major psychoeducational approaches are interpersonal (social-skills training) and intrapersonal (cognitive-skills training). Cognitive systems train people to think or talk to themselves differently while SST teaches people new communication skills. SST can be narrowly focused (assertion skills) or broadly focused (general communication skills). Rooted in social psychology and behavioral therapy, SST focuses on critical social interactions, views patient as needing reeducation in these areas. uses specific techniques toward specific reeducation goals, and introduces positive expectancy into the treatment.

#### Research on SST Models

Greater improvement from use of various modes of SST over traditional (insight oriented) therapies found among veterans (Pierce and Drasgow, 1969; Ivey & Authier, 1978, Goldstein, 1973). SST reduced preselected relapse measures at one year follow-up (Chaney, O'Leary and Marlatt, 1978). SST trains specific skills more rapidly than insight treatments and reaches more short term treatment goals. Methodological problems with studies indicated. Problems with SST models: may be considered narrowly defined or superficial; may not generalize; temporary boost may erode.

3. The Learning Disabled Delinquent: Teaching Socially Appropriate Reactions to Confrontations for Negative Behaviors.  
Darrell J. Burnett  
Je Special Education Tech, Spring 1982, V. 2, pp

Learning disabled delinquents are often adjudicated due to their socially inappropriate reactions when apprehended. Paper describes a specific private adolescent psychiatric inpatient treatment program for L.D. adolescent delinquents referred by probation officers for purpose of teaching socially appropriate reactions when confronted by authority figures for negative behavior. Involves token economy programs, teaching adolescent to accept and anticipate consequences, positive and negative reinforcements. Baseline data are gathered for inappropriate reactions, and competing socially appropriate reactions are taught and reinforced in training sessions. Introduces cognitive restructuring in which entails control of behavior by self verbalization. Social skills training consists of nonverbal communication (eye contact, posture etc.), assertive vs. aggressive responses, role playing (resisting peer pressure, rule negotiation), and homework.

A single case study is described with some successful results after six weeks and at three months follow up.

4. Social Skill Development in Delinquent Adolescent Patients.  
Clyde V. Martin  
Corrective and Social Psychiatry and Journal of Behavior 26(1),  
1980, pp.35-36.

Assumption is that "troubled" adolescents will show less movement along a scale of social development than "well adjusted" adolescents. Aim was to see whether program could further patient's social growth. No relationship was found between presence of social skills and association with general assertiveness among adolescent girls (N=8, aged 13-17). Training of social skills in desensitization process involves self monitoring, review of specific assertive behaviors, self-reward, relaxation training, modeling, behavioral rehearsal, feedback, social imposition, requests, eye contact and interpersonal process recall.

B. Assessment and Measurement of Social Skills

1. The Development of Social Cognitive Processes among Juvenile Delinquents and Non Delinquent Peers.  
Anthony A. Hains and Ellen B. Ryan  
Child Development 1983, 54, pp.1536-1544

Study examined development of social cognitive processes among juvenile delinquents as compared to nondelinquents, based on a process model of social cognition (Flavell, 1974). Researchers have shown a development lag for delinquents on indices of moral reasoning and role-taking (Hains and Miller, 1980; Jurkovic and Prentice, 1977...). Investigated social cognitive processes of 10-11 and 14-15 year olds to assess differences in moral reasoning tasks, social problem solving and strategic social cognitive behavior. Clues were provided for half of the subjects to prompt use of problem solving strategies.

Seventy-four male participants were included in this study (20 delinquents and 20 non delinquents ages 14-15 and 14 delinquents and 20 non delinquents ages 10-11). All subjects participated in four sessions, rated statements after moral dilemma stories and responded to social problem situations.

Developmental differences were observed in moral judgement and prosocial moral reasoning for age but not for delinquency. Under certain conditions, older nondelinquents performed better than other groups while considering some dimensions of problem solving, with age differences noted on social problem solving task. When subjects were provided with clues all groups scored at higher levels than no-clues performances, and delinquents performed less well without clues. All groups except younger delinquents displayed comparable knowledge about strategies to solve social problems.

Non delinquents and older non delinquents were more exhaustive in consideration of social problem solving than delinquents and younger subjects. While delinquent - non delinquent differences were found on some dimensions of strategic social thinking, at various points no differences occurred. The lack of delinquency differences on two moral reasoning tasks was unexpected given past findings, and further study is needed. Predicted age differences were noticable. Authors conclude that antisocial behavior may be initiated on the basis of incomplete or inaccurate inferences made from social situations.

2. Empathy and Socialization in First and Repeat Juvenile Offenders and Normals.

Phillip C. Kendall, P.A. Deardorff and A.J. Finch Jr.  
Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology 5 (1) 1977 pp.93-97

Several investigators (Hogan, 1969; Kurtines and Hogan, 1972) have found meaningful differences between criminal and non-criminal groups using the empathy scale (Hogan, 1969). The California Psychological Inventory (CPI) has differentiated delinquents and non delinquents using a socialization scale. Deardorff and associates (1975) compared normals with both first offenders and repeat offenders in two studies of empathy and socialization. Study one showed normals and first offenders both differed significantly from repeat offenders but not from each other. In the second study, with matched groups, the same was true. Purpose of present study is to determine whether differences in first and repeat offenders would be found in similar groups of juvenile offenders.

