

Practical Assessment & Treatment Methods for Prosocial Reasoning for Probation Youth FMHAC, 3-19-15



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- **Formerly Associate Clinical Professor at UC Davis School of Medicine, and Biostatistician and Lecturer at UC Berkeley**
- **Thirty years of clinical practice with low income children/teens**
- **30 published articles and books, primarily child/adolescent and evaluation topics**

Contact Information and Bibliography

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- Available at: norbertralph.com
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Presentation Learning Objectives and Outline

- **OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Identify methods to assess prosocial reasoning in youth.
- 2. Identify research regarding relation of prosocial reasoning levels & criminal behaviors.
- 3. Identify interventions to increase prosocial reasoning in youth.

- **OUTLINE**

- 1. Prosocial developmental theories & practical assessment instruments.
- 2. Prosocial practical treatment models.
- 3. Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes (PRO)/ assessment instrument.
- 4. Being a Pro/ treatment model.

- **QUALIFICATIONS/LIMITATIONS:**

- Research on adolescent males mainly.
- The assessment and treatment methods here may require supervised training &/or certification.
- Beautiful Baby Effect: Every parent thinks their baby is the most beautiful in the world, and the same for every author of research. Use the caution for author's research presented below.

An illustration of four stylized human figures of diverse ethnicities and ages, all with their arms raised in a gesture of joy or celebration. From left to right: a person with dark skin wearing a pink shirt with a sun emblem and blue pants; a person with light skin wearing a yellow dress; a person with light skin wearing an orange shirt and blue pants; and a person with grey hair wearing a yellow-green shirt and green shorts. The background is white with a blue wavy border at the top.

Prosocial Developmental Theories & Assessment Instruments

Models of Prosocial Develop in Adolescence

- Can't have treatment for probation youth w/out theory of how adolescents develop prosocially.
- Adolescence is a key period in the development of prosocial thinking.
- Developmental & social learning writers developed models from child development and neuropsychology.
- Many models shared characteristics including developmental stages, increased complexity, and description of the transformation from child to adult thinking.
- Includes Piaget, Luria, Kohlberg, Peck & Havighurst, Wm. Perry, Loevinger, and Roberts.

Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

- Piaget hypothesized two stages of moral development
- Heteronomous morality
- Autonomous reality

The Psychology of Character Development, Peck & Havighurst

- R. F. Peck and R. J. Havighurst, research with 120 children in the Midwest started in 1940's. Tests included projective and sentence completion, and family/school observation/interviews. They found five types of moral behavior:
- Amoral, when you seek only direct personal gratification,
- Expedient, when moral behavior occurs because you perceive some consequent advantage,
- Conforming, when all that matters is not to stand out from the crowd,
- Irrational-conscientious, when you have accepted some moral code and stand by it,
- Rational-altruistic, when you are concerned for the welfare of others and take proper measures to achieve it.

Sullivan, Grant & Grant 's Levels

- Sullivan, Grant & Grant (1958) proposed four levels of interpersonal maturity and interpersonal integration: Impulsive, Conformist, Conscientious, and Autonomous.
- Developed with probation youth in California using sentence completion instrument.

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning

- Three levels each w/ two stages (six stages total).
- Preconventional
- Conventional
- Postconventional

Loevinger and Hy's Levels of Ego Development (Practical)

- The Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT) uses sentence stems.
- It has valid and reliable methods for assessing ego levels, similar to Kohlberg's model.
- Has psychometric advantages, and can readily be administered.
- Is a practical tool for clinical work and we use at SF juv hall.
- The most frequent stage for younger teens is the Self-Protective level, and for older teens, the Conformist level (Westenberg & Gjerde, 1999).
- Ralph's (forthcoming) research with the WUSCT shows most probation teens are at Impulsive or Self-Protective level, and most non-delinquent teens are at a Conformist or Self-Aware levels.

Loevinger and Hy's Levels of Ego Development

Name	Level	Impulse Control	Interpersonal Mode	Conscious Preoccupation
Impulsive	2	Impulsive	Egocentric, dependent	Bodily feelings, gratification
Self-Protective	3	Opportunistic	Manipulative, wary	“Trouble”, power, control
Conformist	4	Respect for rules	Cooperative, loyal	Appearances, behavior
Self-Aware	5	Exceptions allowable	Helpful, self-aware	Feelings, problems, adjustment

Note: Adapted from Loevinger (1976, 1987).

