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## A Proactive Approach to Juvenile Delinquency Utilizing the K.A.R.E. Program

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ABSTRACT

**A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO  
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY  
UTILIZING THE K.A.R.E.  
PROGRAM**

**Shae Cody Abram, B.S.**

A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Lindenwood College in Partial  
Fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Communications

1997

## ABSTRACT

This project will focus on the study of juvenile delinquency in America and the growing trend of juveniles between the age of 12 and 16 years old who are both the victims and perpetrators of criminal activity. It introduces a program called K.A.R.E., an acronym for Kids At Risk Education which is a proactive approach to addressing the root causes of juvenile delinquency.

Breakdowns in family life, neighborhood environments, socioeconomic, inequities, and peer group's pressures have contributed to this growing trend of youth crimes. Youth violence has become one of the leading causes of death for juveniles in this country.

Juvenile delinquency is addressed by sociologists, psychologists, doctors and the clergy. All have different views on what causes juvenile delinquency. It is clear that the causes of juvenile delinquency involve a combination of many circumstances. The breakdown of the family, severed bonds to society, child abuse, and many other factors which contribute to delinquent behaviors are discussed, here through a review of literature and cases.

Three perspectives dominate this field of study. The first is the social control theory by Travis Hirshi in which a breakdown of socializing bonds in

three areas, supervision, overly harsh discipline, and finally parental rejection . Are identified as causes of lack of adequate of value formation. The second perspective by Dr. Popenoe, focuses on the a breakdown of the family. Which allows the child to deviate. The third perspective, which was introduced by Dr. Sandberg, explores the direct correlation between child abuse and juvenile delinquency. This discussion forms the backdrop for the K.A.R.E. program which employs a peer counseling approach along with a parental support academy and professionals within the community such as psychologists, psychiatrists, or doctor's to counsel both children and parents.

The K.A.R.E. program will allow parents and juveniles to reach positive solutions and give them alternatives before they are trapped in a system that does not work. Law enforcement, parents, juveniles and communities must come together to fight for a brighter future- a future where our kids are not afraid, or better yet, we are not afraid of our kids.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This graduate degree is dedicated to my lovely wife, Jennifer, my inspiration and motivation in life, and to my parents Douglas and Becky Abram who instilled in me the strength to make a difference. To my brother Scott and my sister Amy Ann who taught me patience.

Also this project is dedicated to the spirit of positive change within an community that **only** occurs when enough people dedicate themselves to take action. **Without** this kind of positive change, a community has no hope for survival.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Our nation is facing the fastest growing category of criminals in the world. This category is children between the ages of 12 and 16 years old. Juvenile delinquency in America has been on a steady rise since 1977. With a dramatic increase in delinquency between 1992 and 1996. The breakdown of the American family, environment, socioeconomic and peer groups have all contributed to this growing trend. Youth violence has become one of the leading causes of death for juveniles in this country. Danny Dawson, head of the county juvenile detention facility in North Dallas stated that ten years ago it was a shock to see a seven, eight, or nine-year-old come into the system. Now it's not, it's a trend. The juvenile courts are seeing growing numbers of younger and younger offenders. In response to this problem, proactive programs like K.A.R.E. , Kids At Risk Education, will help regain control of juveniles and repair broken families. I designed the program to be a peer counseling program which will educate juveniles and parents on positive solutions. If we do not act now, America's future may be filled with the constant crackle of gunfire and the sounds of frightened students diving for cover. We cannot tolerate our children dying in ever-increasing

numbers.

While a certain amount of violence has always been a trademark of adolescence, the proliferation of guns among youth has made its consequences far more tragic. As Georgia E. Butterfield, deputy director of the National School Safety Center, states, "Some students would not think twice about carrying a gun. Their attitude is, "I carry make-up, I carry a piece of candy . Why not carry a gun?" Indeed, a 1991 U. S. Centers for disease Control (CDC) survey showed that one in twenty students in grades nine through twelve carries a firearm at least once a month. According to the CDC in 1986, firearm homicide became the second-leading cause of death among fifteen -through nineteen-year-olds. For many years it has been first among blacks youth in that age group(Sandberg 4).

Many of these deaths are the result of an increase in gang violence. As more teenagers swell the ranks of gangs and obtain guns, violence escalates and threatens more neighborhoods. Gang shooting, once endemic to America's big cities, is a growing problem in smaller cities as well. Cities with no previous history of gang warfare, such as St. Peters, St. Charles and Chesterfield mustnow contend with this new phenomenon.



In some neighborhoods, the increase in youth violence has turned schools into war zones. For example, in St. Peters, Missouri, at Fort Zumwalt South High School a sophomore took an entire classroom hostage. The student was believed to be under the influence of a controlled substance. He was upset about how an administrator had handled an argument he had with another student. He entered the classroom with a .357 revolver and immediately kicked the teacher out. The St. Peters Police tactical unit responded with MP5 machine guns prepared to go to war if necessary for the safety of the students in the classroom. Fortunately, after successful negotiations with the juvenile, he was persuaded to put his gun down and come out without incident. Dr. Sandberg states that students cannot learn the lessons they need to succeed in life if their attention is on first learning how to survive the day in school.

Currently the Cities of St. Peters, O'Fallon, and St. Charles police departments have full time officers within the local schools. There has been much debate by parents and students on whether this is necessary. Some parents have difficulty believing that a suburban high school needs an armed police officer patrolling the hallways that their children walk through. The fact is that violence is here. However many wish to remain blind to this or deny it.



Todd Roth, a police officer for the City of St. Peters who is currently assigned to the Fort Zumwalt South High School believes the School Resource Officer program is a success. He stated that, according to assault reports taken in 1995 and 1996, there has been a steady decline since his presence at the school. Assault reports are down approximately 30 percent and reports of minors in possession of alcohol and possession of a controlled substance are down 44 percent. The attempt to make the schools safer seems to be working.

According to the Missouri Juvenile Delinquent Statistics there were 52,790 juvenile referrals to the juvenile courts in 1995. This is an increase of 28,798 over the figure for 1984. Approximately 75 percent of these referrals come from municipal, county, and state police officers. The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that the number of juveniles arrested for homicide between 1981 and 1994 increased by 60 percent nationwide. Furthermore, a 1992 issue of the American Medical Association reports that gunshot wounds are the second-leading cause of death among teenagers in the United States.

More than half of the juveniles who were referred to family court were fifteen years old or older. Most often these kids are arrested for stealing. Some are stealing for drugs while others are just experimenting

with delinquency. A significant increase in the number of juveniles arrested for liquor and drug offenses has occurred over the past three years. This substance abuse is obviously a contributing circumstance to their lack of judgment when making decisions.

The number of violent juvenile offenders has had a dramatic increase. Juveniles are not stealing bubble gum from the local convenience store. They are stealing their communities' sense of freedom and security. Jennifer Richards, 25, had been worried for much of the day about her baby's crying and fever. Late that night, she decided to take him to the emergency room, where doctors diagnosed the 19-month-old as having strep throat. Jennifer left the local hospital with the baby a little after midnight. As she walked through the parking lot toward her car, a tall young man jumped out from behind a parked van. Brandishing a gun, he ordered Jennifer to put the baby onto the backseat of his van. Then, with the gun to her neck, he forced Jennifer into the front seat. As the baby cried, the stranger robbed Jennifer and raped her repeatedly, then sped down the highway for a harrowing hour and a half. Finally, he pulled over near the small town, Silex, Missouri and raped Jennifer several times more. Then he drove back to the same parking lot, releasing Jennifer and her son. The rapist was 17 years old.

Children are capable of extremely violent behavior. Susan Tipton, 22, is mentally retarded and suffers from cerebral palsy. She was enjoying an autumn day in her parents' yard in Washington State when John, a boy she knew from the neighborhood, suggested they go for ice cream. When Susan agreed, John lured the young woman to a secluded area where he tied her hands and one foot to a fence post. He then beat her with a stick and raped her. Afterward, he threatened that if she ever told anyone he would find her and cut off her arms. John was 12 years old.

Experts in the field of juvenile delinquency want to correct behavior instead of focusing on what the juvenile has done. "We can be more productive if we look at how we can help these individuals correct their behavior rather than limiting our focus to why," says Alison Gray Stickrod, M.S., of the Lane County Juvenile Department in Eugene, Oregon. (Biskup 42).

Sociologists have studied the relationship between attitudes about social class and juvenile delinquency. Dr. Lynd said, "Our self-image is determined by what the larger society thinks of us. If they think we are inferior, or criminal we also consider ourselves inferior" (Lynd 60).

Furthermore, the individual may assess his or hers own worth in



terms of objective accomplishments. Such attitudes can result from a conscious or unconscious acceptance of the American creed in which each man has an equal chance to get ahead. Unequal success thus is due to unequal talent, ingenuity and drive, and the successful are those who are more worthy and meritorious( 60). This kind of thinking contributes to the self- image problems related to juvenile delinquency. It is obvious that lower class life constitutes a serious disadvantage for children. Children who grow up in this environment not only adopt self-destructive attitudes like the one just mentioned, but they learn deviant behavior. They see others like them succeed by breaking the law. The majority of children in the inner city define success as status based on the car you drive, the girl you date, and, most important, your reputation within the community.

There is a direct correlation between social class and juvenile delinquency. This could also be explained by the broken window syndrome. One broken window that isn't repaired immediately will lead to more broken windows. Simply, stated, this is when the neighborhood starts to fall apart, and the home's physical condition suggests that they are spiritually run down homes on the inside. Crime is symptomatic of this breakdown. Police report higher numbers of incidents. The police will put more cars in the area and even more crime will get reported.

More police present will observe more deviant behavior; simply because there are more observers, and this in turn raises the reported crime rate in the area, which contributes to the evidence of direct correlation, between social class and crime rate.

In the United States, the peer group tends to be the dominant agent of socialization in middle and late childhood. Peer groups are interacting groups of people who are about the same age. Among adolescents, peer groups exert a strong influence on their members' attitudes and values. Adolescents typically acquire much of their identity from their peers, and consequently find it difficult to deviate from the norms of behavior that their peer group establishes (Gans 62).

The peer group may become more important than the family in the development of the individual's identity. There is far more diversity in the norms and values of peer groups in the United States than in other countries. The American teenager is typically presented with many more lifestyle choices than other teenagers typically are. American teenagers in our free society can try more adult roles. This freedom leads to confusion and ambivalence, as can be seen through the growing incidence of delinquency and pregnancy.

Youth violence and juvenile delinquency can be detected before kids die and girls get raped. There are warning signs of this type of behavior. We must educate parents to recognize these signs and not be afraid to act upon them appropriately.

The K.A.R.E. program mentioned earlier is designed to give parents and juveniles an alternative that is a proactive instead of a reactive approach to problems. We must identify potential for problems before they occur. The K.A.R.E. program is a community based, proactive program. It is based on the premise that collaboration between the police and the community will identify problems and reach positive solutions. According to this model police are no longer the sole guardians of law and order; rather all members of the community become active allies in the effort to enhance the safety and quality of neighborhoods, schools, and the future of the youth.

