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Family Health Problems

TR 1:10 – 2:25pm

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This essay completes my semester long experience with two residents at the Louis Gossette Residential Center, and after spending the past thirteen weeks getting to know two teenage boys who's lives somehow ended them up in a juvenile jail I've not only learned a great deal about their individual lives, but also how they play a part in the larger picture. I have also, through my brief yet intense relationship with these two boys, been not only on the receiving end sharing personal life stories but also on the giving side. Through weeks of conversing almost every Thursday afternoon since the onset of this adventure September 27th, there has been a cultural exchange taking place that has only allowed me to in a qualitative way explore the issue of Family Health. And all the mean while- with gathering field noted pertaining to my resident's lives; I've been gaining a more insightful awareness of issues such as race, gender, class, and age. This close contact with the juvenile justice system has also shed light on numerous loop holes and injustices the system- of which I am only more intrigued by and aspire to get involved in even after this final paper is handed in. As of today I am much capable and prepared to face the expectations of future careers- especially those that pertain to the interaction with youth. I have explored family health through hearing details about the many facets of family health problems and how they destine boys like Suddy and Marlon in a detention center rather than in a desk at university. Following is a the investigation of both Suddy's

and Marlon's lives as they relate to present day professional and peer reviewed literature pertaining to the countless relevant topics of poverty, child-hood intervention, families serving as protective assets, gang involvement, resiliency, school involvement, as well as participation in athletic programs, the role of peers, delinquent fathers, ethnic ties to violent behaviors, and immigration being linked to predictors of gang involvement. Both Suddy and Marlon provided me insight to the various topics listed above, but they do not each relate to every topic equally and therefore will only be applied to the concepts were it is fit to do so. And I begin my review of how Suddy and Marlon fit into the bigger picture with subject of poverty.

Poverty

Although the topic of poverty was never a grand tour question for any of our weeks at Gossette poverty is almost evident in the majority of the cases juveniles who've become incarcerated; whether it be income poverty or relative poverty- I have seen glimpses of how financial affluence has deterred opportunities for both Suddy and Marlon. The article *The Effects of Poverty on Child Health and Development* states with well-built confidence, "...poverty is correlated with a host of other social conditions that themselves have been shown to be detrimental to children." Furthermore it is said to be that extreme poverty early in life can have "detrimental effects on children's future life chances," and that's exactly what we're talking about here when it comes to both Suddy and Marlon- their life chances and the forces that are limiting those life chances to not be subject to violence and drugs but to be actively involved in any healthy and constructive form of success- whether it be academic or not. It's sad to report that during our weeks of

conversing- a specific focus on health or the health care they received was never achieved- from this information we could have gathered a better foundation on the residents tie with the medical system and more specifically- probably the Medicaid branch of government funded health care programs. It is valid to say that even if Suddy or Marlon did not experience what is considered persistent poverty it is very likely they at least experienced transitory poverty, which involves even the brief sporadic contact with poverty due to factors including fluctuating income- as is the case with Marlon. His mother, although considered in Columbia a well educated nurse, is constantly changing from one job to another- making money when and how ever feasible. This irregular flow of income may create emotional stress posed on her- as a single parent. More so evident is with the mother of Suddy- although relatively stable in her employment at Wal-Mart- it is safe to doubt that her income is suffice to provide adequate care for her ten children and two grandchildren. Without the support of an available husband- Suddy's mother must make due- but not without the taxing confrontation with income volatility- which is said to often not only formulate to increased emotional distress but ultimately lead parents "to be less nurturing and more punitive with their children." (Lawrence 467). Even if the latter were not entirely predictable from what I have gathered while speak with Suddy the former is and easily filled just simply by the fact that she was never home nearly as often to nurture as she was away to provide- the although weak- vital source of income.