Loevinger and Hy's Levels of Ego Development: Examples

- Uses sentence stems which teens complete, and ego levels can be measured. Stems like:
- Impulsive responses: Rules are...
 - always broken.
 - never followed.
- Self protective responses: Rules are...
 - stupid at times.
 - senseless.
- Conformist responses: Rules are...
 - not to be broken.
 - for your safety.

Roberts 2 (Practical)

- Roberts 2 is TAT-type, story-telling test. Youth tells stories about set of cards.
- Can be administered and scored in 1 hour, used at Juv Hall in SF.
- Study by Dr. Ralph with the Roberts 2, with N=198, with probation, and ethnic/age matched outpatient guidance clinic, and “normative” (non-probation) groups.
- Probation youth average 4 years behind in problem analysis and resolution skills compared to “normative” groups.

Roberts 2 Research and Social Skills

- **Non-probation youth are more likely to use Level 4 Problem Analysis, and Level 4 Problem Resolution.**
- **Problem Identification 4, Definition (PID4):** Conflict or problem described with explanation of reasons for feelings and behavior. Description of the prior circumstances, and the internal process is elaborated.
- **Resolution 4, Process described resolution of feelings & situation (RES4):** Process is included and described in the constructive resolution of the problem situation. The related feelings are addressed and resolved.

Roberts 2 Research and Social Skills

- **Probation youth more likely to use Level 1 Problem Analysis, and Level 1 Problem Resolution.**
- **Problem Identification 1, Recognition (PID1):** Simple recognition of feeling or behavior without preceding factors. A problem is not really defined or articulated.
- **Resolution 1, Simple closure or easy outcome (RES1):** A simple, easy, elliptic resolution of the problem, no intervening steps. "They lived happily ever after", "Then everything is good", or "Then they were friends."

Evidence on Prosocial Reasoning Deficits

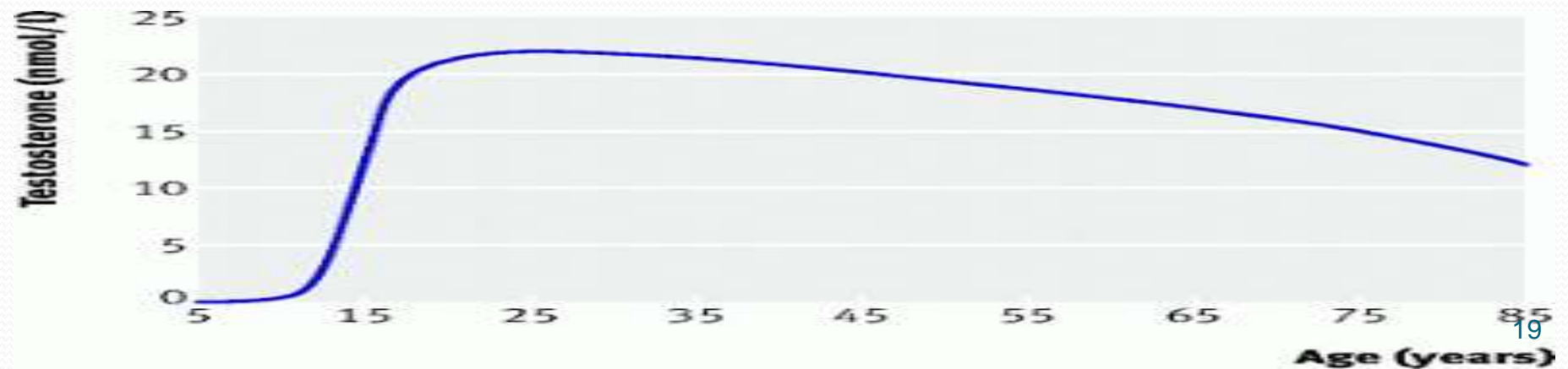
- Higher scores identified probation vs. "normative" sample correctly (using ROC curves):
 - 92% using Problem Identification
 - 88% correctly using Problem Resolution
 - Probation < Outpatients < Normative on measures
 - ROC very good. T4 levels ID thyroid disease correctly 86%, clinical signs ID strep correctly 79%
 - A small sample of JSO youth (N=10) were even lower than the general probation group

