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Getting Out of Trouble: Understanding Developmental Pathways from Early Adolescence to Adulthood

Kathleen Elizabeth Burgoyne

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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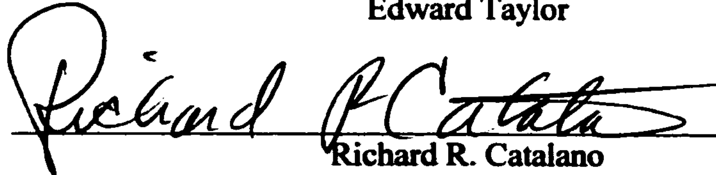

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Abstract

Getting Out of Trouble: Understanding Developmental Pathways from Early Adolescence to Adulthood

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This comparative case study describes the development, from childhood to early adulthood, of eight people who were failing in school and involved in criminal activity during early adolescence. At age twenty-five: three respondents were thriving; three were struggling to live independently, and two share characteristic with both groups.

There are subtle yet important differences in circumstances and conditions in which the respondents grew up, and these differences influenced their developmental trajectories. All of the respondents were exposed to multiple environmental and personal risk factors. However, this did not, in and of itself, prevent them from thriving in early adulthood. Instead, it appears to be the cumulative weight of multiple, violent, exploitive childhood experiences, particularly exposure to domestic violence and child abuse, and multiple personal problems, particularly difficulties with addiction and psychiatric disorders, that weighed down the struggling respondents' ability to overcome the challenges they faced.

The interrelationship between oppression and risk factors is complex. In several of the respondents' stories racism and sexism appear to create, facilitate, or augment the role of risk factors. Sometimes what is perceived, as a behavior problem by mainstream standards may be an attempt to establish a particular racial or gender identity. It may be that issues of power and domination undergird many risk factors.

Some of the differences in the respondents' development can also be attributed to differences in the kinds of opportunities the respondents were given, the

degree to which their capabilities were noticed and encouraged, and the kind of support or nurturance they received. Each of the thriving respondents had close relationships with at least two people who made a significant commitment of time and resources them. These individuals attended to their particular needs, encouraged their coping efforts and competence, and helped them to define themselves as valuable and capable. The African American respondents felt more comfortable accepting support and guidance from people who shared their cultural background and life experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

List of Figures iii

List of Tables iv

Chapter I: **Understanding Developmental Pathways: The Problem for Research and Practice** 1
Explanations for Youths' Developmental Pathways 4
Why study developmental pathways intensively and from multiple perspectives 24

Chapter II: **Conceptualizing The Research Problem** 28
Conception of Developmental Pathways 29
External Influences on Developmental Pathways: The Immediate Social and Organizational Environment 38
The Important Role of Relationships in Youth Development 47
Research Questions 50

Chapter III: **Research Strategy** 55
The Research Strategy and Its Appropriateness to the Research Problem 55
The Sample 63
Data Collection Sources and Procedures 67
Data Analysis 74
Summary 87

Chapter IV: **Where Developmental Pathways Diverge: Exposure to Risk and Oppressive Factors** 89
Setting the Stage 90
Exposure to Environmental Risks 92
Exposure to Oppressive Factors 105
Personal Risks 111
Summary 124

Chapter V: Where Developmental Pathways Diverge: Exposure to Protective and Resistance Factors......126
Protective Environments: Opportunities, Expectations, and Support......126
Protective Relationships: How Many and What Kind......138
The Meaning of "Protection" in the Face of Oppression......146
Summary......150

Chapter VI: Summary and Conclusions......152
Forces and Conditions the Shape Developmental Pathways......152
Reflections on Serving Adolescents who are Failing In School and Committing Crimes......171
Unanswered Questions and Avenues for Further Research......180

Bibliography......182

Appendix A: Interview Guides......203
Appendix B: Coding Scheme......206
Appendix C: Example of Coded Data......214
Appendix D: Example of Combined Summary Sheet......221
Appendix E: Confident, Competent and Caring at Age Twenty-Five......229
Appendix F: Unskilled, Addicted, Depressed and Anxious at Age Twenty-Five...260
Vitae......291

LIST OF FIGURES

Number Page

1. Basic Elements of a Developmental Pathway 29
2. Developmental Pathways 37
3. External Influence on Developmental Pathways 39
4. External Influences: Adverse and Protective Conditions 40
5. Protective Relationships 48
6. Possible Responses to Oppression 163
7. Zone of Competence 179