Thirty two first offenders and 16 repeat offenders from two state training schools in Virginia and 19 non offenders were administered Hogan's empathy scale and CPI socialization scale. Subjects were matched on age and race and were all around 16 years old. One-way analyses of variance indicated that the groups differed significantly on socialization but not on empathy, in contrast to studies of adults. This may reflect undeveloped adolescent moral development regarding empathy. Also found that individuals likely to develop criminal behavior patterns may be isolated at a young age using the CPI socialization scale. Therapists working with juvenile offenders might focus on increasing the level of clients' socialization or empathy. Role-playing techniques might be beneficial and should be examined further.

3. Differences in Social Skills performances between institutionalized juvenile male offenders and a comparable group of boys with offense records.

Susan H. Spence  
British Journal of Clinical Psychology 20(3), 1981, pp. 163-191

Young offenders are generally less socially skilled than non-offenders (Freedman et al, 1978). Present study attempted to identify specific behavioral components which correlated with adults' subjective ratings of social behavior. Eighteen institutionalized randomly selected young male offenders and 18 boys without criminal records, comparable in age (13-15), academic performance and social background, were videotaped during a five minute interview. Interviewer did not know whether subjects were offenders or non-offenders. Videotapes were subjected to a behavioral analysis of 13 responses which are important social skill components. Tapes were rated by six judges in terms of social skills performance, social anxiety, friendliness and employability. Offender group was found to be significantly different from non-offender group on level of eye contact, head movements, amount spoken, fiddling movements and gross body movements, but not on other variables. Offender group rated significantly less favorably than non-offender group on scales of social skills performance, social anxiety and employability. No significant differences found on friendliness. Correlation analyses between the specific behavioral measures and the subjective rating scales revealed statistically significant associations between 6 of the 13 behavioral measures and one or more of the subjective rating scales.

Generally, convicted young offenders tend to be deficient in terms of social skills performance in relation to impression made on adults during an interview. Offender group judged as less socially skilled, more socially anxious and less employable than non-offender counterparts. Subjective rating scales and specific behavioral measures are representative of level of social skills performance. Study limitations include small subject and rater sample, and brief interview method as opposed to real life interactions. Interpretations are that adolescents deficient in social skills are more likely to engage in delinquent activities or that juveniles lacking in social skills receive less favorable dispositions from police and courts.

4. Validation of Social Skills of Adolescent Males in an Interview Conversation with a Previously Unknown Adult.  
Susan H. Spence  
Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1981, 14(2), 159-168

Seventy convicted male offenders were videotaped during an interview with a previously unknown adult. Measures of 13 behaviors were obtained from the tape to validate the behavioral components of social interactions for this population. These measures were correlated with ratings of friendliness, social anxiety, social skills performance and employability by four independent judges. Measures of eye contact and verbal init-



iations were correlated significantly with all four criterion rating scales. Frequencies of smiling and speech dysfluencies were significantly correlated with ratings of friendliness and employability. The amount spoken was a significant predictor of social skills performance and the frequency of head movements influenced judgements of social anxiety. The latency of response was negatively correlated with social skills and employability ratings and the frequency of question asking and interruptions correlated significantly with friendliness, social skills and employability ratings. The levels of gestures, gross body movements and attention feedback responses were not found to influence judgements on any criterion scales.

If beneficial changes are to be produced with social skills training it is important that the targets of training lead to success in social interactions. Study attempts to validate the social importance of a wide range of specific responses to suggest valid targets for social skills training with male offenders.

5. Social Skills Performances of Learning Disabled, Non-Learning Disabled and Delinquent Adolescents.  
J. B. Schumaker, J. S. Sherman and Jan Sheldon  
Learning Disability Quarterly Vol. 5, Fall 1982, 388-397

Studies show that court-adjudicated youths perform poorly on certain social skills prior to training and perform better on these skills after training. Hazel et al (1981) and Sarason (1976) found that youths who received social skills training committed fewer reoffenses compared to groups of adjudicated youths who did not receive training. Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman and Sheldon-Wildgen (1981) produced a social skills assessment instrument assessing a range of social skills needed by adolescents, consisting of eight checklists. Skills were tested on this instrument in a series of role-play situations. Instruments were found reliable and sensitive to pre/post changes in skills.

Purpose of this study was to compare 119 learning disabled adolescents' social skills performances on eight general social skills to performance of a group of sixty non-learning disabled adolescents (grades 10-12) and a group of 57 court-adjudicated juvenile delinquents referred for social skills training. Social skills were tested individually in role-playing situations. Results showed that non-learning disabled youths performed significantly better than the other two groups on seven of eight skills. Learning disabled youths performed slightly better than juvenile delinquent's on six skills but significantly better than juvenile delinquent youths on only one skill: resisting peer pressure. A discriminant analysis demonstrated that the learning disabled group in this study could be correctly classified by social skills half of the time and was heterogenous in regard to social skills.