Before the 1950's juvenile delinquency was not considered a major societal problem. Its emergence as one is attributed to parents' fear to discipline their children. This fear stems from a variety of sociological factors. Among them, in recent years is the media's response to allegations of child abuse by parents. Child abuse hot line numbers have become a weapon for children upset over being disciplined. Allegations of abuse forces mother and fathers to explain



their conduct. We live in a society that is quick to judge individuals before due process. This issue has been addressed by many professionals who push the principle of improving communication to resolve conflict. Such approaches seek to have a juvenile discuss his or her concerns in a rational manner rather than committing crimes just to be noticed. We now live in a society that no longer encourages communication between people due to our reliance on more advanced technology. Television, video games, and computers have widened the gap between child and parent. rapid changes in technology and other areas of society mean parents and kids often have less in common now than previous generations.

As a society we have lost touch with our youth. This is obvious with the growing number of offenders. In the 1940's, 50's and 60's people never read about the eleven year old rapist who murdered his neighbor. But in the 90's we have become numb to this growing trend of unimaginable crimes by children. Juveniles in the 60's and 70's would have been detained for just misbehaving, often in order to teach them a lesson. Now our detention facilities for juveniles are so overcrowded with rapists, thieves, and murderers that there is no room for the delinquent juvenile who, in truth, needs guidance rather than incarceration. With programs like K.A.R.E. there is an



alternative.

If we do not act proactively now, America's future may be filled with the constant crackle of gunfire and the sounds of frightened citizens, both young and old, diving for cover. We can not tolerate our children dying in ever-increasing numbers. We must have proactive programs like K.A.R.E. to step in, identify and apply alternatives. Society is losing control of our most precious resource, our future, our children. The focus of this paper is on the K.A.R.E. program. It will address research regarding the causes of teen violence and thoroughly explain how the K.A.R.E. program will give parents and kids positive alternatives that address these root causes.

## Chapter II.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Juvenile delinquency is addressed by sociologists, psychologists, doctors and the clergy. All have different views on what causes juvenile delinquency. It is clear that the cause of juvenile delinquency is a combination and interaction of many circumstances. The breakdown of the American family, severed bonds to society, child abuse and many other factors contribute to delinquent behavior.

David Sandberg of Boston University is the country's leading expert on the connection between child abuse and juvenile delinquency. In 1970 Dr. Sandberg, was the director of a residential treatment program for court-referred delinquents. These young people were sent to his agency for theft, assault, breaking and entering, and running away; basically for everything but being abused. In the mid 70's child abuse was just beginning to surface as a national issue and most professionals knew little more about it than the average citizen.

In group therapy sessions, Sandberg mentions the juveniles discussing, in fragmentary ways, the abuse that they have received. The brutal beatings, sexual assaults, verbal put-downs, neglect, and

parental abandonment were some of the types of abuse mentioned by the juveniles. What Sandberg could not understand was how these kids would, more often than not, defend their abusive parents. After some time he and others realized that to condemn one's parents, is to orphan one's self. The fact that the kids would defend their parents was a major dilemma for Dr. Sandberg and the faculty. How would they address this issue of parental abuse without "orphaning the child" and without creating a defensive barrier to further communication (Sandberg 2).

A study carried out in 1982 entitled, " The Role of Child Abuse in Delinquency and Juvenile Court Decision-making," surveyed children at Odyssey House a juvenile detention facility. Researchers obtained some startling results, which included:

1. 66 percent of the 150 Odyssey House residents had child abuse histories, almost all involving a parent perpetrator.

2. 61 percent of the boys and 75 percent of the girls had been abused.

physical abuse being the most common (53 of 99 boys, 32 of 51 girls.)

3. 10 of 99 boys and 4 of 51 girls had been neglected, and 8 of 99 boys and 4 of 51 girls had been emotionally abused.

4. 83 percent of the 150 had engaged in 3 or more different types of illegal activity, with theft, burglary, and assault being the most common offenses(Sandberg Appendix A).

David N. Sandberg went on to testify to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice on "The Relationship between Child Abuse and Delinquency" in an attempt to bring attention to the problem that could lead to changing policies. The following is actual testimony by Dr. Sandberg during the Senate subcommittee hearing:

I realize that statutory changes such as I am proposing are not within the jurisdiction of the federal government. However, over the past ten years the government under its spending power has implemented important changes pertaining to juveniles in many states. Perhaps it is time for federal legislation to condition some new or existing juvenile money to the states on state use of social histories in dispositions. Another option is to stimulate training of court personnel in child abuse and neglect issues within the delinquency context. (Sandberg 141-142)

After that testimony by Dr. Sandberg the U.S. Senate allocated funding for research in training court personnel in child abuse to allow for appropriate treatment of juvenile offenders. David Sandberg's contribution to understanding the problem of juvenile delinquency has been great. The work that he has done has allowed individuals who work in the field of delinquency to understand other catalysts for delinquent behavior. Mr. Sandberg has been able to obtain federal funding for research in the area of child abuse and how it directly relates to juvenile delinquency.

While researchers like Sandberg focused on child abuse as a stimulus to crime, others have identified other contributing factors. For



instance, television violence promotes youth violence and delinquency. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, is an assistant dean at the Harvard School of Public Health in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a former Massachusetts commissioner of public health. She believes that years of ingesting television's violent repertoire may promote aggression. Look at what television teaches: Good guys use violence as a first resort. Any amount of killing is alright, as long as one's cause is just. Violence is a hero's way to solve problems. In a world permeated with violence, Prothrow-Stith suggests, these dangerous lessons learned during a decade or more of watching may be the incendiary cap that forces a confrontation. Instead of walking away, two hot-headed young men armed with deadly weapons, and programmed by television, may choose to stay and shoot it out.

Prothrow-Stith focuses on television because of its pre-eminence in our society. Almost since its inception, television has been the most pervasive and powerful of the mass media. The availability of new ways of watching television--subscribing to Cable, hooking up a VCR-- has only increased television's cultural dominance. From preschool until around seven years of age, the average young child watches between two and three hours of television a day. Two Surgeons General have publicly supported the thesis that an overdose of media violence can

trigger aggressive behavior(Prothrow-Stith 70-72).

Deborah Prothrow-Stith believes the aggression and deviance is a learned behavior, which one can unlearn. According to social learning theory, children learn how to behave aggressively by watching others use violence to their advantage and then initiating what they have seen. This process is called modeling. The social learning process operates regardless of whether the observed behavior is seen on T.V. or in person. Psychologists say that children who watch a great deal of violent T. V. are desensitized to the wrongfulness of what they are seeing. This is true for adults as well as juveniles. As a society we have become numb to violence.

Yet another factor that has been identified as a contributing to juvenile crime is simple greed. Mercer Sullivan is a senior research associate at the New School for Social Research Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy in New York City. In the greed and violence study Sullivan focused on three different neighborhoods in New York City. She concluded that youth today are committing high risk crimes for money, whether nonviolent or violent. It is necessary to consider the other patterns of violence which characterize their neighborhoods in order to comprehend the mindset from which they view the costs of engaging in violent crimes for money. Their

willingness and ability to employ violence for economic gain, both initially and over time, she stressed, cannot be understood apart from the context of the non economic functions of violence in their neighborhoods.

Non economic adolescent violence in the form of street fighting, for instance, provides early socialization into illegal behavior and the techniques of violence, which some individuals then go on to apply to systematic economic crime. Sustained involvement in economic crime, Sullivan found, resulted in patterns of behavior which were shaped by neighborhood-specific illegal markets, criminal organizations, and environments of social control.

Accounts of first explorations of economic crime typically emphasize a certain amount of explicitly economic motivation combined with a search for excitement and the desire to establish a reputation among peers. One of the juveniles in the study had started stealing when he was fourteen. During an interview he stated, " It wasn't so much for the money then. It wasn't till I got older, say about seventeen, and I wanted to buy clothes and impress females, that's when I started to care about money. Back then, it was more like the excitement of it, plus, you got to make that reputation for yourself" (Sullivan 92).

The respondents in the study pointed out that crime proved a



viable way to make money at the same time that they were beginning to perceive a need for more regular income. They found that they could sell the products of criminal enterprise with ease and virtually no risk. Although the movement from stealing for thrills to stealing as part of a more sustained search for income was a common process in all three neighborhoods that were studied by Sullivan, both the extent of more sustained involvement and the particular types of criminal activity undertaken in each neighborhood were shaped by the local environment.

Their environment shaped their delinquency. Many sociologists believe that delinquency is a learned behavior. The juveniles' surroundings teach them to steal, assault (sometimes to survive), and rob.

Sullivan's study also discussed how the physical ecology of the local neighborhoods defined a certain set of possibilities for and limits on illegal income opportunities for local youths. Since youths tend to commit crimes fairly close to the area with which they are familiar, especially during the earlier stages of involvement, ecology had a direct effect in terms of the sheer physical availability of crime targets--factories, stores, crowded shopping areas, unprotected pedestrian routes to and from transportation--and of empty lots and abandoned buildings to conceal stolen goods or car-stripping and drug-selling operations(94).

Ecology also reflected the social isolation of poor neighborhoods. The same residential areas that contained high proportions of burned-out blocks and abandoned buildings or were located near noxious industrial and transportation facilities were also characterized by a lack of service and of effective neighborhood organization to demand services. This isolation from municipal government and services affected the ability of local residents to control crime in their areas. Sullivan's discussion of greed as a motivator of juvenile crime leads him to reveal much of the social dynamics surrounding it.

A fourth major contributing factor discussed in the literature of juvenile delinquency is drugs. Drug use will lead to a pattern of delinquency among juveniles. James A. Inciardi is a professor and the Director of the Division of Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware in Newark. Inciardi is the editor of the 1991 book The Drug Legalization Debate. Given the recent concerns over the perceived rising rates of drug-related violence in many city neighborhoods across the nation, this analysis focuses on the various types of violence associated with crack use and crack distribution in Dade County, Florida. The data is drawn from a National Institute of Drug Abuse funded study of adolescent drug users, conducted from 1985 to 1988, with follow-up

interviews during 1989 with crack users and dealers in Miami's inner-city communities.

The focus of Inciardi's research was not crack per se, but rather the drug-taking and drug-seeking behaviors of some 600 Miami youths who were seriously delinquent. A serious delinquent is defined as having committed, during the 12-month period prior to interview, no fewer than 10 FBI "Index" offenses [homicide, rape, assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, motor theft and arson] or 100 lesser crimes. A second criteria for inclusion in the study was the regular use of one or more illegal drugs at any time during the 90-day period prior to interview. Regular drug use was defined as use at least three times a week.

Eighty-eight percent of the subjects reported having carried a weapon, and 42 percent reported carrying a gun. Inciardi suggests that our youth are committing crimes to support a costly drug habit. In St. Louis a button of heroin (small tylenol capsule) will cost from \$15 to \$20 dollars. The average teenager I deal with in St. Petersburg needs about three buttons a day or they will be sick. Three buttons a day will cost close to \$60 dollars. Where does a 14-year-old get \$420 dollars a week to keep from getting sick? They steal. These kids steal from their families and from their schools. They will do whatever it takes to stay



alive. One kid told me once 'It's as if you are dying. You will do whatever it takes to stay alive. When you're sick from not getting high you literally feel as if you're throwing up your intestines." He went on to tell me that they (delinquents) know the system. They know they will not be detained. They know when they become an adult their record is clean and that it will take numerous arrests to be put away. Inciardi's approach is cause and effect analysis. The effect is delinquent behavior and the cause is the need for cash for the drug. They will do whatever it takes to get the drug because they physically need the drug. These juveniles will surround themselves with others in the same position. They will work together to get what they need. This leads to gang activity which results in the endless cycle of violence.