LIST OF TABLES

Number | Page

1. Pool of Potential Subjects....64

2. Pool of Potential Subjects when Matched for Eligibility for Free or Reduced Lunch in Seventh Grade....65

3. Completed Interviews....71

4. Selection Criteria....78

5. Description of the Respondents....83

6. Degrees of Difference between the Groups in Late Elementary School and Junior High School....86

7. Respondents' Report of Community Risks....93

8. Respondents' Report of School and Peer Risks....96

9. Mean Differences in SSDP School Variables....97

10. Mean Differences in SSDP Peer Network Variables....98

11. Mean Differences in SSDP Family Variables.... 100

12. Respondents' Report of Family Risks....101

13. Respondents' Report of Oppressive Factors....105

14. Mean Differences in SSDP Personal Risk Variables....111

15. Respondents' Report of Personal Risks....113

16. Self- reported Protective Environments....127

17. Experiences with Protective Relationships....139

18. Types of Protective Relationships....141

19. Functions of Protective Relationships....143

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I am grateful to the respondents who participated in this study. They welcomed me into their homes, shared their triumphs and struggles, and inspired me. I hope I have accurately told their stories and given voice to those who are so often marginalized. They offer hope to adolescents who struggle with health and behavior problems and to those who care for them.

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In memory of Dominic LaRusso.

He taught me essential life lessons, sparking my intellectual curiosity and passion.

CHAPTER I
UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS: THE PROBLEM FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Adolescents who fail in school and participate in criminal activity are more likely to be unemployed, addicted, incarcerated, and victimized in adulthood (Dryfoos, 1990; Howell, Krisberg, Hawkins, & Wilson, 1997; Jessor, Van Den Bos, Vanderryn, Costa, & Turbin, 1995). However, research indicates that not all individuals who had these problems in adolescence continue to experience significant life difficulties as adults (Howell et al., 1997; Jessor et al., 1995).

The puzzle is to discover what differentiates the lives of these individuals. In this study I examine the developmental pathways[1] of eight respondents who were failing in school and involved in criminal activity in early adolescence. I explore some of the forces and conditions that differentiate the respondents who continue to experience considerable difficulties, at age 25, from those who are thriving. Specifically, I examine differences and similarities in:

- The situations and circumstances that shaped their early years;
- Their psychosocial qualities, including their internal models and skills; and
- Their significant relationships.

Throughout these explorations, I contend that relationships are the prime motivator of development.

[1] A developmental pathway is the direction of growth over the individual's life span.

All of the respondents in this study have long histories of behavioral problems that stem from complex psychological, social, and cultural forces. Their behavior and exposure to extreme trauma place them outside of what is typically considered normal development (Erikson, 1963; Garmezy & Matsen, 1986). A central goal of this study is to more fully understand the developmental trajectories of these individuals and, in doing so, inform the fields of social work, counseling, and corrections.

In this chapter I examine how two different scholarly perspectives explain differences the ways in which young people develop. The central perspective of this study is derived from prevention research and makes use of a database assembled by The Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington, one of the main groups of scholars engaged in prevention research. The second perspective, stem from an eclectic array of research traditions. Under this rubric I borrow ideas and concepts that are anchored in several "multicultural" traditions (Banks, 1981; Gay, 1987; Ladson-Billings, 1994; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985), as well as those concerned with the sociology of education (Baker, 1978; Eitzen, 1992; Knapp & Woolverton, 1995), ethnic and gender identity development (Barlow, Taylor, & Wallace, 2000; Cross, 1991; Gilligan, Rogers & Tolman, 1991; Tatum, 1994), and cultural assimilation (Gilligan, 1982; Hamm & Coleman-Hardin, 2001; Rodriguez, 1982). I use these literatures to expand, clarify, and illuminate the concepts and theories of prevention research.

The perspectives from which I draw are not, strictly speaking, parallel. Prevention research is a relatively well-defined body of work. It draws on psychological and sociological research traditions that seek to understand youth development, developmental dysfunctions, and how to ensure healthy development. It has assembled a systematic, cumulative evidence base supporting many of its claims. There is consensus among the principal contributors to prevention research about the central constructs under study and the methods of developing evidence (Dryfoos, 1990; Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992; Jessor, et al. 1995; Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris, Jones, Tabor, Beuhring, Sieving, Shew, Ireland, Bearinger, & Udry, 1997; Werner & Smith, 1992).

