



Greetings!

We have wonderful news this month! NEARI Press and Training Center received a \$50,000 grant from Raliance to implement our new Parent 2 Parent project. See below for more information and for the link to the official press release.

And the article we discuss this month is exciting in its call for the use of a strengths-based approach for youthful offenders to achieve success in returning to their communities after detention or incarceration. The Australian authors apply the emerging lens of positive psychology in examining how youth can receive the support they need to avoid recidivating. They conclude that the use of a deficit-based risk-prediction model of youth re-offense may still be warranted, but that an effective companion approach that recognizes youths' desire for autonomy, competency, and relatedness can go a long way towards successful reintegration.

At NEARI Press and Training Center, we value research that offers us new ideas and tools, especially ones that are compassionate and recognize the unique needs of children and adolescents who have perpetrated harm. Although the article does not focus on youth who have perpetrated sexual harm – in fact, the participants in the study are identified as youthful offenders who have *not* perpetrated sexual harm – its insights are valuable and potentially transferable to the kids with whom we work.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you about articles, authors, or topics you'd like us to cover in our monthly newsletters and webinars. Please contact Alisa at: aklein@neari.com to share your thoughts.

We're grateful for your interest in NEARI, and for the vital work that you do,

Craig Latham, Executive Director, NEARI
Alisa Klein, Director, NEARI Press and Training Center

[Check out our NEW 2016-2017 NEARI Press Catalog!](#)

This month, David S. Prescott and Alisa Klein examine the article:

"Applying Positive Psychology to Illuminate the Needs of Adolescent Males Transitioning Out of Juvenile Detention"

AUTHORS

Danielle Tracey and José Hanham
(Please see below for full citation and abstract.)

THE QUESTION

How can we best move beyond employing risk-and deficit-based models and focus on helping adolescents to prevent further crime? Can we use a strengths-based approach rooted in principles of positive psychology and self-determination theory to encourage a better, crime-free life for young offenders returning to their communities?

THE RESEARCH

Understanding the risk factors that contribute to new crimes is important, but a new focus on adolescents' strengths to help them to achieve a life without crime has emerged in recent years. This study interviewed young male offenders involved in a voluntary mentorship program, their mentors, and a caseworker, about their experiences as the young offenders transitioned from a detention facility back into their communities. The researchers sought to identify the common themes and key motivating factors that encouraged the young offenders' desistance from re-offending upon re-entry.

The researcher conducted semi-structured open-ended interviews with all of the youth participants over three time periods:

1. While the young men were in the detention facility;
2. Three to six months following their re-entry into the community; and
3. Nine to 18 months following their re-entry into the community.

By also gathering the perspectives of the mentors and caseworker, the researchers sought to explore whether or not they had similar or different perspectives from the youth about their re-entry process. The mentors and caseworker were interviewed towards the end of the study or kept journals of their mentees' experiences throughout the entire period.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The authors found that the young men participating in the study shared some common emotions associated with their re-entry. These included a desire for a better life and a sense of fear about returning to their old lives that had led them to offending. The authors also found three key themes – all aligned closely with three primary goals of self-determination theory – that drove the plans and actions of the participants before their release and after their return home:

1. **Relatedness:** a strong desire to reconnect with family and partners after they had “burnt a lot of bridges;”
2. **Competency:** the desire to be enrolled in training, find work, earn a living, develop social aptitude and confidence, and make healthy and safe choices; and
3. **Autonomy:** management of their relationships with their previous peer groups in a way that would allow them to remain in control of their actions, along with gaining access to every day freedoms like, “being able to wear my own clothes and being able to walk down the street.”

The researchers noted that over the period of transition, the nature and weight of these needs shifted and varied.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

This study provides further empirical support for positive, strengths-based approaches such as those described by Kevin Powell and many others in NEARI Press books such as *Current Applications* and *Very Different Voices*. These findings also illustrate how professionals treating youth do well to remember that adolescents of all backgrounds have goals that they share with all other humans. These include the desire for relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Interventions that incorporate these goals will likely benefit adolescents more than those that focus simply on risks.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

Our field has its roots both in the promotion of healthy lives for clients and community safety more broadly. Considerable energy has gone into studying risk factors and treatment needs; however, early exploration was typically deficit-based and did not focus on identifying how best to develop empirically supported strengths-based approaches. Our historical risk-and deficits-based emphasis was certainly understandable in the context in which it occurred.

These findings point to the fact that it is time to expand our knowledge and practice.