Sample Roberts 2 Picture



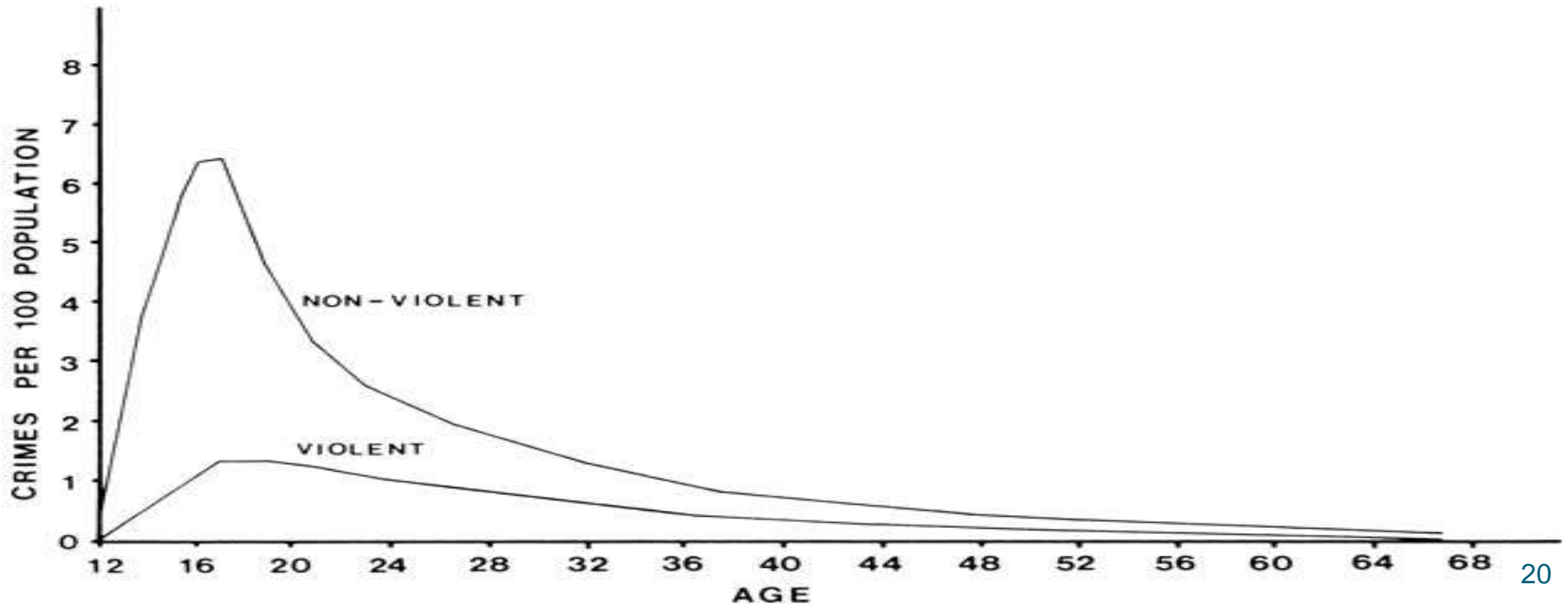
Adolescent Development

- Dr. Laurence Steinberg, in "The Age of Opportunity" describes adolescence as critical period for prosocial development.
- Important period of brain changes and plasticity relevant to the development of prosocial behavior.
- Increase in the drive or reward centers of the brain, risk taking in adolescents, and also a critical period of development of judgment and control centers of the brain which regulate behavior.
- The adolescent is simultaneously motivated to pursue rewarding activities, using more risky behaviors to accomplish it, while also waiting for controls over these behaviors to develop.
- The 18 y/o male is physically able to do more than 12 y/o, has adult physical abilities, has less supervision and social controls, is associating w/ a more risk-taking group of peers, who influence over them is stronger, & has higher testosterone levels.