Prevention research is not primarily concerned with the structure of power, inequality, and oppression—the guiding concerns of various traditions of research that take a more "critical" stance toward social phenomena. Other scholars working in various traditions do consider such matters, and some have put forward well-defined theories and evidence related to them, for example, scholars who have explored the role of race and gender in youth development (Banks, 1981; Corwin, 2000; Edwards & Polite, 1992; Gay, 1987; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lightfoot, 1997; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985; McLaughlin et al., 1994). Though the lives of individuals who experience profound behavioral and emotional difficulties is not the focus of this research some of its alternative understandings of the development of young people from different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds face significant adversity

In this chapter, I describe the assumptions, research methods, and interpretive frameworks used by prevention researchers and show how and where scholarship, which is more explicitly concerned with power, oppression, and inequity, might differ in approach to youth development phenomena. Then I explain the benefit of considering more than one perspective in analyzing developmental pathways. I follow with an exploration of how the frameworks and concepts drawn from multiple perspectives may be used to describe why young people succumb to and avoid academic failure and delinquency. In conclusion, I explain the need for further research, explain why this line of inquiry is important, and present the overarching research focus of the present study.

Explanations for the Developmental Pathways of Youth

There are many theories about why some adolescents who fail in school and get in trouble with the law continue to have significant life difficulties well into adulthood while others do not. Some research suggests that the developmental paths of individuals who have lifelong problems with violence, substance abuse, and mental illness are primarily influenced, if not determined, by experiences in early childhood (Golden, Jackson, Peterson-Rohne & Gontkovsky, 1996; Karr-Morse &Wiley, 1997).

There is evidence to support this position. However, most of it does not target variables of race and ethnicity in the analysis. Prenatal exposure to alcohol and other drugs (Coles, Platzman, Smith, James, M., & Falek, 1992; Phelps,

1995), adverse experiences in the womb and at birth (Clarke & Schneider, 1996), as well as trauma (Perry, 1998) and head injury (Rosenbaum & Hodge, 1989), impair neurological and brain development, which, in turn, is related to life long behavior problems. In addition, there appears to be a strong genetic foundation for alcoholism (Goodwin, 1979; Schuckit, 1994) and some forms of mental illnesses (Egeland, Gerhard, & Pauls, 1987; Fisher, 1973; Slater, 1971). Finally, research suggests that early emotional deprivation, especially abuse and neglect in the first two years of life, is related to life-long difficulties with mental illness, crime, and violence (Cicchetti & Carson, 1989; Cicchetti, Toth, & Lynch, 1995).

Other schools of thought present development as a complex, unfolding process that occurs over time and is largely influenced by ongoing interaction between the individual and the social environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). In this view, the individual negotiates with and adapts to various environments to which she or he is exposed; the environment shapes the individual's development. Prevention research and scholarship that takes a more "critical" stance share this point of view.

Although these research perspectives tend to share an ecological view of development, they differ in what they assume to be the forces and conditions that lead young people to fail in school and commit crimes. Prevention research categorizes delinquency and school failure as adolescent health and behavior problems. These behaviors are defined as antisocial because they disrupt the fabric of conventional society (Dryfoos, 1990; Hawkins et al., 1992). Hence, the

goal of this line of research is to learn how to prevent antisocial behavior or, failing to do so, to help antisocial youth to become more prosocial.

Researchers and theorists working from an alternative set of assumptions tend to view the development of some youth, especially those from disenfranchised groups, in the context of youths' responses to a racist, classist, and sexist society (Knapp & Woolverton, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1992a; McLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1994). The goal of these lines of research is to create of a society that cares for all youth or, failing that, to create institutions and relationships that enable non-mainstream youth[2] to resist oppressive conditions.

Prevention research and critical scholarship on youth development also differ in their research methods. Prevention research is primarily based in quantitative research traditions. Its history of longitudinal research has supplied considerable empirical data as to what facilitates and inhibits antisocial behavior in youth (Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor et al., 1995; Resnick et al., 1997; Werner & Smith, 1992). Other scholars address the issue of youth development from a more theoretical perspective, locating their work in social commentary and in qualitative case studies. Research on factors facilitating success in ethnic minority youth offers one example (Edwards & Polite, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Lightfoot, 1997; Corwin, 2000).

---

[2] Non-mainstream youth are defined as members of ethnic groups other than European American and are not middle class.

An integrated approach that brings other conceptual perspectives to prevention research may make it possible to more fully capture and convey the complexities of development (Malen & Knapp, 1997). In this way, considering the implications of oppressive conditions for youth development and prevention work may expand, elaborate, or enrich understanding of the phenomenon in question.