Teaching learning disabled youths with skills deficits important social skills could increase their chances for successful interpersonal interactions and decrease likelihood of using inappropriate behavior to obtain desired rewards.

6. A Comparison of Social Skills in Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Adolescent Girls Using a Behavioral Role-Playing Inventory.  
Lisa R. Gaffney and Richard M. McFall  
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1981, vol. 49, no. 6, 959-67

Delinquent behavior in adolescent girls may be related to deficits in social skills, i.e., lack skills to perform more competently. The Problem Inventory for Adolescent Girls (PIAG) was developed to measure competence in social situations. Study compared performance of carefully matched groups of delinquent and non-delinquent girls on the inventory.

Social Learning theory suggests that delinquent behavior is acquired the same way as other behaviors - through modeling and differential reinforcement and can manipulate reinforcement consequences of existing behavior or teach new skills (see Meichenbaum, Bowers & Ross, 1968; Sanson-Fisher, Seymour, Montgomery & Stokes, 1979; Tyler & Brown, 1968). Social learning theorists taking a skills approach have taught new response system to teens. Freedman developed the Adolescent Problem Inventory (API) to determine skill deficiencies. The API is a 44 item assessment instrument to measure social competence among adolescent boys, with an item-specific criterion referenced manual to evaluate competence in problem situations. Delinquent boys have been found less competent than non-delinquent boys in solving problem situations (Freedman et al, 1978).

Present study examines relationship between social competence and delinquency among adolescent girls. PIAG provides individual assessment of strengths and weaknesses in interpersonal situations. Subjects were 29 randomly selected adjudicated delinquents and 29 matched non-delinquent adolescent girls. Subjects responded to 52 items with solutions or words, and these were scored by raters.

#### Results

A significant difference was found between delinquent and non-delinquent groups in overall performance on PIAG with delinquents more incompetent than competent. Delinquents differed significantly on 4 of the 52 items ( $p < .05$ ). Data suggests that delinquent adolescent girls tend to be more deficient in relationships with adult authority figures than peer interactions, but are less competent with peers than are non-delinquents. Some independent measures supported the external validity of PIAG while others did not. No clustering patterns were found for items. PIAG correctly classified 85 percent of the subjects as delinquent or non-delinquent.

Freedman et al (1978) suggest that the probability that a teen will be classified as a delinquent increases as a function of three factors:

1. extent to which teen lacks skills to deal with everyday problems.
  2. frequency with which teen encounters such problems.
  3. extent to which incompetent solutions take forms of illegal behavior.
7. A Social Behavioral Analysis of Skill Deficits in Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Adolescent Boys.  
Barbara J. Freedman; Lisa Rosenthal; Clyde P. Donahue, Jr.; David G. Schlundt; Richard M. McFall  
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1978, vol. 46(6), pp. 1448-1462

Delinquent behavior viewed as a manifestation of situation-specific social-behavioral deficits. In phase 1 of the research, a measure consisting of 44 behavioral role-playing and problem-solving items - the Adolescent Problems Inventory (API)-was developed along with item-specific criterion-referenced rater's manual. Identified strengths and weaknesses in personal and interpersonal skills repertoires of adolescent boys. Phase 2 was concerned with validation of API. Initial study: API responses of institutionalized delinquent boys rated as less competent than 2 non-delinquent groups of teenage boys from public high schools. Inventory shown to be reliable, items did not cluster, had strong discriminating power. Second validation study compared API responses of institutionalized delinquent boys with frequent behavioral problems and those with few behavioral problems within the institution. Former group was judged to respond less skillfully. Third validation study replicated previous group differences between delinquents and matched non-delinquents, and showed that type of directions given and test format affected performance.

McFall (1976) found that some individuals behave maladaptively because they lack requisite skills to do better. Skill deficit conception of deviance reflected in experiential skills training programs with non-assertive college students (McFall and Twentyman 1973), shy males (Twentyman and McFall 1975), alcoholics (Sobell and Sobell 1973) and male adolescent delinquents (Sarason and Ganzer, 1971). Inadequate evaluation of skills training programs and types of client skill deficiencies noted. Need taxonomy of particular problem situations and skill deficits characteristic of particular populations to guide treatment. Hypothesis: adjudicated male delinquents would show situation-specific skill

deficits when performance compared to matched non-delinquent boys. Phase 1 involved development of 44 problem situations differentiating skills and criteria for evaluating competence (API). Second phase was concerned with validating the instrument by its ability to differentiate. Compared responses of institutionalized delinquents, non-delinquent peers (good citizens) and non-delinquent adolescent leaders; and compared responses of institutionalized delinquents with and without behavioral problems in the institution.