Adolescent Development

- All these factors make adolescence a particularly vulnerable stage of life, both for developing risky behaviors but also prosocial ones. Part of this is reflected in the classic "Age-Crime Curve" (see Figure 1 below). Demonstrates that most crimes are committed by adolescents, but drop off rapidly in early adulthood when brain maturation has progressed especially regarding judgment in areas that apply the "brakes" to behavior.



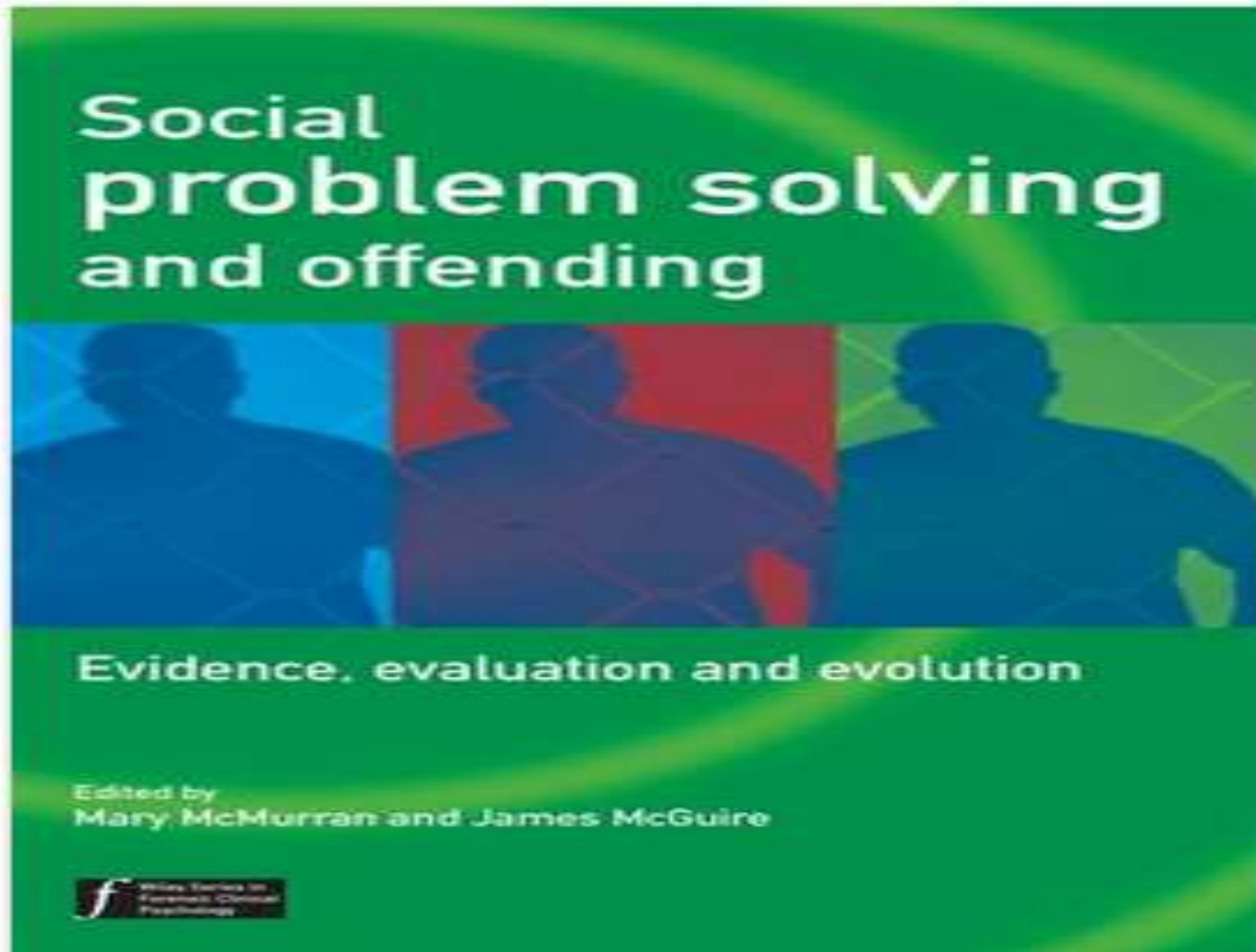
An illustration of four stylized human figures of diverse ethnicities and ages, standing with their arms raised in a gesture of celebration or triumph. From left to right: a person with dark skin wearing a pink t-shirt with a sun-like logo and blue pants; a person with light skin wearing a yellow dress; a person with light skin wearing an orange t-shirt and blue pants; and a person with dark skin wearing a light green t-shirt and green shorts. The background is white with a blue wavy border at the top.