The primary goal in this study is to consider a wider range of possibilities for understanding the developmental pathways of youth who fail in school and commit crimes than is usually employed when working solely within prevention research tradition. Adding alternative perspectives that includes considerations of power, inequality, and different cultural meanings may validate the claims and concepts of prevention research, offer new hypotheses to test, and broaden the conceptualization of the problem.

How Prevention Research Views Youth Development

In prevention research the developmental process as the interaction between conditions (risk factors) that foster health and behavior problems and other conditions (protective factors) that encourage prosocial development in the face of multiple risks. Research that emerges from this framework indicates that there is an interrelationship between adolescent health and behavior problems including delinquency, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and dropping out of school. Young people who have serious problems in any one arena are more likely to have problems in other arenas as well (Donovan & Jessor, 1985; Howell

et al., 1995). Furthermore, these behaviors share common risk factors (Dryfoos; 1990). Risk factors are environmental and personal characteristics that increase the likelihood that an individual will develop one or more health and behavior problems (Dryfoos; 1990). They are considered to be direct and indirect causes of the problem behaviors (Institute of Medicine, 1994), and are found both within individuals and in the immediate environments in which they function.

Several risk factors are predictive of dropping out of school, delinquency, and substance abuse (Howell et al., 1995). They include transitions and mobility, extreme economic deprivation, family history of problem behaviors, family management problems, family conflict, academic failure beginning in elementary school, lack of commitment to school, early and persistent antisocial behavior, rebelliousness, friends who engage in problem behaviors, favorable attitudes towards problem behaviors, and early initiation of the problem behavior. Statistically, the more risk factors, the higher the likelihood of developing health and behavior problems.

Protective factors are those qualities or conditions that encourage prosocial development even in the face of multiple risk factors. They, too, are found both within individuals and in their immediate environments. They include:

- Individual characteristics (such as a high I.Q., positive social orientation, resilient temperament, and being female).

- Strong relationship bonds with family members, teachers, other adults, and peers who encourage and recognize a young person's competence.
- Structure and safety (such as families and schools that monitor young people's behavior and use moderate, consistent discipline, and schools that are safe, orderly, and disciplined).
- Opportunities and the skills necessary to be successfully involved in prosocial activities (such as schools and organizations that provide opportunities for youth to be meaningfully involved and that teach youth the skills that they need to be successful).
- High expectations and clear standards for prosocial behavior (such as clear family and school rules against problem behavior, expectations to do well in school, and reinforcement and recognition of prosocial behavior).
- Reinforcement or recognition for efforts to meet high expectations (such as a teacher acknowledging a student for going above and beyond the requirements of an assignment, a parent thanking a child for cooperating, or a promotion at work).

The greater the number and intensity of protective factors, the less likely the individual is to develop health and behavior problems (Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor et al., 1995; Rutter, 1985; Resnick et al., 1997; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Wehlage et al., 1989; Werner & Smith, 1992).

Some research suggests that when protective factors are inserted into the lives of youth who are already "in trouble"[3], they modify the individual's developmental trajectory to reduce the likelihood that he or she will continue to behave in ways that result in trouble (Rutter, 1990; Wehlage et al., 1989). This contention rests on the assumption that protective factors are a part of causal or developmental sequences that lead to prosocial behavior (Farrington, 1993).

An Alternative View of Youth Development

From the perspectives of multicultural scholarship and the sociology of education, youth development can be viewed as being shaped by risk and protective factors, cultural socialization, and as *responses* to a racist, classist, and sexist society, and institutions and relationships that enable youth to prevail in oppressive conditions, or thwart their ability to do so (McDermott, 1977; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985; McLaughlin et al., 1994).

Historically, monied European American males have controlled public institutions, including the economy, government, press, education, and research. Through this control, they have shaped and disseminated the dominant culture and values. This dominance has effectively made their values and standards of behavior the defining norms of the United States. By claiming truth and establishing social and economic policies that reproduce the existing power structure, the dominant groups in society suppress the ideas of non-mainstream or

---

[3] Trouble is defined as having significant difficulties with conventional society (i.e.: failing in school, committing crimes).

non-dominant groups (Code, 1991; Collins, 1994; Franklin, 1989; Akbar, 1985; Polokaw, 1993; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). For example, the culture of this dominant group asserts that schools help to create a society based on merit, and school achievement is determined by individual ability and effort. This 'truth' overshadows the belief of many non-dominant people that schools reinforce the existing social inequalities by reinforcing the dominant position of privileged groups (Hurn, 1993).