## Results

Leaders significantly outperformed good citizens on 7 out of 44 items and good citizens performed significantly better overall than delinquents on 42 of 44 items, even when controlling for IQ. Discriminant analysis was 89 percent correct when used to classify subjects in derivation sample and 100 percent in identifying delinquents. Low disruptive delinquents had significantly higher total scores on API than did high disruptive delinquents (matched on age and socio-economic status; significant differences on IQ but negligible relationship found between IQ and performance on API). Differences were found when test instructions were altered.

Summary: API could differentiate between delinquents and non-delinquents, shown to be reliable, to lack any interpretable item structure, and to be an unusually strong predictor of subjects' group membership. Differences were also found among group of delinquents. Instructions affected (improved) API performance. Wide array of skill deficits may be related to delinquent behavior. Systematic assessment of type and extent of skill deficits can guide treatment programs.

8. Assessing Social Skills: The Use of Adolescent Problems Inventory (API) in Washington State  
David R. Guthmann and John C. Steiger  
Olympia, WA Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation, April 1984

The use of social skills training has increased dramatically in Washington since 1983 in detention centers, institutions and probation units. The API (Freedman et al, 1978) was selected as the best available instrument for measuring social skills abilities.

Delinquency may result from insufficient interaction skills, suggesting the need for social skills training for youths behaving in a maladaptive manner. Past studies showed that youths in social skills training had fewer reoffenses than comparison group (Collingswood and Genther, 1980) and scored significantly higher on a number of behavioral indicators (Ollendick and Hersen, 1979). However, no rigorous research evaluations have validated the effectiveness of SST with juvenile offenders.

The API was developed and validated to discriminate between delinquent and non-delinquent populations as predicted by social skills. The Problem Inventory for Adolescent girls (PIAG) was developed specifically for girls (Gaffney and McFall, 1981). A scoring system awards points for competent responses to survey items dealing with problem situations. DJR found that some items on the PIAG did not distinguish adequately. Scoring procedure was adjusted and normalized to indicate not only the degree of skill or lack of skill but also the specific skill areas of deficiency, making this a useful diagnostic and evaluative tool. Subscales were established to indicate five skill categories: interaction with peers, with opposite sex peers, with family, staying out of trouble and school and/or work relations.

The API is currently being administered as a pre-test in several evaluation sites in Washington where social skills training is provided. Samples consisted of a normal population, an alternative school population, an offender school population and a probation population. Especially low scores are indicated for the alternative school settings, especially on school-related skills (for males) and interaction with family (females).

Three DJR projects now administer the API to clients upon entry and after training. Caution should be taken since evidence is not yet available on predictive validity of the API (are results related to future behavior?), on relationship of items on the API and actual material taught in SST, and the nature of social skills and their relationship to delinquency. Non-delinquents generally have greater social skills than delinquents but there are contradictory cases, and other factors may be more influential in preventing reoffenses. Social skills may be an important antecedent to involvement, attachment and commitment. Social skills training can be a valuable tool in prevention in this context. May also be offered as treatment, motivating youth to choose non-delinquent alternatives by providing necessary skills. This may only be effective if youth is attached, committed, and involved. DJR will examine the relationship between social skills and delinquency, controlling for level of involvement and attachment, to assess the independent impact of SST.

## C. Program Evaluations and Results

### 1. Delinquency and reoffense outcomes

- a. Social Skills Training for Juvenile Delinquents  
Thomas H. Ollendick and Michel Hersen  
Behavioral Resident & Therapy, 17, pp. 547-554, 1979

Absence of interpersonal skills and high recidivism rate noted for externally oriented delinquents (Ollendick and Elliot, 1978). Several studies have shown the effectiveness of social skills training for unassertive college students, withdrawn children and chronic psychiatric patients.

Subjects of this study were 12 black and 15 white male adolescents, adjudicated delinquent and incarcerated, selected on the basis of external scores on Locus of Control scale. Matched subjects were randomly assigned to Social Skills, Discussion and control groups. Treatment facility utilized fixed token economy and behavioral contracting system.

Social skills training was conducted in group sessions by a male psychologist and co-therapist, once per week for ten weeks. Group dealt with interpersonal problems through role-play and discussion. Social skills package taught alternate ways of responding. Treatment involved rehearsal, modeling, feedback, social reinforcements, and practice. Subjects in the Discussion group met for group sessions with eclectic orientation to discuss problems and ways to deal with them. Control group subjects involved in usual treatment program only. Assessment instruments included Locus of Control scale, role-play responses and program behavior (points earned and acting out). Role-play behaviors video taped, rated and scored on non-verbal behavior, negative content and positive content.

#### Results

Analysis of variance for difference scores indicated that the social skills group improved significantly more than the Discussion and Control groups, which did not differ from one another, on a number of measures. While measures such as incidence of disruptive behavior did not show significant changes, the mean difference scores favored the social skills group in all but one case. Appropriate interpersonal skills were learned, internal Locus of Control was increased, and significant shifts in adjustment to the institutional program were evidenced for the Social Skills group. Authors suggest the effects of social skills training generalized to more global measures, and that Social Skills Training is superior to structured discussion approach. Present study does not report on long-term effectiveness of Social Skills Training.