In terms of wealth- it was shocking to see that "overall, black families suffer from a median net worth one twelfth that of white families." (Lawrence 469) And although

neither Suddy nor Marlon were black they are ethnically diverse from the Caucasian status and their cultural backgrounds- when analyzed in the grand scheme of statistical comparisons- Suddy's Laotian and Marlon's Columbian heritage more closely tie them to those statistics not represented by white samples. And the degree to which Asian Americans and Hispanic American experience wealth is not mentioned in the article, but if one were to see the vast gap between white and black Americans- it can be safe to conclude that such a gap, of varying size, would exist between Asian American, Hispanic American and white American incomes.

Overall poverty has been tied to a slue of detrimental life experiences or ecologies of life such as: the availability of basic educational and health services, job opportunities, and social networks. And questioned in the article on poverty and child health are the "unobserved behavioral and cultural factors that may exert important effects beyond poverty alone," (Lawrence 472). And these additional factors are important to consider because they include: work-related psychological stress, as well as physical exertion on the job, prenatal behavioral, and ultimately alcohol and drug consumption. Furthermore are the direct emotional effects poverty has on the psychological well-being of the children; "as the length of time spent in poverty increases, so too do the children's feelings of unhappiness, anxiety, and dependence," (Lawrence 476). This nicely links to the question of how Suddy's and Marlon's contact with poverty has influenced their antecedents to negative behavior that ended them in Gossette.

Early Childhood Intervention

The next area I'd like to examine in relation to lives of my residents is the idea of implementing early childhood intervention programs in high risk neighborhoods to combat the influences of living in those high risk neighborhoods. Both Suddy and Marlon were directly exposed to violence through exposure to their communities and neither of them attended a program in early childhood, nor did their families receive any additional family support from organizations such as the Child-Parent Center program- highlighted in the article *Effects of a School-Based, Early Childhood Intervention on Adult Health and Well-being*. "Early Childhood Interventions (ECIs) have demonstrated consistent positive effects on children's health and well-being" and have shown to be influential on curbing the rates of educational delinquency which is in and of itself a significant predictor of health and economic well being in adulthood. The outcomes pertaining to the implementation of ECI's were measured in five categories: educational attainment, criminal behavior, economic status, health status and behavior, and mental health. With the implementation of ECI's these subsequent observations were made. In terms of educational attainment- noticed were higher rates of high school completion, and overall more years of education. Differences in crime were remarkably noticed with lower rates of felony arrest and incarceration. Additionally, extended intervention was linked to lower rates of arrest for violence and violent convictions as well as multiple incarcerations. With regards to the economic status of the study's participants- there were noticeable differences in the extended program as well as the school-age sample. Those involved in the school-age participation "had fewer months receiving any public aid" which includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Food Stamps, or Medicaid.

With extended programs participants, there were high rates of full-time employment. By and large- the intervention program on the preschool group showed to influence the higher rates of health insurance coverage and “lower rates of out of home placement in the child welfare system;” the intervention on the school-aged group showed the group was less likely to “receive disability assistance as young adults;” and the extended intervention program showed the culmination of all three of these above listed benefits. Lastly the mental health component to this longitudinal study showed that “the intervention group was less likely to have one or more depressive symptoms.” (Reynolds 737). If such an ECI were implemented in Suddy’s Utica neighborhood or Marlon’s NYC community- we can only infer what outcomes would have arisen.

Family, Risk, and Gangs

Family has been an ongoing theme and point of interest and great concentration when it came to my discussions with Suddy and Marlon. Suddy is one of 10 children of his mother. Two of his siblings have children and there are three different biological fathers in the mix- although one of them has (only recently) decided to stick around. Sad, yet true to say- Suddy does not know his father and only in the very distant sense does he know the third semi-present father to his younger brother. Marlon on the other hand has a twin brother- whom which he does everything- and two biological parents both of which he knows on a personal/intimate level. But he does not have any present communication with his father due to the fact that he is incarcerated for some time now. Consequentially, his mother and brother are the only two viable sources of family connectedness; but that doesn’t mean he’s any worse or better off than Suddy. Although

emerging from two very different familial dynamics both Suddy and Marlon have faced issued regarding family connectedness. And as the article *The Family as a Protective Asset in Adolescent Development* discusses, there is evidence supporting the concept families fulfilling that role as a protective asset and have the ability to help defend young people from risk. “Family remains a strong factor in moderating teen risk behavior,” (Kington 102).