Youth gangs cause violence and organized criminal activity.

Leon Bing, a former fashion model, is a journalist and the author of Do or Die, an insider account of teenage gangs in Las Angeles.

Gangs give the kids a sense of family, a sense of belonging. The majority of gang members come from dysfunctional families. Their bond to their family has been severed, or weakened to the point where a gang will come in and give them a way out. At first, Bing reports, that gang membership is exciting and fun. Then before the member knows it, he is living a lifestyle in which he is running for his

life because of the color of his shirt(Bing103). Bing's research is relevant because of the sole fact that there has been such tremendous increase in gang activity in the United States. Big city warfare has found its home in middle town America. Bing forces us to realize that gang activity can be found in all parts of the country in different forms and manifestations. Bing emphasizes that a poor family life where bonds have been broken will help juveniles make up their minds to become members, and that early intervention is imperative.

A functionalist theorist by the name of Robert K. Merton (1938) developed a typology of deviance based on how people adapt to the demands of their society. Merton's aim was to discover how some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in society to engage in nonconformist rather than conformist conduct (Kornblum 265) Merton's explanation of deviance is based on the concept of anomie, or normlessness. In his view, anomie results from the frustration and confusion people feel when what they have been taught to desire cannot be achieved by the legitimate means available to them. Merton believes that North American and other modern societies exhibit high levels of anomie because people are socialized to desire success in the form of material well-being and social prestige(266).

Merton states that adolescents who steal to obtain things that their parents cannot afford must learn new norms. They must learn how to steal successfully and must receive some approval from peers for their conduct. As a result, they drift toward deviant peer groups (266).

Merton's findings were published in 1938. Today, some 60 years later, you can still see the same types of tendencies with deviant peer groups.

Families today are not successfully meeting the needs of society as they once did. From sociologist David Popenoe's perspective, the key problem is with the decline of the family as an institution. The weakening of the family raises the questions: with the family declining, who will be the socializing agents for the child? What kind of life-course will the child have?

According to Popenoe, the family today is lacking the three key dimensions that give it strength as an institution:

1. The institution's cohesion or the hold which it has over its members, such as the bond between parent and child.
2. How well the institution performs the functions of a family, expressing love and warmth.
3. The power the institution has in society relative to other institutions, such as gangs or clubs.

If families could focus on the three key dimensions mentioned by Popenoe, the probability of their children getting involved in deviant



behavior would be less. Addressing this dimension is a key element of the K.A.R.E. program.

The life-course perspective provided by sociologists Sampson and Lobbe helps further explain juvenile delinquency. They state that juveniles go through life stages that mold their decision making process. Stability for a child within relationships is crucial. Instability can lead to delinquent behavior.

The authors stress that there is an importance in continuity between childhood and adulthood. Childhood antisocial behavior is linked to troublesome adult behavior. If conduct disorder or juvenile delinquency is not corrected, then that child will be on the wrong path. Criminologists still focus primarily on the teenage years in their studies of offenders, apparently disregarding the clear connections of criminality to childhood deviance. Certain life events will determine outcomes in later life, and not only the event itself but how the child reacts to the event (Sampson, Lobbe 2-6).

The Social Control theory discussed by sociologist Travis Hirshi, identifies weakening bonds to family and society as the crucial factor in juvenile delinquency. He identifies four factors:

1. Emotional attachments to significant others.
2. Commitment to appropriate life styles.



3. Involvement or immersion in conventional values.
4. Belief in social obligations and the rules of the larger society.

Crime and deviance result when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken. If these bonds are weakened or broken the likelihood of crime and deviance increases. These bonds and their informal social controls are derived from the family. A dysfunctional family has weak supervision, threatening or harsh discipline, or parental rejection. These negative factors are the result of weak attachments to the family that will allow deviant behavior to emerge.

Another important factor that has a direct correlation with delinquency is lack of success in school. Falcon Baker is the director of juvenile studies at the University of Kentucky. Baker believes that no factor correlates with delinquency so closely as does lack of success in school. One can go back almost a half-century to the Glueck's classic study of five hundred white delinquent boys brought before the Boston juvenile court. Two-thirds were two or more years behind in grade level, and 85 percent had school behavioral problems. Nothing has changed since Baker states that a boy with poor grades in high school is more than six times as likely to be in trouble with the law as is the youth earning above average grades(Baker 61).

Falcon Baker also believes this strong correlation applies not only to individuals but to entire school populations. In a study done for the Louisville public schools he found that those areas of the city where the achievement level of the schools was the lowest also harbored the highest concentration of delinquents. Baker relates this correlation to seven reasons; the first being that many school personnel believe in the myth of the limited intellectual capabilities of disadvantaged children. Thousands of children become victims of the prejudgment of school personnel. Personnel feel that the effort to educate is a waste like fertilizing a dead tree. The prejudgment becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy(71). Second is despite their greater need, less money and concern are spent on underclass children than other affluent counterparts(72). Third, Baker feels schools are structured to produce losers. When children are rank-ordered it is axiomatic that some must be placed at the bottom. From among these losers delinquents are recruited(72). Schools fail to diagnose and correct the causes of early failure. Difficulties at school largely go unnoticed until the youth becomes a serious behavioral problem and starts tearing up the classroom(73). Baker states that a lack of alternative programs locks many youths out of the educational system. Once the school personnel label someone as a loser they do not offer them any counseling or support.. According to Baker, the sixth reason is that the discipline is so

lax in some schools that learning is virtually impossible. Finally, he states that the academic standards are meaningless... or missing. A diploma from an inner-city school may mean nothing other than that the student was enrolled for twelve years(78). Falcon Baker feels that the schools should be restructured to meet today's challenges. One change Baker would like to see is to speed up the timetable for completing basic education so as to permit more time for either advanced studies or career-oriented education. Many educators agree with Falcon Baker's philosophy of offering career-oriented programs for those who do not wish to go on to higher learning(196)

When you speak of violent individuals or research the topic you can not help but come across the controversy of nature versus nurture. Are we born with genetically predetermined behaviors, or are our behaviors shaped by our environment? Philosophers, religious leaders, and scientists have been trying to answer that question for thousands of years. An 18th-century philosopher, Jean Jacques Raousseau, tried to demonstrate that humans are naturally good until they are warped by society, which encourages inequality and competitiveness. He believed that society was responsible for the fact that humans hurt one another(Miller 21).



There has been an ongoing professional debate as to whether violent aggression is learned or instinctive, and interesting points have been made on both sides of the question. Some sociologists believe that some primitive outbursts of rage that lead to violent aggression are instinctive. They consider them part of the human survival mechanism: When we feel threatened, we strike out(22).

This reaction is sometimes described as a "blinding rage". Anger and frustration have built up to such a degree that it literally blinds us, clouding our judgment. We do things that had we stopped and thought about --we would not have done.

A blinding rage can also build up over time until it explodes in a situation of violence. Mass murders are prime examples to consider. Most mass murders are violent acts in which the person committing the act is expressing years of accumulated anger (22). Depending on who you talk to, some sociologists will blame nature while others will blame nurture. I believe that there is an interaction between nature and nurture. You can have violent tendencies but, if you were raised in a home that taught you self-control, and right versus wrong, then you will not act on those tendencies.

As mentioned earlier, family plays a crucial role in socializing our youth. Edward L Kain, however, believes that family decline is

nothing but a myth, and further states that the myth of family decline is a result of many misconceptions about family life in the past. Kain brings up the idea of comparing apples and oranges: You can not compare the family of today with the family of years ago. Families of yesteryear, are called by Kain the "the world we have lost". These were the farming families which can not be compared to the urbanized family of today. Kain, states the family has not declined, it is just completely different than before(Kain 21-34). I agree with the point that society has changed and the structure of the family has changed. The structure and roles are different beginning with the fact that mothers are now, more often than not, working mothers. I believe that the moral and spiritual values of the traditional family have declined, along with time available to parents to spend with their children. Parents compete for their children's attention against friends, schools, malls, other parents, T. V., M.T.V., and a new system of values, which many won't agree with. Society needs more proactive programs that address the root cause of much delinquency within the declining influence of the family, which prevent criminal activity instead of reacting to it.

K.A.R.E. along with community programs will help identify and resolve family problems that will work with the family and not against it.. The K.A.R.E. program will help identify these problems before it is



too late. We are losing our children in growing numbers to gangs, peer groups, child abusers, dysfunctional families, and the media. We cannot afford the continued loss of our children.

An investigation of the growing incidence of juvenile delinquency reveals that there are three perspectives which dominate this field of study. First is the social control theory of Travis Hirschi. Second, is the breakdown of the family. Third, would be the direct correlation between child abuse and delinquency which was introduced by David Finkelhor. Through the author's research I was fortunate to have been able to interview many juveniles. The interesting thing about the juveniles that I interviewed is that there is a direct relation to juvenile delinquency in America.

Sociology of Travis Hirschi studied how people behave motivated in conventional norms. Such motivation, he found, comes out of the interactions that we get social bonds to others. When we are closer and to people who adhere to conventional norms, we have high motivation to conform. As we grow older and experience an opportunity conventional norms decrease because we feel that we have more to prove. The process of becoming individual is going to prove a successful ending of their lives. This individualized process marks the end of the social norms and disciplines.

By the time when a person who never gives into the system is...

### Chapter III.

#### EVALUATION OF LITERATURE

An investigation of the growing incidence of juvenile delinquency reveals that there are three perspectives which dominate this field of study. The first is the social control theory by Travis Hirshi. Second, is the breakdown of the family. Third, would be the direct correlation between child abuse and delinquency which was introduced by David Sandberg. Through the author's research I was fortunate to have been able to interview many juveniles. The interviews have allowed me to evaluate how all three of these perspectives directly relate to juvenile delinquency in America.

Sociologist Travis Hirshi studied how people become committed to conventional norms. Such commitment, he found, emerges out of the interactions that create our social bonds to others. When we are closely tied to people who adhere to conventional norms, we have little inclination to deviate. As we grow older our investment in upholding conventional norms increases because we feel that we have more to protect. This process of lifetime socialization in groups produces a normative system of social control that is internalized in most members of the society(Hirshi and Gottfredson, 35).

By the same token, a person who once gives in to the impulse to commit

a deviant act and is caught, or who becomes a member of a deviant group because it has recruited him or her, gradually develops a commitment to that group and its deviant culture. The reasons for taking the first step toward deviance may be many and varied, but from the interactionist perspective one of the most crucial steps in the process of building a stable pattern of deviant behavior is likely to be the experience of being caught and publicly labeled as deviant (Hirshi 31)

For instance when discussing juveniles Hirshi says that if a child's bond to the family or society is weak then the tendency for delinquent behavior will increase. Informal social controls are derived from the family. It is the family's responsibility to instill morals and values. Travis Hirshi defines social control "all the ways in which a society establishes and enforces its cultural norms." He believes that without the socialization and the controlling actions of social groups like the family, schools, the military, and corporations there would be much more anomie, crime, and violence.