- b. Skills Training as Treatment for Juvenile Delinquents  
Thomas R. Collingwood and Robert W. Genthner  
Professional Psychology Vol. 11 No. 4, August 1980  
pp. 591-598

Viewing skills deficits as parameters of juvenile offender disfunctioning and skills training as treatment is a new rehabilitation strategy. Data from a police diversion project indicate that levels of certain physical, emotional and intellectual skills are related to juvenile offender recidivism. The results of skills training for both juvenile offenders and their parents are presented and implications discussed.

Past treatment programs often focused on casework rather than specific skills training, and few programs proved effective (Romig, 1978; Gibbons and Blake, 1976). The most effective programs appeared to be those which focused on skills and skills deficits (Romig, 1978). Carkhuff (1971) formulated the Human Resources Development (HRD) model based on training of specific skills deficits. Carkhuff (1973) compared outstanding, non-delinquent and delinquent youths and found that the first group were highest and delinquent group lowest in living, learning and working skills. Incarcerated youth trained in these skills had reduced recidivism and runaway-outcomes (Carkhuff, 1974). Similar positive outcomes have been demonstrated for troubled youths and adult offenders in other studies (Collingswood, Devine and Bellingham, 1978).

Youth Services Program treats middle-range youths in 3-stage process over 6 months.

1. intake assessment of physical, intellectual and emotional functioning.
2. direct treatment (16 hours of skills training in group over a month. Parents trained in monitoring child's activities and implementing behavioral contracts to reach goals).
3. follow-up phase (homework or contracts to apply skills to critical areas e.g., following limits at home, school attendance and grades).

Study analyzed data on first 1,140 youths referred. Sample included 887 who completed training, 253 who were referred but did not participate (not a strict control group, no random design). Both groups equivalent on sex, age and prior record.

Youths who completed the program were compared with the comparison group on percentage rearrested, average number of repeat offenses, type of repeat offense, and percentage rearrested with petitions filed in juvenile court. Youth Services Program groups had significantly fewer recidivist youths (24.3% vs. 42.7%),  $t(1,138) = 5.3$   $p < .001$ . The overall recidivism rate for all arrested juveniles was 50-55%, and total Youth Services Program recidivism rate was 24.3% (13.7% while in program, 10.6% after program). Youth Services Program group had significantly fewer repeat offenses than did comparison group  $t(1,138) = 4.16$ ,  $p < .001$ . Means were 1.6 and 2.3. Youth Services Program had significantly more of the less severe offenses (67.4% vs. 44%). Youth Services Program group less likely to be arrested; if they were, committed fewer and less severe crimes and less likely to have court action taken.

Major analysis was done on relationship of skill and application factors to recidivism. Rated on functioning at home, school and free time, based on observations and input from teachers, parents, etc. Youths rated after completion of training demonstrated significant improvement in all areas. Youth Services Program non-recidivists were rated significantly higher on all dimensions of skill levels and application than Youth Services Program recidivists, except for free time. No significant differences found for sex, age or referral offense, with slightly more blacks and those with prior records repeating more often. Skills, prior record and race were significant discriminators between recidivists and non-recidivists.

- c. Egocentrism and Antisocial Behavior: The Assessment and Training of Social Perspective - Taking Skills  
Michael J. Chandler  
Developmental Psychology 9(3), 326-332, Nov. 1973

Study measured and attempted to remediate deficits in role-taking skills of 45 chronically delinquent boys, to explore role of persistent social egocentrism in antisocial behavior. Studies have explored relationship between delays in acquisition of social cooperation/competence skills and social deviation (Chandler, 1972; Feffer, 1970; Martin, 1968...). This study compared role-taking skills in groups of 45 chronically delinquent boys as compared to 45 non-delinquents (ages 11-13), developed a program of remedial training in deficit role-taking skills and evaluated effectiveness of this training on delinquent behavior. One third of the delinquents were randomly assigned to the experimental program in remedial training, 1/3 to placebo and 1/3 to control conditions.

Subjects were administered a vocabulary test and a measure of egocentrism using cartoon sequences which were interpreted. The study consisted of individual assessment of 90 subjects, 10 week intervention with delinquent subjects, and post-intervention assessment 18 months later. The intervention involved drama and video films to promote empathy and provide remedial training in deficient role-taking skills. Half of the experimental subjects were enrolled in a placebo group which did not receive these specific skills. Follow-up consisted of a review of police and court records.

#### Results

Delinquent and non-delinquent subjects initially demonstrated statistically significant differences in the level of their role-taking skills. Non-delinquents were easily able to adopt role or perspectives of others, while delinquents had difficulty differentiating own point of view from others. Differences continued even after controlling for I.Q.



## Post Intervention Assessment

Experimental training subjects improved significantly more in role-taking ability than placebo and control groups, while the placebo and control groups did not differ significantly from each other. Follow-up (complete data available only on 33 of 45 subjects) subjects of all 3 treatment groups committed somewhat fewer offenses during follow-up period, but this difference was most striking for the experimental training group. Although improvements in these skills were associated with reductions in post-intervention delinquency, it is not clear that a causal connection exists and it is not known whether findings can be generalized to other populations. Author concludes that this approach suggests promising diagnostic and intervention strategies.