Firstly we must address the issue of setting up a well defined linguistically based framework for better understanding and communicating in the context of the statistical findings pertaining to youth, risk, risk behavior, risk factors, and family support. Answer the question “What is risk?” preliminarily involves the question “What is high-risk behavior?” The article elaborates that high-risk behavior does not only included the “...negative health behaviors of drug and alcohol use [with an emphasis on marijuana use and binge drinking], unprotected sexual intercourse, and violence,” (Kington 102) but also “...antisocial behavior, driving under the influence of alcohol, [and] gambling,” (Kington 104). The second question to ask as a follow up to “What is risk?” is the question “What are risk factors?” Risk factors were discussed in terms of environmental exposure and predisposition. Such examples are “access to firearms, gang involvement, poverty, minimal parental supervision, and neighborhood characteristics” (Kington 103). And lastly, we ask “What exactly does ‘family support’ specifically mean?” And as defined by the Search Institute, ‘family support’ “provides high levels of love and support” and explained in more detail Richman said that ‘family support’ entailed social concepts which can be broken down into 8 categories: listening support, appreciation of effort,

encouragement, emotional support, values clarification, reality confirmation, tangible support, and personal support. These categories were further explained briefly mentioning how everyday parenting tasks satisfied many of the standards, such as, loaning money, helping with homework, and providing transportation (Kington 106). In addition to the two above-mentioned definitions there were also additional slightly varying views on the assortment of other factors involved in family support or protective families including: positive family communication, boundaries, parent involvement in schooling, and high expectations (Kington 106). And within the basis of the comprehensive designation the findings of several studies are able to show that overall “...teens who rated their families as highly supportive and emotionally positive engaged in significantly less health-risk behavior 6 years later than those teens whose families were less supportive” (Kington 107).

Now to relate this literature to the lives of Suddy and Marlon... Both of the adolescent boys that I worked with through my class project at Gossette exhibited and shared with me many of their life stories many of which were filled with high risk behaviors, involving various risk factors and concerning family support or the lack there of. Suddy, only presently a 14 year old boy- has partaken in, from what was shared with me, drug and alcohol use and violence. Although not concluding it was inexistent- alcohol use was not nearly as discussed as his daily marijuana use. Smoking weed every day before school (school which he would then skip) was routine for Suddy; and the violence either experienced in him home from older siblings or on the streets within his gang were evident in our conversations. Marlon although also a member of, oddly

enough the same gang, the Crips, did not reveal through sharing of stories too many cases of violent exposure. But Marlon did also share his relatively habitual use of marijuana. Marlon also did share with me, that once while visiting Columbia- he tried cocaine, but after not enjoying the same pleasing effect as marijuana- he never continued the use of that drug. Unlike Suddy- Marlon did exhibit more clues to alcohol use. Again within the conversation reflecting on his time in Columbia- Marlon spoke heavily about partying until 5:00 am in clubs and what not. No specific amount of alcohol was discussed and so no accurate inference of binge drinking can be made. Regarding the onset of unprotected sex, again I am unable to assume the nature of Marlon's sexual experiences. Losing his virginity did come up in dialogue but beyond knowing that mere fact- I am in the dark. Judging one of the last mentioned risk behaviors discussed in the article, antisocial behavior, is somewhat difficult because Suddy especially- their social interactions varied from the normal expectations of youth. Suddy, being one of the younger siblings and being an admirer of his older siblings gang involvement; he has followed in their footsteps but in doing so has lost his connection with youth his age. When I would ask about his peers- for the most part- they'd be in school while he was home hanging out with kids that had already graduated high school. So in terms of social behaviors- Suddy's is quiet in appropriate and detrimental to his normal development as an adolescent boy. Neither boy- both under legal guidelines- reported driving under the influence or gambling.