Hirshi breaks the issue of weakening bonds into three categories. They are weak supervision, threatening harsh discipline, and parental rejection. Weak supervision stems from parental responsibility. Unfortunately, we live in a world where mothers and fathers are submerged in the workforce. Therefore, they leave schools, T. V. , law enforcement and the local mall to raise their children. Weak supervision leads to delinquent behavior.

Contrary to many people's beliefs, threatening harsh discipline is a contributing circumstance as is weak supervision. Hirshi says that it is inconceivable that a child who suffered from parental child abuse does not have ill effects from the experience. The proper balance between rewards and punishment is crucial. Parents who never discipline children will often display harsh discipline, then expect the child to understand their wrath. This may come in different forms from physical to verbal abuse. This inconsistency is not only confusing but harmful to future personal growth.

Parental rejection will also contribute to delinquent behavior. Delinquent behavior demands attention, whether positive or negative. These juveniles learn to crave negative attention as much as positive attention. Negative attention from parents is better than none at all. Parental rejection is ultimately a fast track to delinquency.

Hirshi once said , " a child is a blank slate, on which his parents and society could write whatever they wished" (Hirshi 33). We now know that the infant enters the family equipped with important predispositions. Some persons still think of him and, worse, do research on how he is raised by his family based on the implicit assumption that whatever happens to him is wholly the result of the parents acting on the child and not at all of the child acting on the parents. There is genetic basis for the child's intelligence, temperament, and



adaptability.

Social control theory identifies four components which guide a juvenile to delinquency. These are emotional attachments, commitment, immersion in conventional values, and a belief in social obligation(16).

Hirshi says emotional attachments to significant others are crucial for establishing a stable atmosphere. If an individual does not care about the wishes and expectations of others, (parents) then he is not bound by norms and has weak attachments. These weak attachments are with his peers, parents, and society. This allows juveniles to deviate from the norm because there is no attachment or sense of loyalty(17).

The commitment to appropriate life styles is essential. Few would deny that humans on occasion obey the rules simply from fear of the consequences. This component of conformity is known as commitment. Commitment will give a person a sense of belonging(17).

Involvement or immersion in conventional values according to Hirshi does not allow for delinquent behavior. The assumption is that a person may be simply too busy doing conventional things to find time to engage in delinquent behavior. More parents today try to keep their children involved in more extracurricular activities. Their belief is that if they keep the kids involved in constructive activity, then they will not get involved in destructive

behavior(18).

Hirshi states that one's belief in social obligation to the rules of the larger society will hinder deviant behavior. Control theory assumes the existence of a common value system within the society or group whose norms are being violated. If the children who deviate are committed to a value system different from that of a conventional society, then it would be considered wrong within of the realm of the conventional society(18).

Social control theory includes four key components: emotional attachments to significant others, commitment, immersion in conventional values, and belief of correctness of social obligations(17).

Emotional attachments to significant others are important to becoming a well- rounded individual. If an individual does not care about the wishes and expectations of others, then he is not bound by norms and has weak attachments. These weak attachments can be with his peers, parents or society on the whole. This lack of strong social attachments allows him to deviate from the norm.

A commitment to appropriate lifestyles allows for consistency. Few would deny that humans on occasion obey the rules simply from fear of the consequences breaking them. This component of conformity is known as commitment. Conformity to conventional values is the essence of the social

control theory(18-19).

Involvement or immersion in conventional values is the third component. The assumption here is that a person may be simply too busy doing conventional things to find time to engage in delinquent behavior. Parents, for instance, might choose to keep their children involved in sports or other extracurricular activities. This will establish bonds for the child(19).

Juveniles must believe in social obligations and the rules of the larger society. Social control theory assumes the existence of a common value system within the society or group whose norms are being violated. If the children who deviate are committed to a value system different from that of conventional society, there is, in the context of the control theory, nothing to explain(19).

Juvenile delinquency and crime result when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken. Informal social controls are derived from the family. A dysfunctional family suffers from weak supervision, threatening harsh discipline, or parental rejection. These negative factors often result from weak attachments in the family that will allow deviant behavior to emerge. If the bonds to school or work are severed, where will new bonds be established? Possibly with gangs or other organized crime rings. This is why social control theory as developed by Hirshi is important to understand, since it allows us to help respond to the problem of delinquents and gangs in our society.



Crime does not wash over all Americans equally. It especially terrorizes the weakest and most vulnerable among us. Three quarters of America's 64 million children live in metropolitan areas, a fifth live in low-income households, at least a tenth come home after school to a house containing no adult, and all are physically immature and incompletely formed in character. These are the people who suffer most when law and order deteriorate. Children need order. Aside from love, there is nothing they need more than order. The primary socializing agent for juveniles is their families. The rise in juvenile delinquency is a result of a breakdown in the American family. This issue is addressed by Karl Zinsmeister, who is a writer living in upstate New York. He is an adjunct scholar with the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative research organization in Washington, D.C. Another leading sociologist in this field is Dr. David Popenoe from the University of Delaware New York.

The family is defined by Popenoe as a relatively small domestic group of kin consisting of at least one adult and one dependent person. The family should be thought of as carrying out or meeting certain functions, and meeting certain needs for society. The function or needs, as spelled out in almost every textbook of marriage and the family, have traditionally included the following: reproduction and the socialization of children, and sexual regulation, which means that people are made responsible for their sexual activity and



results of their sexual activity(Popenoe 526).

Popenoe states that the family is not successfully meeting the needs of society as it once did. From his perspective, the key problem is associated with the decline of the family as an institution. With the family declining, what will be the socializing agent for the child? What kind of life-course will the child have? Children need to have significant others and turning points to play an active role in their lives(539).

According to Popenoe, the three key dimensions to the strength of an institution are:

1. The institution's (family) cohesion or the hold which it has over its members such as the bond between parent and child.
2. How well the institution (family) performs its function such as expressing love and warmth.
3. The power the institution (family) has in society relative to other institutions, such as gangs or clubs.

Popenoe cites further evidence of the decline of the family by stating that there has been a definite decrease in positive feelings about parenthood and motherhood. The number of children that families are producing has declined since the late 1950's. The average American woman had 3.7 children over the course of her life, but thirty years later, this rate has dropped by 50 percent. In 1990, the average woman had only 1.9 children far below the number needed for population replacement ( 526).

While investigating the growing trend of juvenile delinquency I spoke with 39 juveniles in the St. Charles County area. Nineteen percent of the 39 juveniles did not have siblings. The absence of sibling relationships can be an important element in the decline of the family that Popenoe cites as a contributing factor to delinquency. Popenoe points out that when juveniles have brothers or sisters the rate of delinquent behavior is lowered. The siblings work to police one another, and help keep each other out of trouble(527).

Children are growing up in a different family setting than did their parents and grandparents. Today mothers are entering the workforce at a greater pace than ever before. The biggest increase is among younger mothers with small children, under the age of three. The single family dwelling is the fastest growing type of family setting today. In 1960, only 9 percent of the families were single family dwellings. In 1990, that number jumped to 24% and has continued to grow. Studies conducted by sociologist Eleanor Glueck, Sir Cyril Burt and many others support the theory that homes from which one parent, usually the father, was absent would be more likely than an intact family to produce a delinquent child. Sixty-two percent of the 39 juveniles who the author spoke with came from a single parent dwelling. The majority lived with their mothers and had limited, if any, contact with fathers.

According to sociologists marriage is best understood mainly as a path toward self-fulfillment. One's own self-development seems to require a

significant others and marital partners are chosen primarily to be personal companions. Marriage is on a steep decline in America. The family decline can be explained by stating that Americans today are less willing than ever before to invest time, money, and energy maintaining the family structure( 531-533).

Senator John D. Rockefeller stated,

By now these changes in the family structure are quite familiar. Although their causes and consequences are still not fully understood, it is clear that they have had profound effects on family roles and on relationships between fathers, mothers, and children and between families and the communities in which they live. Observers from many quarters worry that these changes have had largely deleterious effects on family life and have caused a dramatic decline in the quality of life for many American children.(Kramer 178)

A child needs both parents, mother and father, to develop the skills necessary to be a productive, mature adult. If the bond between mother and father never forms, the consequences to the child can be very severe. Dr. Popenoe says that the absence of attachment may lead the child to become an affectionless psychopath. He describes this as beginning with an initial phase of clinging and dependent behavior by the child followed by attention-seeking, uninhibited, indiscriminate friendliness. The loveless interaction between parent and child may make the child more or less impulsive and willing to take the feelings of others in account when acting. The resulting personality is characterized by the lack of guilt, inability to keep rules and form lasting



relationships(534).

The most important long-term result of the failure to form an affectiional bond, is the inability to establish and to maintain deep and significant interpersonal relationships. That interaction involves three predictable processes:

1. The development of attachments. Attachment is defined as the inculcation in a child of the desire to win and hold the approval of others as well as the belief that given certain conditions he/she can count on having that approval.
2. The development of a time horizon. A time horizon is the shaping of the child's ability and inclination to take into consideration the more distant consequences of present actions.
3. The development of internalized constraints. The ability to restrain from certain actions which causes feelings of anxiety.

Karl Zinsmeister wrote an article titled, "A Lack of Traditional Family Structure Causes Youth Violence." Within the article Mr. Zinsmeister identifies what he calls the root of the problem. Zinsmeister, along with Dr. Popenoe, believes the most important source of violence and juvenile delinquency among children is from family breakdown. More than 60 percent of all children born today will spend at least some time in a single-parent household before reaching age eighteen. That kind of collapse of family structure is heroically unprecedented in the United States and possibly in the world. For many black teenagers, according to a report by one child welfare



organization, marriage is "now an almost forgotten institution" (Zinsmeister 68).

There is a major difference of opinion over the causes of this family decay. One viewpoint is the Charles Murray school, which argues that perverse government policies lie behind the collapse of family responsibility. There are others, however who believe that government intervention offers the best hope for solutions to this problem of delinquency. But despite the deep split over causes and solutions, there is broad agreement at last that family disintegration is at the root of many of the social and economic problems that worry us most.

Zinsmeister's belief that family structure is now the principal conduit of class structure is not to deny that plenty of children with intact families have problems, or that many youngsters from single-parent homes will grow up to be happy and successful. There are children being raised in Beirut today who will turn out fine, too; nonetheless, growing up in Beirut is not to be recommended. The point is, having only one parent's time and energy, and earning and teaching power is a serious blow from which a child recovers only with effort. Lack of a male role model providing direction is an additional problem for many such children. During my interviews with juveniles approximately 73 percent of the 39 came from a single-parent dwelling. Only two of the juveniles lived with fathers. The remainder lived with mothers or grandmothers.