- d. Social Skills Training with Adolescent Male Offenders-II. Short-Term, Long-Term and Generalized Effects.  
Susan H. Spence and John S. Marziller  
Behavioral Resistant and Therapy, Vol. 19, pp. 349-368, 1981

Social Skills Training (SST) is a therapeutic package consisting of modeling, role-playing, feedback, social reinforcement and task assignment, which aims to teach a range of social and interpersonal skills. Short-term effectiveness has generally been supported in research studies of various populations, but longer term benefits have not yet been established. Studies suggest that young male offenders are generally deficient in terms of social and interpersonal skills (Spence, 1980; Freedman et al, 1978). There have been relatively few studies on benefits of SST on adolescent offenders. Short-term positive effects found within an artificial setting (Maloney et al, 1976; Braukmann et al, 1973, 1974; Kifer et al, 1974; Werner et al, 1975) Not known whether 1) SST can produce specific changes in social behavior of delinquents, 2) changes can be attributable to SST, 3) effects are lasting and generalizable 4) there are general benefits for delinquents, 5) these outcomes will prevent reoffenses, 6) they will enhance social adjustment.

Subjects were 76 adolescent male offenders ages 10-16 demonstrating interpersonal skills deficits according to an assessment (staff questionnaire, self-report questionnaire, direct behavioral observation, and cognitive changes). Subjects were randomly selected to one of three groups: 32 to SST group, 20 to attention placebo group (APC) and 24 to no treatment control (NTC). Groups were similar in number of prior offenses, age, self reported problems, and social skill ratings. SST group received 12 one-hour sessions over a six-week period in small groups, involving use of instructions, discussion, modeling, role-playing, feedback, reinforcement and homework tasks. Program taught simple and complex

interaction skills. APC group received equivalent level of trainer contact not involving interpersonal skills and NTC group received assessment and normal treatment. Involved group design and single case multiple designs across behaviors to measure four specific target skills.

Social skills training resulted in improvements in some but not all six skills, which were maintained at 3 month follow-up. Social skills training found to be significantly superior to APC and NTC on performance of basic skills at post test. Social skills training questionnaires indicated less decline in social behavior over time among social skills training group but effect was short lived. Self-report questionnaire indicated decrease in total number of problems, and improved self perceived social competence for Social skills training and APC, continuing at a slower rate at follow-up. Little change on ratings of video taped interviews, self-report offenses, police convictions, or social work ratings for family, school or social relationships.

These changes were assessed in an artificial environment. Study failed to show generalized changes in social skills. Study does not support lasting and significant improvements in everyday competency from social skills training. Social skills training may be of value only when combined with other interventions or as a preventive intervention.

## 2. Other Outcomes

- a. A Psycho-Educational Therapy Program for Delinquent Boys: An Evaluation Report  
Judy Garber, Jack T. Tapp, Michael Dunbar, Steven K. Tulkin, and Kathy Jens

Training delinquents in interpersonal skill development has met with success but criticisms of this method include lack of practice in applying skills in the real world, labeling, negative peer alliances from isolating delinquents, and absence of criteria for making appropriate choices in new situations. This program was designed to overcome these shortcomings by allowing participants to practice skills in the community and to bring their friends to the group meetings. Consisted of 10-week training course in human behavior including Transactional Analysis. Participation mandatory or else sentencing would take place. Theory was integrated into life situations and personal experiences. Subjects were 20 males ages 15-24 placed on probation for first offense with no previous psychotherapy. Matched subject design, with controls (n=10) receiving usual interventions.

Outcome variables included Tennessee Self Concept Scale, Personal Orientation Inventory (values and behavior), Self-Disclosure Questionnaire, and Relationship Inventory.

Means and standard deviations on pre-test and post-test measures analyzed using t-test, one-tailed test. No significant differences were found at pre-test. Significant differences found at post-test on 3 of 22 Tennessee self-concept measures (higher scores for program participants on self-identity, self-satisfaction, description of self behavior, and self-concept) and on Personal Orientation Inventory (significant difference on 4 of 14 variables with experimentals scoring higher on time competence, inner-directedness and self-acceptance). No significant differences on Self-Disclosure Scale for subjects or their parents, or on Relationship Inventory. Significant increases found for Experimental group youths but not Comparison group youths from pre to Post-test.

Program appeared to improve sense of personal worth, feelings of adequacy, self-concept, and self-evaluation. Intervention was specific to appraisal of personal worth and did not impact other dimensions. No changes in quality of relationship with parent demonstrated. Did not control for Hawthorne effect but program more effective than occasional meeting with probation officers (control condition).

- b. Behavioral Intervention in Public Schools: Implementing and Evaluating A Model  
James Filipczak and John S. Wodarski  
Corrective and Social Psychiatry 1979 25(2) pp. 104-113

Describes PREP Project (Preparation through Responsive Education Programs) that tried to make public school education more responsive to the needs of disruptive and skill deficient students. PREP was implemented in 3 school settings (suburban, rural and urban). Students were identified by academic and/or social problems and volunteered to participate (60-120 experimentals per year plus control group).