Prosocial Treatment Models



Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program

Models of Adolescent Prosocial Development



Social Problem Solving and Offending, 2005

- "The evidence from a number of empirical studies presented ... indicates that there is a link between social problem solving and offending." (Pg. 1576)

"... a search of four decades of research literature on the relation between cognition and crime revealed a considerable body of empirical evidence that many offenders have experienced developmental delays in the acquisition of a number of cognitive skills that are essential to social adaptation." Ross (2004) has summarized these as follows:

- Impulsivity.
- Concrete thinking.
- Externality
- Conceptual rigidity.
- Interpersonal cognitive problem-solving skills.
- Egocentricity.
- Critical reasoning.
- Values.

Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R&R) Program

This research led Ross to develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted, manualized program for teaching these cognitive skills and values: R&R. The program combining best techniques from programs which reduced recidivism, and could teach social cognitive skills. It is: 35-session (70-hour) group program.

Major components of the **Reasoning and Rehabilitation** program (Ross & Ross, 1995):

- Self-control.
- Meta-cognition.
- Social skills.
- Interpersonal cognitive problem-solving skills.
- Creative thinking.
- Critical reasoning.
- Social perspective-taking.
- Values enhancement.
- Emotional management.
- Helper therapy.
- Overall good effectiveness & meta analysis (2008) showed 14% decrease in recidivism compared to controls. Factors effecting outcomes were whether therapists were adequately trained and implemented model with fidelity.



Moral Reconciliation Therapy

Moral Reconciliation Therapy (Practical)

- Developed in 1985 by Gregory Little, Ed.D., and Kenneth Robinson, Ed.D.
- Moral Reconciliation Therapy is an evidenced based therapy for promoting moral reasoning in forensic populations.
- The treatment program uses a workbook whose goal is to increase the level of moral reasoning w/ a 16-step system of chapter exercises done in group setting with manual.
- Developed initially for male adults in jail and prison.
- Based on view that a factor contributing to criminal behavior is deficits in moral reasoning and behavior.
- Based on Kohlberg's view of moral reasoning.
- More than 120 published reports have documented that MRT-treated offenders show significantly lower recidivism for periods as long as 20 years after treatment.
- Studies show MRT-treated offenders have rearrest & reincarceration rates 25% to 75% lower than expected.

MRT Effectiveness

- MRT with juveniles in several studies promoted higher moral reasoning levels.
 - Burnette, et al. (2004), "Participants showed significantly lower antisocial characteristics, significantly less problem areas, and significantly lower levels of the lowest stage of moral reasoning as a consequence of program participation." (pg. 5)
 - Ferguson and Wormith (2012) reviewed existing literature for adults and juveniles & concluded that MRT is effective in reducing recidivism across a variety of forensic population and age groups, including juveniles. Their summary of the literature notes that MRT participants recidivate at one third the rate of a comparison group of offenders.
 - But no "fidelity" measures or procedures for MRT except requires initial training/certification.



Aggression Replacement Training/ART

Aggression Replacement Training/ART (Practical)

ART is group based intervention (Goldstein, Glick, & Gibbs, 1998)

ART has three parts:

1. Skillstreaming, the Behavioral Component
 2. Anger Control, the Emotional Component
 3. Moral Reasoning, the Values Component
- Each part takes 10 sessions
 - Was chosen by State of California for juveniles on probation. Leader training required, fidelity monitoring, and outcome evaluation.
 - Requirements for fidelity and training issues not part of the original model, but added later.
 - Washington St. Policy Institute found: 1. high fidelity, best outcomes, 2. medium fidelity, still good outcomes, and 3. poor fidelity, worse outcomes.