The issue of risk factors as it pertains to Suddy and Marlon is quiet contextually rich because environmental exposure, access to firearms, gang involvement, parental

supervision and neighborhood characteristics are of great substance in the tale of their lives. Suddy and Marlon both described their environment- predominantly with relation to their community/neighborhood- as “negative” and filled with crime, drugs, and violence (similar themes that weaved their way into their lives). Suddy would lie in bed for hours because the sound of a gunshot caused such an anxiety would not allow him to fall asleep. Talk about environmental exposure- Suddy’s brother Philip was shot when he was 14- and was an enormous event for Suddy- when he could no longer deny that safety did not exist somewhere in his community. The issue of firearms is another grave issue of concern- especially since both Suddy and Marlon- not only own firearms but also are intensely involved with the Crips. Ultimately this entire world of destructivity runs on without a single skip in the steady step largely due to the lack of parental supervision. It is certain that Marlon’s mother is able to play a more supervisory role over her two boys unlike Suddy’s mother who has 10 children to oversee, but still there exists a lack of involvement coming from Marlon’s mother that is only negatively affecting Marlon’s life chances to become positively involved in his school and community rather than negatively involved in violence and crime. Analyzing why such a strong disinterest exists for Suddy’s and Marlon’s mother will be addressed later on when the topic of immigration comes into light. Continuing on the risk factors that comprise Suddy’s and Marlon’s life, fire arms, gangs and the lack of supervision has enabled; Suddy to not only keep a gun in the house, carry it to school, but to use it to feel powerful shooting at rats and squirrels; and for Marlon to succeed in robbing individuals using his gun as means to gain compliance.

The next, rather hefty, concern addressed in the Kingon's and Sullivan's article is the issue of family support. Family support- as already briefly explained- involves such behaviors as: listening, showing appreciation for their child's efforts, providing encouragement, emotional support, clarifying values, confirming reality, supplying tangible support such as money, or personal support such as assisting with homework or providing transportation, as well as being a logical communicator, setting boundaries, having high expectations and being involved in their child's schooling. I will address the issue of family support relating first to Suddy.

Suddy's mother as already alluded, is not present in his life and seems to lack the necessary time to provide the listening, appreciation, encouragement and support even if the skills were there. Suddy shared with me that he only saw his mother on the weekends sometimes, and even when she was home during the week at nights he couldn't spend any alone or quality time with her because there'd be so many other things to get done and her limited time had to be split between her household responsibilities as well as between 10 children. The only avenue in which I saw Suddy being provided support was from his older siblings- Long, Philip, Jackie and Linda. And what ever value clarifying or reality confirmation from his older siblings didn't take the form of being very constructive being that two of them themselves were involved in gangs and were detained for criminal behavior. Such responsibilities as homework was a non-existent issue for Suddy being that he never went to school and didn't carry much more than a pen to class when he did go; nor did I ever hear or get the inclination that his family had high

expectations or expectations in general beyond- the very clear defined expectation that you do not tattle or snitch on anyone.

Marlon has a somewhat different tale to tell because his relationship with his mother is much closer and significant than Suddy's is. From what I can tell- Marlon's mother succeeds in addressing the communication requirements for family support. She is in constant communication with both of her incarcerated boys and seemed to possess that characteristic all throughout their lives. Their relationship is characterized by Marlon as being very loving and sufficient in emotional support. But in terms of providing homework help or being involved in schooling- that is a challenge that Marlon's mother faces. She is a native Spanish speaker who hasn't developed very much English skills and therefore is at a disadvantage for being actively involved in Marlon's studies even if she desired to be.