Program components included academic training, social or interpersonal skill training, family liaison and skills training, and teacher/staff training. Small group instruction is individually paced, with teacher reinforcement and clear classroom rules. Social skills focuses on appropriate verbal and non-verbal behavior, small group interaction and leadership, personal behavior management, following instructions, test-taking, family processes and interactions, career preparation and practical skills training, and rights and responsibilities. Appropriate behavior is rewarded and inappropriate behavior ignored or eliminated. Parent training and behavior management programs provided for parents.

Evaluation includes criterion-referenced selection procedures, grades, suspensions, attendances, discipline referrals, and achievement tests. Follow up includes one-year assessment and four-year follow-up of student experiences and performance.

Significant increases initially found for PREP students on academic skills though these were not maintained across all years. In rural program, significant differences were found year one favoring PREP students in grades and attendance but not suspensions. In urban site, PREP was unable to implement its research design due to a number of problems the first year. In year two, a greater number of control students were retained in grade level than PREP students and reduced suspensions were shown for PREP students while increases were shown among control group. Highly favorable outcomes were found at both sites in social behavior areas measured by suspensions, citizenship ratings and teacher ratings, while overall outcome for grades was mixed.

- c. Application of a Group Training Program in Social Skills and Problem Solving to Learning Disabled and Non-Learning Disabled Youth  
J. Stephen Hazel, Jean Bragg Schumaker, James A. Sherman and Jan Sheldon  
Learning Disability Quarterly, Vol. 5, Fall 1982, pp.398-407

Learning disabled (LD) youths frequently have poor psychosocial skills. The efficacy of training learning disabled adolescents in social and problem solving skills was evaluated by conducting a group skill training program with three sets of youths (7 each): non-learning disabled adolescents attending an alternative high school, non-learning disabled youths attending the same high school, and court-adjudicated youths on probation. The 6 skills taught included giving positive feedback, giving negative feedback, accepting negative feedback, resisting peer pressure, negotiation and problem solving in social situations. Training procedures consisted of skill explanation, rationales, modeling and behavioral rehearsal with feedback.

Skills were trained over a ten week period in a multiple baseline design across skills. Skill performance was assessed through behavioral role-play testing using novel, non-practiced situations. All three groups of subjects showed increased skill levels following training and could generalize use of skills to novel situations. Learning disabled adolescents demonstrated only a slight gain on cognitive problem-solving skills when compared to other subjects.

Similarity of the three groups' pretraining skills levels indicates that LD youths may not have special skill deficits beyond those of other youths experiencing adjustment problems. Low social skills may be one factor in being labeled troublesome. Specific discriminator of LD may be related more to cognitive processing deficits than social skills deficits.

- d. Group Training in Problem Solving Skills and Group Counseling: A Study Comparing Two Treatment Approaches with Adolescent Probationers  
S. H. Klarreich  
Corrective and Social Psych, 22 (1), 1981, pp.1-13

Group counseling is a widely used approach in the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders on probation. However, in spite of positive findings, there has arisen controversy as to its effectiveness. Examines efficacy of a more specific approach to counseling where the objective is to train probationers for particular skills, and compares this approach to an unstructured, non-directive existential method of group counseling. Program involves group problem solving training to facilitate conflict resolution and promote positive self concept, competence, independence and confidence.

Subjects include 60 male adolescent offenders ages 16-19 on probation who volunteered to participate, meeting specific criteria in terms of age, sex and no previous psychotherapy. Subjects were randomly assigned to two sub-groups in either group training in problem solving skills, group counseling or the no-treatment control group. Pre, post and follow-up assessments completed. Six week skills training program was based on research by Parnes (1967) and D'Zurilla and Gold-friend (1971). Measures included self-concept, and behavior analysis (interpersonal and problem solving).

#### Results

One-way analysis of covariance yielded no significant F-ratios. Group training in Problem Solving Skills brought out significantly greater increase in self satisfaction than other two groups, but less favorable results for skills group in wanted affected and wanted inclusion scale. Greater percentage of high and good responses for skills group on progress checklist, greater positive change score based on open ended questionnaire data. Results were not overwhelmingly significant though consistent trends were noted. Increases found in self-satisfaction, but not other self concept variables, gains made for counseling group on expressed affection and wanted affection scores. Skill group showed gains in wanted inclusion group; and significant relationship on perception of change as measured by questionnaire.

Skills training had slightly greater impact than the group counseling group but not enough to justify its greater effectiveness. Recommendations for future research include study separating out subjects by level of disturbance, measure of extent to which subjects respond in socially desirable directions, similarity between those responding favorably to the 2 treatments, and usefulness of assessment tests for detecting behavioral change.