Seen in this way, many health and behavior problems of adolescence may be consequences of being immersed in a society that dismisses their perspectives and denigrates their cultures. Factors that protect non-mainstream youth from failing in school and becoming involved in delinquent activities thus can be thought of as forces and conditions that enable them to resist and achieve in spite of oppression (Branscombe, Smith, & Harvey, 1999; Corwin, 2000; Foster, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Edwards & Polite, 1992; Lightfoot, 1997). For the purposes of this study, these forces and conditions are defined as "resistance factors."

Resistance factors enable non-mainstream youth to effectively fight the imposition on their lives of the dominant culture's hegemonic attitudes and practices. They give non-mainstream youth the tools to validate and affirm their own perspectives, returning to them the voices that were appropriated by the dominant culture. They include organizations and relationships that:

- Affirm youth's cultural identity, encourage youth to maintain their cultural heritage in dress, language, style, and interaction patterns, and use cultural referents to acquire and impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Establish high expectations by reminding youth that they can accomplish any goals they set for themselves.
- Critique mainstream culture and teach youth to recognize, understand and analyze society for cultural and racial bias and deconstruct the dominant culture's vision of truth.
- Teach youth ways to resist oppression, including when and how to confront, deflect, or counter racism, sexism, and classism (Akbar, 1985; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Edwards & Polite, 1992; Foster, 1990; Gay, 1978; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994; Lightfoot, 1997; O'Connor, 1997).

It may be that when resistance factors are inserted into the lives of non-mainstream youth who are "in trouble", they increase the their chance of developing into adults whose lives are not at odds with mainstream society —that is, "out of trouble")—and are also acceptable and fulfilled within their non-mainstream communities or, their lives may be at odds with mainstream society but in sync with their own cultural communities.

Both resistance and protective factors consist of beliefs, standards, and skills. In some cases they are similar (e.g., high expectations). In other cases there is tension between the two. For example, prevention research emphasizes the importance of youth involvement with prosocial individuals and institutions,

reflecting the values and norms of mainstream society. In contrast, scholars working in alternative traditions suggest that deconstructing the values and norms of the mainstream and identifying with the values and norms of a one's own ethnic culture can be an essential part of resisting oppression (Banks & Banks, 1995; Branscombe et al., 1999; Cross, 1995; Pope-Davis, Lui, Ledesma-Jones, & Nevitt, 2000).

Protective Processes

Prevention research and scholarship that take a more critical stance are both interested in identifying ways to shield youth from adverse influences, by enhancing protective processes. The fundamental concept in the prevention literature, concerning processes that shield individuals from suffering the expected negative consequences of exposure to risk factors, provides a useful starting point (Rutter, 1990). For the purposes of this study, protective processes are defined as the mechanisms by which protective *and* resistance factors shape the developmental pathways of youth in ways that help them avoid getting in trouble in school and with the law. These factors may protect through their interaction with adverse conditions, or contribute directly to the individual's well being.

Across a range of literatures, three major protective processes emerge: (1) the development of positive internal models, (2) the development of specific skills, and (3) the formation and maintenance of protective relationships (Akbar, 1985; Corwin, 2000; Cross, 1995; Felsman & Valliant, 1987; Garmezy, 1991;

Gay, 1978; Tatum, 1992; Werner, 1989). However, research traditions differ in the definition of what is a positive internal model, what skills are protective, and what protective relationships look like and with whom they are formed.

The development of positive internal models. An internal model, as conceptualized by attachment theorists, is the individual's conception of the nature, characteristics and expected behavior of the world and those in it, including the self (Bowlby, 1973; Cassidy, 1988; Cicchetti, Toth, & Lynch, 1995). This inner organization of attitudes, expectations, meanings, and feelings emerges from the individual's history of relationship, and functions as a self-regulating mechanism that provides continuity in patterns of interactions between the self and others (Cicchetti et al., 1995; Sagan, 1988). The individual develops an internal model by incorporating relationships and experiences into the self and internalizing lessons about whom one is, how one is expected to act, and what one should expect from the world (Cicchetti et al., 1995; Erickson, 1968; Sagan, 1988).

These models of the self are both domain specific and global. The individual has a sense of him or herself as a worker, family member, learner, and friend, for example. These domain-specific models of self combine to form a global definition of the self, which, in turn, influences domain-specific definitions. Along the same lines, the individual has a picture of how the world operates at work, at school, at home, and with friends. These domain-specific

models also combine to form a global definition of what to expect from the environment that, in turn, influences the domain-specific definitions.