Karl Zinsmeister cites a study conducted by the National Association of

Elementary School Principals. The study found that 30 percent of the two-parent elementary students surveyed ranked as high achievers, compared with only 17 percent of the one-parent children. At the other end of the scale 23 percent of the two-parent children were low achievers--versus 38 percent of the one-parent children. There were more clinic visits among one-parent students, and their rate of absence from school was higher. One-parent students were consistently more likely to be late, truant, and subject to disciplinary action. One-parent children were found to be more than twice as likely to drop out of school altogether(69).

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported not long ago that 70 percent of the juveniles in state reform institutions grew up in single-parent or one-parent families. One recent study of seventy-two adolescent murderers found that three quarters came from single-parent homes. Most street-gang members, it has been shown, come from broken homes(Bing 106).

Zinsmeister believes that one of the most depressing lessons in all this is that two thirds of all people in female-headed families with children under eighteen now get benefits from a welfare program (aid to families with dependent children, general assistance,, supplemental security income, medicaid, food stamps, rent assistance) a fact confirmed by the census bureau . Of all never-married mothers, more than 80 percent are receiving some kind of

government check. The federal government spends more than \$100 billion every year on means-tested assistance to families. Yet this aid has not even come close to providing those households with the kind of existential security that most intact families enjoy.

Zinsmeister is and Popenoe's studies make it quite clear that a broken home has a higher percentage of having delinquent children than a two parent dwelling. Both Popenoe and Zinsmeister agree that no matter how inadequate a family may be, it will remain for better or worse, the child's primary socializing agent. Frequently the most effective way to save a child is to first save the family. The basis for society is the family. If we can not save the family and rebuild our value system, then we have nothing to look forward to except more crimes and headlines blaring about crimes committed by children. It is time to compile a new list of children's issues and to put crime reduction at the top.

Child abuse and neglect will cause a child to become a delinquent. Dr. David Sandberg, who is the director of the program on law and child maltreatment at Boston University School of Law, believes that child abuse is a major contributing circumstance to delinquency. He is joined by Charles Patrick Ewing who is a clinical and forensic psychologist and a law professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Both believe that being abused as a child is a major cause of delinquent behavior.



Charles Patrick Ewing believes that juveniles who are involved in delinquent behavior come from broken homes in which one or both parents are disturbed, neglectful, or abusive. Although many youngsters may grow up in homes broken by parental separation or divorce, the percentage of broken homes is much greater among those who are involved in violent behavior(Ewing 79).

Much of the research on juveniles who kill indicates that many have parents who are alcoholics or mentally ill. The single most consistent finding regarding juvenile homicide, however, is that kids who kill, especially those who kill family members, generally have witnessed or have been directly victimized by domestic violence. The most common form of domestic violence witnessed by juveniles who kill is spouse abuse( one parent assaulting the other), but being directly victimized by child abuse is even more common.

Charles Patrick Ewing interviewed 14 juveniles on death row. Twelve of the fourteen were brutally abused physically, and five had been sodomized by older family members. Similarly high rates of child abuse victimization have also been found in other multisubject studies of juvenile killers(79)

Violent behavior, like most behavior, is learned. It is a function of both person and circumstance. We are all capable of killing under some circumstances, but none of us kill under all circumstances. Killing occurs only



when certain people with certain learning experiences find themselves in certain situations. Violent juvenile offenders are no different. They are not born that way they are made, in that they can learn this behavior at home. Ewing states, that " some children who are abused or witness abuse of loved ones learn to be violent; their abusive parents are powerful, negative role models"(80).

The statistics that Ewing quotes confirm that there has been a tremendous increase in reported cases of child abuse over the past decade. Increases in the incidence or severity of child abuse will undoubtedly be followed by corresponding increases in the number and rate of violent juvenile offenders. If, as many contend, the United States is experiencing an epidemic of child abuse, this epidemic will undoubtedly affect the incidence of juvenile violent offender for years to come.

David Sandberg of Boston University is the leading expert on the connection between child abuse and juvenile delinquency. In 1970, Sandberg was the director of a residential treatment program for court-referred juvenile delinquents. These young people were sent to his agency for theft, assault, breaking and entering, and running away. Everything but being victims of abuse. In the mid 70's child abuse was just beginning to surface as a national issue and most professionals knew little more about it than the average citizen.

In group therapy sessions, Sandberg mentions the juveniles discussing

their abuse just in just fragments. They referred to brutal beatings, sexual assaults, verbal put-downs, neglect, and parental abandonment. These children had little experience with parental warmth that facilitates attachment, thereby leading the child to value parental approval and to attach a high cost to its possible withdrawal. In addition to the parental warmth, if the parents are restrictive and the rules of behavior are clearly stated, behavior governed by those rules would be consistently reinforced. This consistency will promote the social behavior in the child of becoming aware of a long time horizon as he learns that approved behavior has predictable consequences: promises made today will be kept tomorrow and the next day. Dr. Sandberg believes if parental warmth and attachment is substituted for abuse and neglect then the child will not care about the high cost of the withdrawal process which could lead to problems. The withdrawal of attachments has already occurred. Time after time Sandberg stated how he could not believe how the kids would defend their parents. Later, he discovered that to condemn one's parents is to orphan one's self, and this was the central dilemma in dealing with the abused delinquents(Sandberg 2).

In 1982, Dr. Sandberg conducted a study entitled " The Role of Child Abuse in Delinquency and Juvenile Court Decision-making. The study discovered that out of the 150 juveniles participating approximately 66 percent had been the victim of some type of abuse. Physical abuse was the most common with 53 out of 99 boys, and 32 out of 51 girls being abused. A higher

percentage of female offenders were sexually abused compared to the boys. Ten out of ninety-nine boys were emotionally abused with 4 out of 51 girls being neglected(2-3).

During the author's interviews approximately 10 out of 39 juveniles claimed to be victims of some type of physical abuse. The majority stated that they suffered emotional abuse from their parents. Included in what was considered emotional abuse, was the fact that Moms and Dads did not care what their child was doing or who they were with. One juvenile stated it is easy to say you care but much harder to actually care. What he was saying is that his parents said they cared but only when a social worker, police officer or guidance counselor was with them. He said once the officer would leave then the abuse would start. They would say things that like "you're not worth the effort", "we give up", and most damaging " we don't care anymore. Do whatever you want, just go away". As one can imagine, these comments coming from someone who is supposed to nurture and support can cause a need for acting out. To a child, negative attention is better than no attention at all.

Pam Hagan a counselor at the Odyssey House, worked with Dr. Sandberg with the female offenders. Pam Hagan states that approximately 80 percent of the females have been sexually abused by intrafamily members. This would include parental figures like moms, boyfriend, uncle, grandfathers, stepfathers, in addition to biological fathers. The other 20 percent is made up



of neighbors, friends of the family, and professionals such as teachers, scout leaders, and camp counselors. The abuse is experienced largely during the preadolescent period, between the ages of one to thirteen. Some cases begin as early as age three. Hagan says that physical abuse and neglect, especially emotional neglect, is common among the girls that she sees. Parents are preoccupied with their jobs or personal problems and are not in tune with the needs of the child (27-28).

Hagan says that the girls experience an element of low self-esteem, which plays a direct part in their putting themselves in risky situations. They are looking for a rescuer and will readily go with males who initially are nice to them. Then comes the sexual confrontation, which is much like the home situation where they were unable or not allowed to say no, and further sexual abuse results. It becomes even easier to accept when there are secondary gains, such as money, drugs and a place to stay. All of this will then lead to delinquent behavior running away, stealing, and drug use(29).

Both child abuse and juvenile delinquency are most likely to arise in high stress/low resource social environments in which the need for emotional validation goes unmet. Thus, the same perverse social environment can, and often does, give rise to multiple problems, including child abuse and delinquency. This is true of physical and psychological maltreatment and, to some degree, sexual abuse(67).



Hagan observes that the worst environments for producing delinquent children are families from which both abuse and aggressive delinquency tend to be very negative environments. The fathers of aggressive boys are often hostile to and rejecting of their sons, express little warmth for them, and spend little time interacting with them during the boy's childhood. Parents of delinquent boys have also been shown to be neglectful and lax or punitive, and erratic in discipline. Some studies find the fathers of delinquents to be cruel, neglectful, and often absent, and the mothers cruel, neglectful, and passively helpless. Life in these homes is a far cry from life with a supportive style of child rearing that encourages interpersonal competence and prosocial behavior(67).

Dr. Sandberg states that it is important to realize that delinquent behavior can be a cause of abuse as well as an effect. When children and youth engage in delinquent behavior, their parents may respond in abusive ways. Sandberg says this has been supported in different studies. Parental and child characteristics can place a family at risk for adolescent abuse. Problematic acting out behavior can become a stimulus for abuse and neglect when parents are incapable of exerting effective but nonviolent control over their teenage offspring. Several other studies cite this particular cause-effect relationship as a major factor in the abuse of adolescents by their parents(68).

We must recognize also that abuse can be and often is the result of

society's response to delinquent behavior. The clearest example of this comes from situations where delinquent behavior places the child or youth at risk for institutional abuse or abusive victimization by predatory adults( or peers).

Investigative journalists and child advocates have documented this connection. Their reports make it clear that when delinquent children and youth are placed in jails, detention centers, or reform schools, they run a serious risk of abuse-- physical, emotional, and sexual(69).

All in all, it seems clear that abuse is linked to juvenile delinquency and delinquency to abuse, though neither is the sole cause of the other. Early abuse can produce a variety of psychological problems and social deficits that set in motion a pattern of behavior that leads to delinquency in later years. Juvenile delinquency can trap the youth in a pattern that leads to further abusive victimization. Dr. David Sandberg has been the leading advocate for bringing the connection between child abuse and juvenile delinquency to the surface. He has testified many times in front of Senate subcommittees in efforts to win more federal funding.

It is painfully obvious that the relationship between social control theory the breakdown of the family, and child abuse are the leading factors underlying juvenile delinquency. We must start by addressing these issues and bringing them to the forefront like Sandberg has with the issue of child abuse. As a nation we must start putting our attention back on the family and the family



## Chapter IV.

### RESULTS

The fastest growing category of criminals is children under the age of seventeen. Our nation is faced with this rapidly growing group of young criminal who keep multiplying in outrageous numbers. Juvenile delinquency has steadily increased since 1977, with substantial growth in the last seven years. Today the offenders are younger than ever. The system we have now is simply not working. It is a reactively oriented system which allows delinquency to grow at such an alarming rate. It is imperative to reach juveniles before the crime starts and before they get trapped in the revolving door of our American Justice System. Kids At Risk Education is a proactive approach to juvenile delinquency. The K.A.R.E. program is oriented towards kids between the ages of twelve and sixteen. Between the ages of twelve and sixteen a teen will be introduced to any number of different things, from drugs to sex. There are three core components to the K.A.R.E. program. The first is the peer counseling approach to learning. Second is the parental support academy for parents involved in the program. Finally, the K.A.R.E. program will have qualified individuals working as Community Resource Officers, who will apply their areas of interest to the program. (ie. counselors, psychologists) The K.A.R.E. program will allow for parents and juveniles to reach positive



solutions and give them alternatives before they are trapped in a system that does not work.