ABSTRACT

Reducing the recidivism of young offenders is a critical research issue, not only to enhance the future outcomes for the young person but also to reduce the future risk to the community. Navigating the immediate transition from detention back into the community is positioned as a critical milestone. This small qualitative study describes how young offenders participating in a formal mentoring program in Australia experienced the transition from detention to the community and the intrinsic drivers of their behaviour throughout this transition. Perspectives of their mentors and caseworker were also solicited. Importantly, their stories were interpreted through the lens of positive psychology and self-determination theory to discuss the relevance of one's pursuit of autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Increasing our understanding of these intrinsic motivators will assist young offenders to pursue a better life away from crime and benefit both themselves and the wider community.

CITATION

Tracey, D. and Hanham, J. (2017). Applying Positive Psychology to Illuminate the Needs of Adolescent Males Transitioning Out of Juvenile Detention. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 61(1), 64–79.

[NEARI Newsletter Past Issues](#)



NEARI Press and Training Center Receives \$50,000 Grant from Raliance to Launch Parent 2 Parent Project!

NEARI Press and Training Center has been selected to receive a grant of \$50,000 from Raliance, a national collaborative formed to distribute funds donated by the National Football League (NFL) to end sexual violence in one generation. The funding will support the roll-out of NEARI's new Parent 2 Parent (P2P) project to prevent child sexual abuse by providing parents and other caretakers with resources, tools, and educational materials to ensure children's healthy sexual development. NEARI will work with consulting experts in the field, Becky Palmer, David Prescott, Cordelia Anderson, Billie-Jo Grant, Jenny Coleman, and others to implement the project.

NEARI Press and Training Center was one of only 14 nationwide grant recipients in a very competitive process to receive funding from Raliance. The grants are awarded to organizations implementing promising practices or policies.

NEARI Press and Training Center is grateful to Raliance and the

To read the official press release in full, please click [here](#).

Training Opportunity with Dr. Phil Rich: Conducting Juvenile Sexual Risk Assessments

Date: Monday-Wednesday, June 26-28, 2017

Location: LaSalle School, Albany, NY

Cost: \$450.00; Early birdspecial: \$395 if registering before April 30, 2017



Discounted hotel rooms will be madeavailable.

This three day training workshop will provide instruction and practiceexperience in administration of sexual risk assessment for juveniles who havepreviously engaged in sexually abusive behavior. The workshop will cover theprocess of risk assessment, from theory, method, and instrumentation to casestudy and applied practice, including case formulation. Day one will review anddiscuss the process and methods of risk assessment, the construction ofcontemporary risk assessment instruments and their on-going development overtime, risk factors for sexual recidivism and protective factors that helpbuffer against and decrease risk, and the empirical standing and validity ofjuvenile risk assessment instruments. Days two and three will focus on theapplication of the assessment process, use and completion of the riskassessment instrument, comprehensive evaluation, information gathering andclinical interviews, case formulation, and the written evaluation report, andwill include cases studies and discussion and the completion of riskassessments by workshop participants. Participants will gain a thoroughunderstanding of juvenile sexual risk assessment, understand the use of riskassessment instrument, and gain feedback-driven practice experience.

And coming this Fall!

Remember to look out for NEARI's Falltraining with Phil Rich, "Contemporary Practices in the Treatment of Youth WhoHave Sexually Abused: A Five-Day Training Course."

NEARI Press and Training Center Webinars and Courses



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April 11, 2017
Practice Self-Regulation™ a
Trauma-Informed Approach for
Adolescent Sexual Health



Book: The TOP Workbook for Sexual Health, **By:** Joann Schladale
Webinar Presenter: Joann Schladale
Date: April 11, 2017
Time: 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM EST
Host: Craig Latham
CE credits available for this webinar!

Please consider becoming a sponsor of our exciting 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 NEARI Press and Training Center Webinar series. We have a great lineup of nationally recognized authors presenting their workbooks, research, and approaches to working with youth with sexual behavior problems.

Past NEARI webinars can be found [here](#).

NEARI ONLINE COURSES

Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors
- From Natural and Healthy to Disturbed

By: Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D.
Duration: 3-4 hours; CE Credits: 4

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Engaging Bystanders in Sexual Violence Prevention

By: Joan Tabachnick
Duration: 1-2 hours; CE Credits: 2

For more information or to sign up, visit our website at www.nearipress.org OR contact Diane Langelier at 413.540.0712 x14, email info@nearipress.org.

Current Practice for Treating Adolescents Who Have Sexually Abused

By: David S. Prescott, LICSW
Duration: 3-4 hours; CE Credits: 4

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QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK

Please email us at aklein@neari.com or call us at 413.540.0712, X35 to let us know if you have a question or a topic you would like us to cover.

We value your trust. We will not sell or give your contact information to any other organization.



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Programming and resources for at-risk children and youth and the professionals who work with them.

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