Therapeutic Components of ART

- Modeled after social learning theory regarding how children actually learn moral behavior and uses these factors
- Meichenbaum and his model of anger management training
- Bandura and Ross, social learning theory
 - Authoritative figures role model desired behaviors, identification with role models
 - Verbal rehearsal of behaviors, practice behaviors in therapy setting & in real life settings
 - Peer group influence to change behavior in prosocial direction
- Uses Kohlberg's Moral Reasoning levels and goal is to increase moral reasoning level of probation youth
- Describes the behaviors and provides verbal model (thought is internalized speech-Luria)

Increasing Prosocial Reasoning

- Aggression Replacement Training is a prosocial reasoning model validated in numerous outcome studies for decreasing juvenile recidivism (Goldstein, Nensen, Daleflod, and Kalt, 2004).
- Related models are *Prepare Curriculum: Teaching Prosocial Competencies* (Goldstein, 1999) and *Thinking for a Change* developed by Bush, Glick, and Taymans (1997).
- Amendola and Oliver (2010) reported:
 - ART is a "Model Program" for the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the United Kingdom Home Office.
 - Classified as a "Promising Approach" by the United States Department of Education.
- Washington State found ART to be the most cost effective treatment for probation youth (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2004).

ART Studies w/ JSO Youth by Dr. Ralph

- **2009 Randomized Trial:** Randomized trial in 2010 with N=19, Showed improvement in JSO youth, w/ psychological functioning. Qualitative analysis confirmed finding. ART helped youth reduce emotional reactivity and make prosocial choices. Only ART randomized study.
- **2012 Replication:** The replication study with N=14 JSO youth, was conducted using ART again, in 2012 which had an intervention group only. Improvement after ART intervention on co-morbid psychiatric symptoms and prosocial reasoning, confirmed by focus group.
- **2006-2012 Longitudinal Study:** N=129. ART treatment w/ JSO youth, and was associated w/ 1/4 of risk of sexual acting out in program.
- Only studies of ART and JSO youth.

An illustration of four stylized human figures of diverse ethnicities and ages, shown from the waist up. They are all smiling and have their arms raised in a gesture of celebration or achievement. The figures are colored in shades of pink, yellow, orange, and light green. The background is white with a blue wavy border at the top.

Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes/PRO

Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes (Practical)

- Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes (PRO) is a new test under development.
- PRO is a test of prosocial reasoning using story vignettes and obtains subjects responses by interviewing them.
- Designed to be practical prosocial assessment instrument.

Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes: Dilemma

- Juan's Problem
- Juan is a 16-year-old whose parents left him at home for the weekend. His parents will check in with him by phone regularly. The parents told him he could go out with some male friends the parents knew and trusted, but no one else. Nobody could come in or over to the house. After his parents left for the weekend, a girl Juan likes called him. She heard his parents were gone for the weekend and said she was going to drop by at dinner time, just say "hi" and bring a pizza.

Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes Example 1

- Why would Juan tell her it's OK to come over?
- To hang out, probably to do stupid stuff, or have sex.
- How would he feel if he did this?
- Guilty.
- What might happen?
- He would get in trouble and his parents might not trust him.
- Why would Juan tell her it's not OK to come over?
- Because he doesn't want to get in trouble and knows it's the right thing to do.
- How would he feel then?
- He would feel proud of himself.
- What might happen then?
- I don't know.

Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes Example 2

- Why would Juan tell her it's OK to come over?
- Because it's probably the girl he likes and doesn't want to say no to her.
- How would he feel if he did this?
- He'd feel good because he's hanging out with a girl he likes and having pizza with her.
- What might happen?
- They might probably kiss.
- Why would Juan tell her it's not OK to come over?
- Because his parents gave him a specific rule and he doesn't want to disobey them.
- How would he feel then?
- He'd feel good because he didn't disobey his parents.
- What might happen then?
- His parents might trust him more and possibility that he might get a few more privileges than he already has.

Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes: Levels and Scoring

- 1 Concrete: Simplistic or concrete description of feelings, rules, motives, outcomes, or consequences. Perceiving and acting based on simple, stereotyped, or concrete conventional rules, roles, and expectations including peer group. Simple feeling or reactions (I'll get blamed, I fouled up, etc.). Simplistic resolution of problems or feelings (e.g., "He is happy", "OK now"). Gratification of impulses prominent, or being overwhelmed, or helpless.
- 2 Normative: Provides some context, contingencies, complexity, or alternatives. Perceiving and acting based on conventional rules, roles, and expectations of general society that are more than peer group values. Some description of ambivalence/tradeoffs of feelings, rules, motives, outcomes, or consequences. Not overwhelmed by impulses, situation or feelings. Simple prosocial concepts, rules, and lessons. Following rules may conflict with what you want.
- 3 Principled: Clear description of ambivalence, and alternatives, regarding feelings, rules, motives, outcomes, or consequences. Articulates concepts and/or steps regarding prosocial resolutions of problems and/or feelings. May include description of cost/benefit, or short and long term feelings and consequences. Prosocial principles may conflict with what others do or expect you to do.

Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes

- The **Prosocial Reasoning Outcomes** has characteristics you would expect from a developmental measure of prosocial reasoning:
- **Interrater Reliability:** Adequate.
- **Age Effect:** (older teens score higher).
- **Group Effect:** Differentiates between average, low risk, and also high risk clinical populations.
- **Treatment Effect:** Shows effects of: 1. a prosocial treatment (ART), and 2. also time in treatment.
- **Correlates:** With measures of psychiatric functioning: JSORRAT-II, GSI (total) score on SCL-90-R, and Total score Child Behavior Checklist.

Treatment Being a Pro



Being a Pro (Practical)

- A workbook to increase prosocial reasoning skills in general probation youth.
- Has Teen Workbook and Therapist Manual.
- Beta testing and outcome studies under way.
- Large body of research supports this approach using prosocial interventions, including ART and related models.
- The model is "beta" and in the processes of being validated.

Being a Pro- Inspired from...

- Biggest inspiration was both quantitative research and qualitative research conducted at Teen Triumph.
- Two focus groups with those youth two years apart.
 - Asked youth what they "got out of" 30 sessions of treatment with Aggression Replacement Training (ART).
 - **What helped:** Helped youth stop reacting impulsively, think through their options, and figure out how to make prosocial choices.
 - When they made those better choices, life was better for them, and they felt more in control.
 - When "better choices" worked better for them, they made "prosocial" the habit.

Being a Pro- Inspired from...

- Being a Pro tries to "distill" what was effective w/ ART model but "leaner", used more easily, "therapist friendly" based on how therapist function and develop, and still effective. A hypothesis being tested.
- Large body of theory & research including some by Dr. Ralph influenced Being a Pro.
- Research w/ PRO indicated that regarding prosocial reasoning you can: 1. Develop simple/understandable theory, 2. Can measure concepts & outcomes, 3. Can develop easy to implement & effective interventions , 4. Clinically useful, 5. And can be done "cheap". (I think so, anyway).

Desirable Features for Being a Pro

- Workbook based on developmental theory and theory of change relevant for probation youth.
- Targets key modifiable psychological criminogenic risk factor for recidivism: prosocial reasoning.
- Help to modify the therapeutic "narrative" towards focusing on developing prosocial skills and reasoning for the youth and living a prosocial life.
- Prosocial Model can be used as the general approach in therapy, along with alternative models.
- Has: 1. Outcome measures to validate model, & 2. Measures to assess fidelity to model. Both important w/ evidence based practice.

Being a Pro

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

Being a Pro

- The Prosocial model is more likely to lead to positive outcomes. Research shows this fits with how older teens and nondelinquent teens think.
- Prosocial means that all the parties are more likely to have mutually positive outcomes and not violate any rules or laws.
- STOP: Stop and think before acting.



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



- CHOICES: What are your choices?