Family structure was briefly conferred; "...living in an intact family...was also a significant predictor of health-promoting behaviors" (Kington 107). This was the case involving consistent oral contraceptive use among teen women which was not only linked to intact families positively affecting this specific health behavior but additionally how it was both maternal and paternal support that significantly impacted the result of this health-promoting behavior. On the same topic of sexual health, parental support or family connectedness was another unique influence that influenced the healthy behaviors of adolescents in regards to sexual activity and pregnancy; "parental disapproval of both sexual activity and use of contraception were associated with delayed sexual onset and

decreased risk of pregnancy-..."(Kingon 108). Family hardiness and other unique supportive aspects of family life, such as observing celebrations, "were all negatively associated with adolescent substance abuse," (Kingon108). And the feeling of strong familial connectedness has positive effects against hopelessness it's been shown that those who have "a strong sense of family connectedness were much less likely than those with weaker family connectedness to attempt suicide," (Kingon 109). The only surprising conclusion revealed was about the protective influence of family was not significantly associated with violence as much as the support from other adults was proven to be (Kingon 108). And although not an essential part of Suddy's life and not so much even Marlon's life, the issue of delayed sexual onset- although seemingly innocent since neither of the my two adolescent Gossette residents have shown intense sexual relations- the fact that Marlon lost his virginity around the age of 13 does provide relevance to the issue of delayed sexual onset and does pose a concern for early pregnancy. Furthermore, the fact that both Suddy and Marlon do not live in an intact family shows an obvious disadvantageous risk for future pregnancy risk and illegitimate fathering. The article *Delinquent Dads in Detention* by Sue Mahan and Kelly Browning addresses the issue the male/fathers role in teenage pregnancies and the subsequent impacts absent fathers have on the delinquency of their children- more so their sons.

The article really addresses the issue of parental roles influencing juvenile delinquency, exists is "a strong correlation between parental factors and juvenile delinquency;" (Mahan 94) and the further does this article exemplify that there is there a connection between overall family functioning and predictors of juvenile delinquency.

“Researches Cove and Crutchfield examined approximately 600 families in Chicago, and found that boys from single-parent households were much more likely to be delinquent than boys from intact families,” (Mahan 94). This finding of Cove and Crutchfield is just a repeated observation additional studies have made- and although well known in the world of juvenile literature- it still doesn’t get the attention and influence it ought with those designing and managing intervention programs. “One survey shows that boys with criminal fathers were more than twice as likely to become delinquents,” (Mahan 94). Even back in 1963 researchers Bacon, Child, and Barry had already made significant discoveries showing that “societies with relatively low father availability have a higher rate of crime than do societies in which the father is relatively available,” (Mahan 95). And it shouldn’t be surprising to hear in today’s literature the same story when nothing had been done to target and help epidemic of absent fathers spawning delinquent sons. Additionally, the article touches not only on the delinquent behaviors of boys with out available fathers, but it mentions “that alcohol and marijuana use, as well as sexual activity rates for father-absent males is greater,” (Mahan 95). To say the least- this article points out that “boys reared without their fathers appear to be substantially disadvantaged, (Mahan 95).

Although seemingly not so related- a good portion of the beginning half of the article is very useful and applicable to the two residents I worked with at Gossette. I found what the author had to say pertaining to the criminality of fatherless adolescent males very relevant to what situations I was dealing with regards to Suddy and Marlon. This heavily qualitatively based research certainly provides insight into necessary realms

of parental development especially for teenage parents, and if I were to go outside Suddy's and Marlon's individual lives we'd see that illegitimacy is present in both of their lives either due to their parents conception of them or their siblings conceiving of children at very young ages. Suddy's sister Jackie, at the age of 13 or 14 became pregnant. This provides an additional point of view- giving a clear example of how Suddy's paternal absenteeism will not only impact his delinquency but also that of his sister Jackie and other siblings.