Millions of parents in this country are growing frantic over the seemingly random violence that occurs everyday against our children. Society can change the odds against juvenile crime simply by taking steps to emphasize training kids in certain habits whether at home, school or at play. Such an approach will reduce their risk of being victimized, or arrested as criminal suspects. Education of both parents and children is the answer to this dilemma. Part of the K.A.R.E. program is to educate parents and juveniles on critical issues facing them today. Drug and alcohol awareness programs and seminars will be offered. The program allows parents and juveniles to work together to establish trust with their counselor as well as one another. The K.A.R.E. program will enable family relationships to grow stronger. It will instill confidence, and high self esteem so that juveniles will be able to turn down the temptation to yield to the many delinquent temptations or opportunities they will face.

The juvenile is introduced to Kids At Risk Education by being referred to the program (Appendix A referral form). The referral cards are located in local police stations, schools, churches, library and a variety of businesses participating in the K.A.R.E. program. The referral can be mailed to the police department or returned to a K.A.R.E. station which can be located within a

business that is participating. Such participation by local business through publicly credited donations will allow them to develop better public relations within the community. Local sporting events, for example will be sponsored by K.A.R.E. and local Dierbergs grocery stores. Cooperation between local business will allow for more funding for the program as well as good public relations for all parties involved.

The referral form requests information on the juvenile being referred. For instance, it asks why the juvenile is being referred and whether the individual referring the juvenile wishes to be contacted. Once an agent of the K.A.R.E. program receives the referral by mail or other means the referral is evaluated according to its urgency. Contact will first be made to the guardian or parent of the juvenile. This is a courtesy call that allows the parent to know that their child had been referred by a teacher, neighbor, or police officer to the program. If and only if the parents give permission to continue the contact, a police officer assigned as a K.A.R.E. officer will set a meeting up with the parents and juvenile. At this meeting the K.A.R.E. officer will evaluate the juvenile and the situation to see if he or she is a good candidate for the program. This is done by analyzing their responses to a questionnaire, informational sheet. (Appendix) If the officer feels, on the basis of this interview, that the juvenile would benefit from the program then the officer will introduce the Kids At Risk Education program to the juvenile and parent. If

the juvenile accepts, then a schedule will be given to them outlining upcoming sessions.

To say that all juveniles will be able to participate would be impossible. Some juveniles are beyond the help that K.A.R.E. will be able to provide. The families of those who are not accepted into the program, will be conferred with and given alternatives for their child. Criteria for not being accepted would be a criminal record, extreme violent tendencies or a poor attitude in receiving help. The juvenile may be referred to a different program or the agent may give the parents contact numbers of local agencies that could assist them. The K.A.R.E. program is looking for juveniles who recognize that there is a problem or a potential future problem. The program is looking for juveniles that are willing to accept responsibility for their actions and are willing to share their experiences with others.

The K.A.R.E. officer will work something like a probation officer to help monitor the child. It is important to understand that the program is proactively oriented to allow the juvenile the ability to help him or herself before they are ordered by family courts to receive counseling. The voluntary basis will allow the learning atmosphere to be more positive than punitive. Once a child is forced to do something they will typically only give minimal effort. If the child wants to be there to help himself then he will participate more fully within the program and most likely achieve positive results.



The first facet of the K.A.R.E. program is a peer counseling approach, which is what makes it so unique. There will be weekly meetings for thirteen weeks. The meetings will involve a counselor and fellow peers experiencing similar problems. Upon successful completion of the program graduates are given the option to become counselors. The meetings will discuss issues dealing with themselves as well as issues that all teenagers face everyday. There will be discussion on teenage pregnancy, peer pressure, drugs, alcohol, sex and many other issues facing adolescents. Attitudes will be addressed along with activities which will help build confidence and self-esteem.

As a police officer I am able to go into many different homes involving kids and parents in conflict. Blame is one of the major factors and obstacles usually seen when the problem addressed. The kids are blaming mom and dad for not understanding and not caring. Mother and Father are blaming son or daughter for having a bad attitude. This blaming approach is nothing other than not taking responsibility for individual's own actions. K.A.R.E. will help parents and children understand the need to own up to their actions. Its counseling process will stress their actions have consequences and that they must deal with those consequences when faced with them. Parents as well as participants in the program will be given tours of detention facilities. Parents will see what it is like to see children behind glass and bars. This will hopefully



instill the need in parents to realize they do not want their children detained and that they must never give up, no matter what the circumstances. While touring these facilities the kids and parents will hear guest speakers who will help to educate them on juvenile issues. During the K.A.R.E. program's peer counseling seminars, juveniles will hear first hand experiences from other juveniles who were in trouble. Adolescents have a tendency to listen first to another teenager's point of view before they will listen to an adult. Sometimes it is easier to listen to someone that you can relate too, rather, than someone you feel is already against you. The majority of juveniles who are in trouble believe that everyone, especially adults, is out to get them or boss them around. This is why the K.A.R.E. program has incorporated the peer counseling approach. Past and present systems have tried the counseling approach with a trained counselor, and have been unsuccessful. This is not to deny that some juveniles need to speak with a professional counselor. Such a child might not be a good candidate for the K.A.R.E. program. The program is essentially set up as an educational seminar for kids and their parents. One of the goals of the peer counseling approach is to have kids share personal experiences with one another to establish bonds. A bond to the program as well as the group will establish a conducive learning environment and foster very social values lacking in many delinquents' lives. Such a group bonding will allow for the juvenile to call for help when faced with an issue or decision.

Therapy and self-esteem for the juveniles are reinforced when graduates of the program are asked to return to speak on personal issues. When the juveniles graduate they will become K.A.R.E. counselors, in essence.

On the first day of the session the kids will be assigned as "SEATBELTS". The seatbelt is a safety net for the kids in the program. The seatbelt aspect is just a spin off of the buddy system. When a juvenile feels that he or she is in trouble they will be able to reach someone to talk too. This again will help establish bonds and attachments to the program.

One of the first hurdles to overcome is to have the juvenile admit that there is a problem not to take blame, or give blame just to admit. Second, is to have the juvenile convey that they want to participate in resolving the problem. This is especially important in situations involving domestic violence and power struggles within the home. It is just as important to have the juvenile want to get help himself as it is to want to help that juvenile. Parents must participate within the program. They must set an example of willingness to sacrifice time and energy to reach a common goal.

The parent's determination and participation reflects the second facet of the Kids at Risk Education program, which is the parent academy. This program will coincide with the peer counseling meetings that the juveniles are attending. The parent academy will run for six weeks along with the peer

counseling program. The academy will work as a informational academy as well as a support group for parents or guardians. Parents will be educated on warning signs for drug use, gang involvement, substance abuse and delinquent behavior. Parents will also receive a training seminar for positive communication as well as lessons on juvenile law.

One of the leading causes of delinquent behavior for juveniles is substance abuse. A seminar on this subject will allow parents and guardians to learn about the drugs that their children most likely already know about. These are not like the substances that parents used to keep out of reach of the children when they were little. These drugs are accessible on the streets, playgrounds, schools and local shopping centers. Parents will have the opportunity to see, and smell if possible, all different types of illegal substances. They will learn how the drug are administered and in what forms the drugs can come in. They will learn what effect the drug will have on the human body. Drug paraphernalia will be displayed so that they can see how creative juveniles can be in obtaining devices used for smoking or injecting drugs. Parents and guardians will be taught how to confront their juvenile when faced with these findings. The K.A.R.E. program will teach them how to properly report incidents of drug use.

As a police officer I am asked quite often by a parent , " How can the system work like this?" The K.A.R.E. program with cooperation from the St.



Charles County Family Court will address juvenile law with the parents. The lesson will educate parents on restrictions that police officers and deputy juvenile officer have to work with. This will develop for better understanding among the parents. This lesson will be taught by a police officer as well as a deputy juvenile officer. Juveniles have very specific rights which can not be violated even if that is what the parents wish. Parents have stated to me before that they wished up their children could be locked up to teach them a lesson. The law, however, allows only detention for a juvenile in specific situations. Through this seminar parents will reach a better understanding of juvenile law and what the police can or can not do. Parents will also participate in tours of detention facilities.

Parents are often unclear as to how to address delinquent behavior. The K.A.R.E. program will address this issue by offering seminars in communication. These classes will employ role-playing exercises as well as discuss educational videos. Role playing is an effective tool for learning. It allows not only the role player's immediate feedback but the observers can watch and critique. Parents will work on different scenarios that all parents are faced with. Role playing will also be utilized in the juvenile peer counseling program.

The last week of the peer counseling program will work on bringing the parents and juvenile together. Different activities will be developed in an



attempt to establish trust , and form new bonds. A family counselor will meet with the parents and juvenile for an exit interview. This will help in the healing process toward the end of the program. Once the exit meeting is over the follow-up assessment will begin.

The K.A.R.E. program will solicit many volunteers. These volunteers will be known as community resource officers, which is the third facet of the program. This facet of the program is activated upon successful completion of the K.A.R.E. program. The community resource officers will be made up of individuals within the community. Their main responsibility is follow-up assessments that will allow further education for the juveniles and the parents. The resource officers will explain resources available to the parent and juvenile. The follow-up will be every six weeks for six months after completion of the program. The resource officers will adhere to strict guidelines and will have a complete background investigation prior to participating. The officers will apply their life experiences as well as professional training (ie. counselor, psychologist etc.) to the program. community resource officers will help not only in counseling but also in records keeping. Each juvenile will have a sealed folder with assessment scores and counseling notes. Before being certified the resource officer will receive training in the field of counseling, juvenile law, substance abuse and awareness as well as communications. The resource officer will have to complete a twenty-four hour ride-along program with the local

police department.

The entire program will have a follow-up assessment. The K.A.R.E. agents along with the community resource officer will utilize their resources to stay in contact with juveniles involved in the program. There will be follow-up class reunions. A plaque will be given to each class with a class number as well as a class motto. Activities of these types will reinforce the bonds established within the counseling period. This program will hopefully lead to new friendships and new futures.

There are no limitations on the K.A.R.E. program. It will attack any topics brought up by the juvenile. It will discuss issues involving sex, drugs, guns, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, to family issues. The community partnership will utilize all of these resources to reach reasonable solutions.

Funding for the Kids at Risk Education will come from various state and federal grants. Private donations will be raised, as well as donations from local businesses that participate in the K.A.R.E. sponsorship program. The K.A.R.E. sponsorship program is to utilize businesses within the community to raise money. Representatives from the local businesses will attend a variety of events sponsored by the K.A.R.E. program. Participating businesses will have referral boxes located within their establishments. There will be stickers on their windows identifying themselves as sponsors of the program. This will

allow funding for the program as well as good public relations for the business involved. Each business will have the opportunity to be involved in co-sponsorships. For example a local high school football games half-time events may be sponsored by a business and the K.A.R.E. program.

Kids at Risk Education is a proactive approach to juvenile delinquency. The system we have now is nothing but a "band-aid" approach. K.A.R.E. seeks to address the root causes of delinquency, the breakdown of value instillation at the family level by working directly with children and their parents in an environment of frankness and mutual concern. It is time that law enforcement, parents, juveniles and communities come together to fight for a better tomorrow: A tomorrow where our kids are not afraid; or better yet, where we are not afraid of our kids.