- e. Use of Videotaped Models to Improve the Interpersonal Adjustment of Delinquents  
Mark H. Thelen, Richard A. Fry, Stephen J. Dollinger and Stephen C. Paul  
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 1976, 44(3), 492

Little research has been done on applying modeling principles to treatment of juvenile delinquent's (Sarason and Ganzer, 1973). Present study designed to assess feasibility and effectiveness of using videotaped models plus role play to improve inter-personal adjustment of delinquents in a group home. Major focus was day-to-day interpersonal behavior. Subjects were 8 males residents ages 12-16; 6 randomly assigned to view modeling tapes and 2 viewed control tapes. After viewing video tapes of problematic situations in home and school settings, subjects played model's part while controls observed lecture tapes emphasizing corresponding social skills.

In multiple baseline design, during all phases behavior ratings were made by staff and teachers. Most modeling subjects had better home adjustment ratings during home tapes phase than during baseline, but improvement was not maintained during school tapes and follow-up. Control students showed no trend in home adjustment, and school ratings for all subjects showed fluctuations unrelated to experimental phases. Although improved home adjustment corresponding to home modeling tapes is encouraging, improvement was not maintained. Suggests more staff participation in positive reinforcements for improved interpersonal behavior.

- f. Training Predelinquent Youths and their Parents to Negotiate Conflict Situations  
Robert E. Kifer, Martha A. Lewis, Donald K. Green and Elery L. Phillips  
Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 1974, 7(3), 357-364

Many youths make inappropriate responses to conflict situations that bring them into contact with courts, etc. Negotiation is more likely to produce acceptable consequences. Two approaches are arbitration or mediation (behavior contracting)

and modification of communication processes (verbal instructions, practice and feedback). Procedures in this study emphasized learning new adaptive behaviors and were primarily educational. Training was designed to teach one skill to enable clients to resolve own conflicts. Purpose was to determine if negotiation skills could be taught to youths and their parents, the effect on mutually agreeable solutions, and the extent to which skills would generalize to real conflicts at home.

Subjects were 2 mother-daughter pairs and 1 father-son pair. Youths (13,16,17) had at least one juvenile court contact. Study involved a home observation, classroom sessions and post home observation. Classroom session consisted of pre-session simulation with role play, discussion and practice, and post-session simulation. Response classes were measured: negotiation behaviors (complete communication, issue identification, suggestion of options) and agreements (compliant or negotiated). Subjects trained in use of three negotiation behaviors through instruction, practice and feedback. Multiple baseline design across subject pairs used to evaluate effects in occurrence of negotiation and number and types of agreements.

#### Results

All three subject pairs substantially increased their use of negotiation behaviors over baseline. These skills generalized in home situations, after subjects were informed of termination criterion. Lack of untreated control group prevents conclusion that improvements were due to training.

- g. Behavioral Training of Social Skills in Shy Males  
Craig T. Twentyman and Richard M. McFall  
1975 Journal Consulting Psychology 4, 364-375

#### Abstract only:

A group of college males who reported themselves as unable to interact with women were contacted and asked to record every interaction for a week. A series of behavioral tests were then given. When compared to a group of confident subjects, shy subjects interacted with fewer women, in fewer situations, for less time outside of the laboratory. In laboratory test situations, shy subjects rated themselves and were rated by observers as being more anxious. Pulse rate was monitored during the behavioral testing. Confident subjects had significantly less pulse rate change during the test situations. After pre-testing shy subjects were randomly assigned to either an assessment control group or an analogue treatment group, with treatment consisting of 3 sessions of behavior rehearsal, modeling and coaching. On post-testing, subjects

who had received treatment showed less physiological responsivity to the testing stimuli, reported less anxiety, and were rated as being more skillful in the test situations. Behavioral diaries revealed that following treatment subjects who received training changed more than controls on several measures of frequency and duration of interactions with women.

- h. Rehabilitation Counseling - A Decisive Approach - Special Skills Training Needed  
William A. Anthony, Adela Margeles and T. R. Collingwood  
Journal of Rehabilitation May/June 1974, 40(3) 18-20

Disability defined as a deficiency in skilled performance in physical, emotional or intellectual area. Goal of rehabilitation is to extend, enlarge or facilitate repertoire of skilled performance. Rehabilitation counselors may include but should not be limited to counseling and coordination, and have recently begun to focus on interpersonal skills training, problem solving, program development and career development.

- i. Role-Play Tests for Assessing Social Skills: Are They Valid?  
Alan S. Bellack, Michel Hersen and Samuel M. Turner  
Behavior Therapy 9, 448-461, 1978

Abstract only

Two studies were conducted to examine the validity of role-play tests of social skills. Subjects were psychiatric patients. Experiment 1 examined relationship between specific response components on the Behavioral Assertiveness Test-Revised (BAT-R) and mental health experts' judgements. Regression patterns for positive and negative assertion responses differed substantially. Experiment 2 examined the correspondence between responses on the BAT-R scores as well as structured interviews and treatment groups. Component responses were highly correlated across BAT-R scores. However, responses on the BAT-R were not related to responses in the other 2 situations. In contrast, responses in the other 2 situations were highly intercorrelated.