The last issue that I wish to address in this section is gang involvement- and the role of family and protective factors related to gang membership. Although the topic of gangs has already been brought up in several different contexts- I will now focus on the detrimental affects of gang involvement as it pertains to Suddy's and Marlon's experience. The article *Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Gang Involvement among Urban African American Adolescents* examined the prevalence of exposure to violence, resilience factors including parental monitoring and family connectedness, PTSD-like symptoms, and other risk behaviors among gang members versus nonmembers. (Li 172) The studies researches speculated that gang involvement would experience high levels of exposure to violence, have less resilient features, have less family monitoring or family connectedness, experience more PTSD symptoms due some of the previously mentioned factors and be associated with higher risk-behavior involvement (Li 172). It was also hypothesized that these studied facets were interrelated and there is some level of influence such as strong family involvement could impact resiliency characteristics and ultimately impact gang involvement and therefore

manipulate the likely hood the adolescent would be expose to more violence and subsequently have a higher probably of experiencing PTSD-like symptoms.

Ultimately "...youth involved in gangs (current or former) were more likely to have been involved in delinquent behaviors, drug use and perpetration of crimes than non-gang members" (Li 181). Most of my literature and residential comparison will be in the context of Suddy's life- being that he is the resident of the two that I heard most about gangs and their impact on their lives. After already having addressed the issue of family we begin to see findings where "strong family involvement and resiliency protected against gang involvement" (Li 172) and family communication as well as parental monitoring were seen to be a significant factor in youth's association with gangs. Resilience, an issue of significant focus in juvenile delinquency literature will be discussed later on, but in term of this particular study- it was measured in terms of- satisfaction with health, physical activity, social problem solving, self esteem, academic performance, and family involvement (Li 177). About 90% of the youth were living with a biological parent, but only 29% of them were living with both biological parents. But when the average was broken down by group stark differences were noticed where 75% of current gang members, 88% of former gang members and 935 of non-gang members were living with a biological parent. The same pattern is applicable to living with both biological parents (Li 180). Interestingly, a Parental Monitoring Scale was used to assess "the extent to which youth perceived that their parents knew where the youth were, who they were with, and they were doing" (Li 177). Suddy every so often would make

comments that his mother did not know where he was and had no idea of the dangerous and criminal activity he was partaking in with his gang- the Crips.

Part of the study looked at reasons why youth joined gangs and theorized that part of that reason was that, "...youth may be looking to gang involvement to provide emotional support that may be lacking from their family." This seems completely applicable to Suddy's situation. And overall it was discovered that "...decreased parental monitoring and family ties are associated with membership in gangs and ... involvement in delinquent and violent behaviors," (Li 173). Again Suddy's family situation seems to be the opposite of a protective factor in his participation with gangs and subsequently gang related violence or crime. The definition of violence exposure included: "shooting, beating, weapon carrying, knife attacking, killing, drug use, and drug trafficking." Suddy has definitely been exposed to intense amount of violence- his incarcerating crime being violent itself should be evident enough of his history with violence. His very own brother being shot, carrying a gun to school, carrying a knife as if it were a necessary accessory, assaulting other individuals, and smoking marijuana daily all seem to fit the above definition of violence expose which has been linked to detrimental effects on health and well-being.

They then asked the youth if they were victims of violence or witnesses of the violence. Further more Victimization was broken down in drug related and non-drug factors and witnessing yielded categorical structure with four factors: violence, against others, nonfatal violence, drug trafficking, and death/deadly force (177). Overall the

youths involved in gangs (current or former) were much more exposed to violence either as a victim or witness.

The video Bui Doi was one of the best resources of information that I found that fit well with my experience with Suddy and his unique membership in the Crips. Producers Ahrin Mishan and Rick Rothenberg created a documentary that looked at gang involvement through the eyes of a Vietnamese immigrant. And although Suddy is Laotian- the same Asian background is useful in making comparisons. The film was supported by the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) and it focused on the character Rick Phan, who is a young adult Vietnamese immigrant “currently serving time in prison for armed robbery.” The film “recounts his evolution from a 13 year old immigrant to a life of crime.” Ricky Phan details his entry into American school after having immigrated from Vietnam. He then shares his stories of involvement with Asian American gangs, his illegal activity, and eventually his incarceration. Ricky- born in 1975 in Vietnam eventually moves to the United States around the age of 13/14. He soon found sanction with a group of Vietnam kids- whom which he felt more connected. He enjoyed this feeling for the better part of his relationship with them. He felt as if he were apart of a whole new family- “one from the heart.” And his life became just like a movie- with “lots of action and love... everything.” But this Vietnamese family of friends was more of gang with beatings as initiations that a traditional family. Before- when Ricky was younger and uninvolved in a gang- he saw them desirable- because of the money- pretty girls and respect associated with them. But after some time of being involved with a gang- it was no longer fun.