## Chapter V.

### DISCUSSION

As you know now, our nation is facing the fastest growing category of criminals in the world. The category consists of teenagers from the age of twelve to sixteen, and is growing because of the number of decisions that a child in this age group is faced with on a daily basis involving potentially delinquent behavior. The system we are working with now is simply not effective. As established in Chapter Four, the number of juvenile offenders is growing faster today than ever before. The breakdown of the family, environment, and peer groups have contributed to this growing trend. Youth violence has become one of the leading causes of death among teenagers in this country. We can not tolerate watching our children die in such great numbers. The Kids At Risk Education program that was introduced in chapter four will help minimize this growing trend. The distinguishing feature of the K.A.R.E. program mentioned in chapter four is its proactive orientation compared to the system we have now which is reactively oriented. The system reacts to what the juvenile has done and does nothing to prevent further delinquency. The K.A.R.E. program will help educate our kids before they get themselves involved in the revolving door of our local juvenile detention facility.



The way the Kids At Risk Education program works is that it will focus on three core components. The first being peer counseling, the second component is a parental support program which allows everyone involved to grow. This component will allow for the bonds between parent and child to grow stronger. The final component is the community resource officers program. This facet of K.A.R.E. allows trained professional to apply their expertise to improve the lives of the students in the program.

We must recognize as a society that there is a serious problem. Then working together as a community we can beat the odds against crime, simply by taking the right steps and training kids in the right habits, whether at home, school, or play. K.A.R.E. will educate children and parents about critical issues that are facing today's youth. Establishing trust between child and parent is one of the first steps in the program. Trust is defined by the New Webster Dictionary as having confidence in a person or thing because of the qualities perceived; acceptance of something as true; a responsibility, charge, duty etc.; faith in the future; and to have faith in. Building a level of trust that includes all of these elements is essentially the backbone of the K.A.R.E. program. It will allow parents and children to have faith and more importantly faith in the future, faith in their future. Faith will allow juveniles to turn down negative temptations. They will no longer feel a need to fill a void in their lives. Along with faith comes confidence, and with confidence leadership can blossom.

Leadership promotes respect, and with respect will come self-worth. The K.A.R.E. program is just planting a seed in juveniles. Hopefully, the seed will allow them to grow-up into responsible, productive human beings. As mentioned in Chapter Four, allowing the juvenile to become a counselor will help them become leader within their peer groups and society.

At this time the K.A.R.E. program has not been implemented, although I believe this program will be changing lives in the future and very soon. To have this program implemented it must be approved by several individuals. I have sat with the public relations director for the St. Peters Police Department to brainstorm ideas for this program. The director stated that for a program like K.A.R.E. to be successful it will need the approval of the community but especially from the police officers that will be involved in the program. I have taken this advice to the street while working as a police officer in the city of St. Peters. While discussing juvenile law with coworkers we become very frustrated with a system that is not working. The system does not work for the juveniles involved, nor does it work for the family of the juveniles, and the victims of juvenile crime. Police officers need, and request alternatives to be effective in dealing with juvenile crimes. At present there are only few alternatives for the police officer to utilize within the St. Charles County area. For the most part these alternative are reactive approaches. The K.A.R.E. program will give police officer an alternative to communicate to

frustrated parents and frustrated victims that there is something that can be done. The K.A.R.E. program will address the community concerns and frustrations involving juvenile crime. I know I have the backing of the patrol officers, as well as the communities within the city of St. Peters. The city of St. Peters has been the fastest growing city in the state of Missouri for approximately the last six years. The city has been able to overcome its growing pains and established itself as one of the leading cities in the state of Missouri. This positive and progressive atmosphere is allowing for fast and willing adoption of a new program like Kids At Risk Education. The success of the program is based heavily on positive local government backing.

Another step in the implementation process is to develop a formal proposal to be submitted to the chief of police. Once the chief of police approves the program then a fine-tuned proposal will be submitted to the city's citizen action committee. This process will involve simply giving a written overview of the program and it may involve a presentation by myself or the public relations director of the police department. Once the citizen action committee has completed its review of the program then the proposal will go back the chief of police. At that time the chief will submit a recommendation to the Board of Alderman as well as the mayor of the city in a closed session. The aldermen and mayor will voice concerns around the project; for example, funding is always a concern. Where will the money come from? This will have



been addressed in the proposal showing estimated costs as well as state grants that are available, and anticipated private contributions by business and individuals. Upon completion of this process, the chief of police will introduce the program in a open session with the board of alderman which will be followed by a vote. By this time all the kinks in the program have been worked out on paper. With the approval of the alderman the program will be underway.

Now an informational public relations campaign will become the focus. The goal of the campaign will be to stir up discussion about the program. Through city newsletters and public publications like newspapers articles and informational brochures explaining the K.A.R.E. program will be introduced to the community. This introduction will also involve soliciting volunteers to help kick start the program. After volunteers come forward, then a team will be formed to solicit business within the city to become K.A.R.E. sponsors. Once a good funding base has been established then the program will begin by notifying business to set up the K.A.R.E. referral board, at the same time local schools, churches, sport registration areas, and especially the police department. (ie. patrol division) will be informed as to how they can become involved in the program.

To give you an idea how the K.A.R.E. program will be utilized during a normal day of business, I would like to share will you a personal experience



where the K.A.R.E. program could have been effectively utilized if it was accessible to myself or other patrol officers. Approximately one month ago I was radio dispatched to a residence in reference to a twelve year old boy in the his backyard playing with matches. Upon my arrival I saw flames coming from the rear of the residence. The neighbor that reported the incident came around the house with a hose. The fire was extinguished without having to notify the fire department. The neighbor revealed that the boy, "Bobby", 11 years old, had really been acting up lately. He told me that the boy's mother and father had just gotten a divorce. I contacted Bobby and asked him about the fire. He said he was playing with matches and did not realize what could have happened. I asked to speak with his mother or father and he became very angry. He yelled that they don't care, they are divorced, and that his mother was at work. I sat down and started talking to Bobby about his family. He stated that his father only gives him attention when his mother calls and tells him that Bobby is being bad. I tried to call Bobby's mother and father but they could not be reached. I asked Bobby to come to the police station with me and he agreed. Had the K.A.R.E. program been in place, the neighbor could have referred Bobby to the K.A.R.E. program by dropping off a referral form at any local K.A.R.E. station, e.g. Quik-Trip Gas Mart. In this case, due to do the severity of the call he decided to notify the police immediately, and still Bobby would have been a good candidate for the K.A.R.E. program. Let us imagine the K.A.R.E. program is in place and see how Bobby's situation could evolve.

The neighbor is bringing the problem to me and I will be the one referring Bobby to the program.

At the police station I was able to contact Bobby's mother who agreed meet me at the police station. While waiting for Bobby's mother I asked Bobby to fill out a K.A.R.E. questionnaire. After reading the response to one questionnaire I believed Bobby would benefit from being a part of the K.A.R.E. program.

While I met with Bobby's mother, another officer gave Bobby a tour of the police department. I explained to Bobby's mother how I got the call and the concern that her neighbor expressed about Bobby. She agreed and stated ever since the divorce Bobby has changed and that he was starting to hang out with a rougher crowd in the neighborhood. She said Bobby would deliberately get into trouble and force her to call her husband. At this time I explained the K.A.R.E. program to her. I told her what Bobby's and her and her ex-husband's role would be within the program. When I explained how the support group for parents worked she wanted to know what type of information would be taught. I explained to her that the parents would receive training in communications and drug and alcohol awareness as well as juvenile law, and other subjects. She seemed relieved in a sense, and stated that she felt her oldest child, her fourteen year old daughter, was starting to experiment with drugs. This scenario suggests how the program can affect other children that

who not directly enrolled within the program. The parent could apply knowledge gained from Bobby's counseling sessions to her other children.

Bobby returned from his tour with Officer Jackson. I asked him if he would want to be involved in a program called K.A.R.E. After explaining the program briefly he was reluctant at first until he heard his mother was going to be a part of the program too. I told him that his mother cared a lot for him and was willing to go to the program to help herself as well as him. He agreed to participate in the program, and they went home. I told Bobby's mother that she would be contacted by a police officer working as a K.A.R.E. agent in couple of days. This dialogue reveals another positive feature of the program, showing the mother's commitment to become involved and challenging the child's assumption that she does not care about him. It begins to address what may very well be the root of the child's behavioral problems.

Bobby and his mother's case was assigned to Officer Smith. I informed Officer Smith Bobby's history and gave him the referral sheet. Officer Smith contacted Bobby and his mother at their residence to go over the program in detail. In this visit it is the goal of the K.A.R.E. agent to have parties agree that there is a problem and that they hold some responsibility for that problem and are willing to fix it. Officer Smith was successful in getting Bobby and his mother to participate. Officer Smith was unable to get Bobby's father to be involved at this point in time, however. Ideally, it would be better for Bobby



to have his father there to support him as well. In a lot of cases you will find one parent more willing to sacrifice their time than the other parent. Officer Smith informed Bobby's mother and father that the program will address critical issues facing today's youth from teenage pregnancy to drug use. Officer Smith ended the meeting by giving them the up schedule for future meetings and setting a date for them to start attending.

I was able to sit in on Bobby's first meeting. He was pretty quiet at first until a young girl named "Kelly" started to cry. She was upset with a decision she had to make. She had to decide on who she wanted to live with, either her mother or her father. Bobby sat up in his seat and started to listen intently. A boy named "David" started to talk about divorce. David had been through exactly what Bobby and Kelly were experiencing. Bobby began to speak of his situation and a discussion of parents divorcing started and lasted for a full hour. You could see Bobby starting to feel more and more relaxed. David was able to put his feelings and experiences into terms that Bobby and Kelly could relate to. An adult counselor could not have established rapport this quickly with a juvenile. Kelly, David and Bobby have immediate rapport because they are all kids faced with similar issues. Its use of peer counselor is one major reason why the K.A.R.E. program can be so effective.

While Bobby was actually beginning to step forward, his mother was touring the local juvenile holding facility. She was with other parents



concerned that their children were going to end up in jail if immediate intervention did not take place. The tour of the detention facility is designed to give parents a sense of urgency. They are impressed that it is time to start repairing the broken bonds between parent and juvenile. The recidivism rate for juveniles within the juvenile system is brought to the parent's attention. After parents enter the K.A.R.E. program you can see them establishing bonds with one another. Like the juveniles the parents have immediate rapport, since they are all going through similar problems. The parents work as counselors to one another just as much as the kids are counselors to each other. As the first meeting winds down for the parents, the kids are being assigned "Seatbelts".

The "Seatbelt" mentioned in Chapter Four, represents immediate support for the juveniles. It gives them someone to call as soon as they are faced with a problem. In fact I found out later in one of the meeting with the kids that Bobby utilized his seatbelt just the other day. Evidently, Bobby's father failed to pick him up on his father weekend, for which camping trip had been planned. Bobby became very angry and instead of causing problems for his mother or starting a fire, he called Kelly, his seatbelt. Together they were able to work through Bobbys' anger and frustration, without Bobby's mother having to call the police. The Kids at Risk Education is beneficial to all parties involved: juvenile, parent, police, and community.