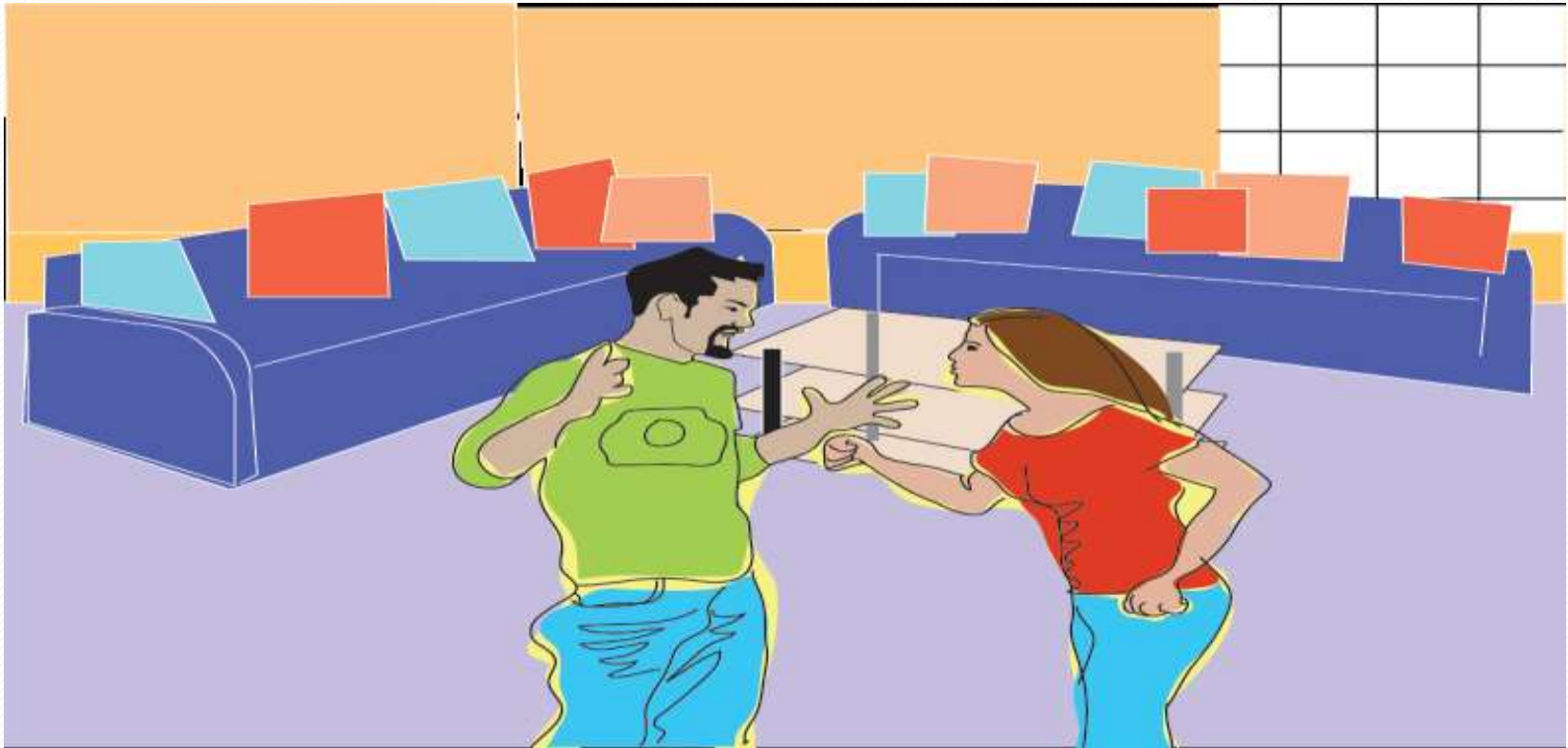


- REVIEW: Review the outcome, and look for improvements.

Example of Exercises

- WEEK 4: PROSOCIAL PROBLEMS
- Part 1: Thinking about a Prosocial Problem
- Story 4: Roger's Problem
- **Roger is a 16-year-old who found \$200 in an envelope with a name, address, and phone number on it in front of a bank while walking home from school.**
- Why would Roger want to keep the \$200 and not tell anyone?
- How would he feel if he did this?
- What might happen?
- Why would Roger want to call the people listed on the envelope or police about the \$200.
- How would he feel then?
- What might happen then?

Examples of Exercises



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

Pre/Post Testing

- **Pre/Post Testing-** Important to assessment treatment outcomes to know treatment effects.
 - Your clinical impressions are important and can be supplemented by quantitative measures too.
 - Useful to see if changes not only one patient, but for whole program.
- **Pretest:** 1. Story vignette, and 2. Behavior rating scales.
- **Posttest:** 1. Story vignette, 2. Behavior rating scales, and 3. Workbook Checklist.