Suddy is still quiet young in comparison to Ricky's current age/ the age he was when the documentary was finished, but it is easy to see a similar longing of Ricky from when he was 13/14. Both Suddy and Ricky seemed to be lacking an emotional connectedness that they believed to have found through being involved in a gang. There is also a fixed sense of alienation after joining a gang because once you feel apart of a family- despite how dysfunctional it may be- feelings of alienation begin to subside with each bonding moment of criminal activity.

Another issue related to the above existence of gangs is friendship and what influences friendships have on individual behaviors. As stated in the introduction to Maxwell's article *Friends: The Role of Peer Influence Across Adolescent Risk Behaviors-* friends play an essential role in influencing both harmful and positive activities, and because of this influential role that they serve it is worthy to focus a study addressing the level of influence and finding out if there is a consistent pattern across activities and conditions in term of social influence. (Maxwell 267 & 274) In the highlighted study five risk behaviors were examined: smoking cigarettes, drinking, alcohol, using marijuana, chewing tobacco, and sexual debut.

In order to well define the study and all it entailed social influence was defined as "when people continually compare themselves with others to ascertain whether or not their own behavior is appropriate," (Maxwell 267). And being that adolescents experience an overwhelming accumulation of significant events such as the biological

change/puberty and their new social demands- they tend to be particularly vulnerable to peer influence. Peer influence was examined pertaining specifically to same-sex friendships. And in this case both Suddy and Marlon would only be somewhat applicable to this study begin their primary relationships have been with family members or friends of the opposite sex. But regardless of that boundary the study still has some surprising similarities regarding friend selection and the influential behaviors of friends on individual behaviors. The use of drugs- particularly the smoking of marijuana, as well as the mere gang involvement and violent behavior are clear examples of when Suddy and Marlon have been influenced by their peers decision to involve themselves in those activities.

And for a more comprehensive understanding- it was just as important to know how the process of choosing friends occurs. It is believed that friend selection happens in response to physical proximity, age and lifestyle selection. Both of these characteristics hold true for both Suddy and Marlon- and apply to most friendships formed, especially in urban settings. And these circumstances are without a doubt influential on influential patterns because there are different patterns where type of friendship formed is associated with the level of impact/influence the friendship has on an individual. For example, “new friends are likely to have a large affect on a teen by anchoring preexisting similarities,” (Maxwell 268). Additionally the terminology referring to the two varied forms of friendship are as follows: heterophilic and homophilic. Again these two terms begin to represent that there are different types of friendship and with each varying form a different degree of influence is present. Suddy and Marlon exhibit more homophilic

relationships primarily because of their ethnic background and gang involvement- both of which have lumped them into a group of friends with similar interests and criminal activities.

The data also showed- differences in terms of age, gender, and race. Age seemed to have a substantial impact and brings to mind the fact that Suddy's friendships with older adolescents may have significantly influenced his life decisions such it was stated to do so in the study... "older teens were more likely to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, use marijuana, and be sexually active," (Maxwell 271). Gender-wise, boys were more likely to smoke cigarettes, use marijuana, and chew tobacco. When race was concerned- white respondents were more likely to be cigarette smokers or tobacco chewers; "Hispanic participants were more likely to use marijuana," this statistic pertains more to Marlon and is quiet interesting when in reality just comparing the sexual history of Suddy and Marlon it fits, sadly, nicely with the studies data.