Bobby went through the entire thirteen week program and experienced a lot of changes. In that thirteen weeks he matured and learned how much his mother loves and cares for him. Bobby now knows that there are others kids in his position and some in worse positions. He learned to respect both his mother and father. He better understands, now, why his mother and father's marriage did not work.

After two weeks of successful completion of the program the community resource officer who was in charge of Bobby's follow-up assessment told me that Bobby was doing well in school and that he had tried out for some school athletics. The community officer also told me that Bobby's sister and father were getting ready to participate in the K.A.R.E. program.

Unfortunately, the scenario described above is only a projection of how Bobby and his family could benefit if the K.A.R.E. program was in place. In actuality, Bobby has been detained in the St. Charles County Family Detention Facility three times since I had contact with him. His mother believes that he is experimenting with drugs just like his older sister has. Bobby's mother has lost faith in the juvenile justice system and has no where to turn at this point in time.

Kids at Risk Education is extremely flexible. In my next scenario you will see how the program took a different approach with a juvenile who simply needed to be heard. It took an alert teacher to aid this young man deal with the

family violence he was experiencing.

The other day I received a referral from a teacher at a local junior high school. The referral stated that a boy we will call "Jose" was very withdrawn in school but at times would lash out at individuals in positions of authority. I contacted the teacher to get some further information. She stated that Jose was one of her best students but lately has been very angry and has come to school with bruises on his arms. In fact a week ago he came to school with a black eye which he told people he got in a fight during a basketball game. The teachers were suspicious because of Jose's temperament in the previous months.

I was the K.A.R.E. agent assigned to Jose. I went to his house one evening and spoke with him and his mother about Jose's tendencies to become abusive and angry. Jose's mother seemed very nervous and was watching the clock. Jose too, was very quiet and did not want to talk about any problem he was having. Jose's mother asked me to leave, which I did. I told her that I was concerned for Jose and his future. I gave her a K.A.R.E. business card and asked her to please call me when she felt comfortable. About a week passed when I received a call from her. She stated that she was dating a man who is alcoholic. She said the man will come home drunk and beat her. Jose will get involved in an attempt to protect his mother then receive a beating himself for fighting with her new boyfriend. I asked her if she would mind if I spoke with Jose at the school about the problem and she stated she did not mind.



I contacted a community resource officer who is a child psychologist who specializes in child abuse cases. She accompanied me to the school to speak with Jose. Once I told Jose that it was alright to speak with me and that I already knew about his mother's new boyfriend, he began to open up. Jose, was very angry at this man and at his mother for allowing this man to live in their home.

As Jose's K.A.R.E. agent I spoke with his both mother and him again. Jose's mother was too frightened to tell this man to leave. Being a police officer I was able to assist Jose's mother in obtaining a ex-parte order of protection against her boyfriend. The St. Peters Police served the boyfriend the order of protection at which time he left the home. He was arrested a week after the order was served for harassing Jose's mother. He was arrested for violation of a court order and since his arrest he has not been a problem for Jose or his mother.

Jose did not participate in the K.A.R.E. peer counseling group as the usual juvenile referred to the program. However, Jose did come to a meeting along with his mother. Both Jose and his mother gave a quick lecture on their experiences. Jose talked with the kids while his mother spoke to the parents support group on what they went through and how K.A.R.E. was able to help them.



Jose's teacher with early intervention and cooperation with the K.A.R.E. program saved Jose from possibly acting on his anger and getting himself in trouble with the law. This is how the referral system can work to stop crime before it ever happens. The K.A.R.E. program designed to save children in this case may have saved Jose's mother.

The case discussions above illustrated important factors in the discussion of bonds by sociologist Travis Hirshi mentioned in Chapter Three. Hirshi says if a child's bond to the family or society is weak then the tendency for delinquent behavior will increase. Jose's attachment to his mother was weakening until a K.A.R.E. agent could step in a repair the damage. Hirshi also states that informal social controls are derived from the family. It is the family's responsibility to instill morals and values. It is important to define social control. T Hirshi defines this as " all the ways in which a society establishes and enforces its cultural norms." Without the socialization and the controlling actions of social groups like the family, schools, the military, and corporations there would be much more anomie, crime, and violence.

Hirshi breaks down the issue of bonds into three categories. They are, first, weak supervision, which Bobby was suffering from. Second, is threatening harsh discipline and, third and finally, parental rejection. Jose suffered from the last two: the harsh discipline of the new boyfriend and the

rejection he expressed based on his mother allowing a man to live with her who was abusive toward him and her.

As I have studied the causes of the growing trend of juvenile delinquency I realized that I was unaware of how many lives a program like K.A.R.E. could touch. Its influence extends not just to the child, but also to parents, siblings and potential victims. I am unaware of any program within the state of Missouri like Kids At Risk Education. The K.A.R.E. program is designed to utilize all facets of the community to be successful. There is a place for everyone in the program. As I mention in Chapter One and Chapter Two, this is not a police program, nor is it a juvenile program. It is a community program implemented by the police department.

The Kids at Risk Education is a program badly needed in today's society. It is time to put the old reactive programs to rest and utilize a proactive approach to saving our youth. This program will fill the void in children's, parent's, sibling's and victims lives. The Kids At Risk Education program seeks to address the root cause of delinquent behavior. The breakdown of the values taught on the family level can be addressed in an atmosphere of frankness, and more importantly, a atmosphere of mutual concern for one another.

Kids At Risk Education  
K.A.R.E.

Mission Statement

The mission of Kids at Risk Education is to identify kids who are at risk of becoming involved in juvenile delinquency. The K.A.R.E. program is designed to identify problems and needs of today's youth and their families in the community before the delinquency occurs. This program is dedicated itself to bringing the community, parents and juveniles together for a better tomorrow.

K.A.R.E. will allow parents and children to work together to establish trust between professional counselors as well as one another. The program will allow family bonds between parent and child to be stronger. It allows for the juvenile to become more confident and have higher self-esteem by addressing a variety of issues.

The Kids At Risk Education is a proactive approach to juvenile delinquency which is based on peer-counseling. Kids will interact with others that have similar problem to work together for positive solutions.

**KIDS AT RISK  
EDUCATION**



# K.A.R.E.



## **KIDS AT RISK EDUCATION**

LOGO



# 1-800-KID-HELP

## PEER GROUP COUNSELING FOR TROUBLED YOUTH

### K.A.R.E.



### KIDS AT RISK EDUCATION

1020 KIMBERLY  
ST. PETERS, MO 63376



### K.A.R.E.



# KIDS AT RISK EDUCATION REFERRAL FORM

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

#### LOCATION OF REFERRAL

- DROP OFF    POLICE DEPARTMENT    SCHOOL
- CHURCH    ATHLETICS    OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

#### TYPE OF REFERRAL

- POLICE    PARENT    PEER    TEACHER
- OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

RACE \_\_\_\_\_   SEX \_\_\_\_\_   DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_   STATE \_\_\_\_\_   ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GAURDIAN NAME \_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR REFERRAL \_\_\_\_\_

#### WISH TO BE CONTACTED BY A COUNSELOR

- YES    NO

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

# 1-800-KID-HELP

**PEER GROUP  
COUNSELING  
FOR  
TROUBLED  
YOUTH**

**K.A.R.E.**



**KIDS AT RISK  
EDUCATION**


1020 KIMBERLY  
ST. PETERS, MO 63376



**NEWSPAPER AD**

BUMPER STICKER

1-800-KID-HELP  
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**K.A.R.E.**  **KIDS AT RISK EDUCATION**

**1-800-KID-HELP**

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**BUMPER STICKER**



**1-800-KID-HELP**

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**K.A.R.E.**  
**KIDS AT RISK**  
**EDUCATION**  
1020 KIMBERLY  
SAINT PETERS  
MISSOURI • 63376

(A.) never (B.) a little at a time (C.) once a day (D.) once a week

**HEALTH**

3. You cough without thinking first? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you ever get dizzy? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Was there \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you usually get a headache? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you get \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you ever feel like anything will \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel like you have a "flu" \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you ever feel like you are "out of it" \_\_\_\_\_

11. Had problems in school \_\_\_\_\_

12. Had problems with your friends \_\_\_\_\_

13. Had problems with your family \_\_\_\_\_

14. In the last 2 months, have you felt like you were \_\_\_\_\_

15. In the last 2 months, have you felt like you were \_\_\_\_\_

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100. In the last 2 months, have you felt like you were \_\_\_\_\_



**K.A.R.E.**  
**KIDS AT RISK**  
**EDUCATION**  
**CODY ABRAM**  
**YOUTH COUNSELOR**

**1-800-KID-HELP**  
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## EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

## INTRODUCTION

1. What is your birthdate? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How hard would it be for you to develop a safe and healthy living situation for yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

(A.) never (B.) A little (C.) Some (D.) Good part (E.) Most always

## FEELINGS

3. Did things without thinking them through
4. Did not enjoy anything.....
5. Was bored.....
6. Felt grouchy, irritable, and in a bad mood.....
7. Felt depressed.....
8. Felt you couldn't do anything well.....
9. Felt you had no future.....
10. Felt that your work was poor.....
11. Had problems in your relationships with friends.....
12. had problems i your family relationships.....
13. In the last 6 months, have you felt that you wanted to die?
14. In the last 6 months, have your felt so low that you thought of suicide?  
explain \_\_\_\_\_

- 
15. Did you attempt suicide?
  16. How many times did you attempt suicide?

## SCHOOL

17. What kinds of grades do you make when you last attended?
18. How hard would it be for you to finish school?
19. Have you ever been suspended or expelled and why?

## EMPLOYMENT

20. In the last 6 months, have you worked at a paid job?
21. Are you currently employed?
22. How many hours per week do you work?
23. What is your pay?
24. How hard would it be for you to keep this (a) job?

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree

### SELF-ESTEEM

25. I feel that I have a number of good qualities...  
 26. I sometimes feel that I am a failure  
 27. I am able to do things as well as most other people  
 28. I certainly feel useless at times  
 29. At times, I think I am no good at all  
 30. I have little control over the things that happen to me.  
 31. I can do just about anything I really set my mind to do  
 32. What happens to me in the future depends mostly on me

### BEHAVIOR

33. Have you ran way in the last 6 months?  
 34. How many days in total were you on the run in the past 6 months?  
 35. During the last 6 months, have you threatened anyone with a knife or a gun or any other type of a weapon?  
 36. During the last 6 months, have you hurt someone badly i a fight so that they had a black eye?  
 37. During the last 6 months, have you deliberately smashed, destroyed, burnt, or damaged someone's property?  
 38. In the last 6 months, have been in trouble with the police?

### SUBSTANCE USE

39. On the average, how often did you use substance such as alcohol, , or other drugs over the past 6 months?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never                  | <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a week      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 times a month      | <input type="checkbox"/> Short concentrated periods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once a week      |   |

40. How often have you been high or drunk in the last 6 months?

41. In the last 6 months, have you missed or been sent home from school or work because of being high or drunk?

42. In the last 6 months have you been in trouble with the police in reference to drugs or alcohol?

43. Indicate use

	YES	NO
Alcohol	_____	_____
Marijuana	_____	_____
Cocaine	_____	_____
Heroin or opiates	_____	_____





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