Overall though, when peer/friend influence was factored into the preliminary data, the data showed that friends T1 behavior significantly predicts each adolescents T2 risk activity. The peer influence fluctuated between activity. With attention given solely to marijuana- "The marijuana use rate [was] twice as high among T1 nonusers who had a T1 marijuana using friend (19%). The same pattern applies to sexual debut, "which also demonstrates an uptake pattern," (274). Each activity drew noticeable conclusions but collectively they were unable to single out one "consistent pattern for the effect of peer influence across behaviors," (2724).

Ultimately we'll talk about the concept of resilience- a concept that is not easily defined, studies or understood- but is the key to understanding youth and what limits the influence of risk factors or the disadvantageous life.

This article focused on the idea of resilience- and what resilience entails. The article *Adolescent Resilience: A Framework for Understanding Health Development in the Face of Risk* the authors explain that “Resilience refers to the process of overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with risk” (399). They also began to explain that in order to study resilience there needs to be the presence of both risk and promotive factors. And promotive factors are seen as anything that helps bring an adolescent away from negative outcomes and towards positive outcomes. Forms of protective factors are either internal (assets) or external (resources). Example assets include “competence, coping skills, and self-efficacy” (399). And resources- external to the individual- are: “parental support, adult monitoring, or community organizations that promote positive youth development” (399). A risk example the authors used was poverty. As already discussed poverty puts adolescents at risk for numerous negative outcomes such as violent behaviors and poor academic achievement. The resilience framework approaches this situation from the aspect that they, “recognize that, despite these risks, many adolescents growing up in poverty exhibit positive outcomes” (400).

One of the articles most interesting topics was the concept of resilient trajectories. There was a table displaying the various outcomes (positive or negative) based on their risk (low or high), and each of the four combinations resulted in a varied trajectory. In essence; “Adolescents in cell C are exposed to low levels of the risk factor and achieve negative outcomes. The adolescents in this cell exhibit an unexpected trajectory....Finally, cell D represents adolescents with the expected outcome in risk models because they are exposed to high levels of the risk factor, which results in negative outcomes.” (400).

The resident I'd feel most satisfied with in speak about resilience is Marlon. Inspiring beyond words this kid has shown me that despite is two juvenile lock up he's fully ready to achieve his goals when he gets out of Gossette. With each weekly visit I was even more inspired by his ambition to change his life- and he always referred to it as stages- as if the same terms in Gossette (involving the different colored shoe laces) applied outside of the barbed wires. Here is a transcribed copy of an essay Marlon wrote while in Gossette.

Who Am I

How are you doing ladies and gentleman? My name is Marlon Arango. I am sixteen years old. I was born on 4/14/1991. I am an American citizen. I am bilingual. I speak Spanish and English very well. I even write and read in both languages.

I am very creative, and I like to learn new things. I am not scared to try something new. I try new solutions to overcome my problems. I am a person that's able to take and follow directions. I am a person who completes his assignments because I like to finish what I start.

I am a person that takes pride and dedicate his time to do the best I am capable of doing. I am very competitive. I like to be the best. I like to stand out. I challenge and push myself to excel in what I do. I am a person that is confident and determined to do anything. I am a person that achieves what has to be achieved. I develop an attitude that's says nothing is impossible and nothing can detain me from achieving my goals.

I am a person that treats people the away that I want to be treated. I am very respectful, polite, patient, honest, generous, and hard working. I always try to think positively. I am a person that likes to help other people [youth].

My long term goal is to be somebody who tries to make difference in youths lives with my experience as a youth growing up in these environments with gangs, drugs, and different kinds of violence. I am going to try to the best of my ability to instill in all youth that violence, gangs and drugs are not the answer. Those things are not going to get you anywhere in life. I am going to teach these youth how to handle different situations in positive ways. That's what I want to be when I get older. That's Who I am.

And he is a wonderful example of someone who is striving to be resilient. He is overcoming his very own risk behaviors and the present risk factors in his life. I've truly enjoyed working both Suddy and Marlon throughout this entire semester and will never forget my conversations with them or my experience at Gossette.

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