Because internal models influence the individual's response to and interpretation of the environment, they can facilitate success or failure within a given domain. For example, O'Connor (1997) found that the beliefs of low-income, African American adolescents race influence their academic success. Youth who did not think it was possible to overcome racism did not do as well academically as those who believed in the necessity and power of collective struggle. Given the internal model's power to shape an individual's response to the environment, its content, sources, and development are of concern to scholars, regardless of their research tradition.

Prevention research indicates that internal models that foster resilience include high levels of self-worth, efficacy, and optimism (Felsman & Valliant, 1987; Garmezy & Matsen, 1986; Werner, 1989). Of these three, self-worth is perhaps the most significant. Defined as having a strong sense of one's own identity and value (Fellowman & Valliant, 1987; Werner, 1989b), self-worth was identified by Werner (1989) as one of the six core protective factors. Resnick (1997) found that it is inversely related to emotional distress in adolescents, while Rutter (1990) suggests it is one of the most powerful buffers against the negative impact of exposure to multiple risks.

Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of shaping one's own destiny (Garmezy, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992). For example,

Garmezy (1991) found that low-income African American, resilient children were more likely to have a sense of power rather than powerlessness. Cameron-Bandler (1986) found that the ability to delay gratification in order to gain something they wanted distinguished children of alcoholics who grew up to be competent, healthy adults from those who did not. Finally, resilient youth seem to be able to distance themselves from dysfunctional family situations. They distinguish between themselves and their parents' mental illness, divorce, or substance abuse, and they engage in activities and relationships outside of the home that bring them satisfaction (Anthony, 1974; Berlin & Davis, 1988; Wallerstein, 1989).

Optimism, defined as having a sense of meaning in one's life and hope for the future, has been identified as a protective factor by several researchers (Brook, Nomura & Cohen, 1989; Cameron-Bandler, 1986; Werner, 1989a). Optimism is the opposite of the "learned helplessness" that is so frequently seen in individuals who have emotional and social difficulties (Seligman, 1982).

Scholarship that focuses more explicitly on race, gender, and cultural background adds an important dimension to the concept of internal model. Many multicultural scholars, for example, suggest that a positive internal model for non-mainstream youth needs to include a positive ethnic and gender identity (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995; Pope-Davis et al., 2000; Gay, 1978; Hamm & Colemen, 2001; Tatum, 1992). Branch (1999, p.6) defines a positive ethnic identity as an "abiding sense of self… including feelings, thinking, perceptions, values, beliefs, customs,

and a sense of belonging to one's ethnic group." Positive ethnic identity can include a wide variety of expressions ranging from minimizing the role of race and identifying as an American to strong pro-ethnic and pro-American feelings, and in some instances to strong pro-ethnic feelings combined with potent anti-white sentiments (Barlow et al., 2000; Collins & Lightsey, 2001; Cross, 1995).

The role ethnic identity plays in shaping developmental trajectories is complex. In an analysis of two national samples, The National Black Election Panel Study and the National Survey of Black Americans, Hyers (2001) found that individuals who were the least racially identified had the highest sense of well-being[4]. Some research suggests that individuals who do not perceive themselves to be victims of prejudice may experience a better sense of well-being, control, and empowerment (Branscombe & Ellemeers, 1998; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997). On the other hand, lack of racial identification may leave individuals self-esteem vulnerable; when faced with prejudice, such individuals may attribute the obstacle to personal shortcomings rather than to forces of racism (Feldman & Swim, 1998).

Finally, the role of racial identity may be different within and among different ethnic groups. For example, Collins and Lightsey (2001) found that the strong endorsement of racial identity among African American women who lived in high-stress and low-support conditions was a significant predictor of both self-esteem and self-efficacy. However, among African American women with post

secondary education, financial security, and a sense of community, racial identification was not the primary indicator of self-esteem and efficacy.

Some research suggests that a strong gender identity is another component of a positive internal model (Garcia, 1997; Messerschmidt, 1997). Youth who identify strongly with their gender are confident of their worth as males or females and of their value as a partner, regardless of whether they conform to the prevailing sex-role stereotypes (e.g., for men, being dominant and woman pleasing). For many youth this means dismantling the bonds of idealized femininity and masculinity, and resisting the internalization of the dominant culture's ideal. Feminist researchers point out that girls who internalize the dominant culture's female gender role have lower self-esteem, self-worth, and sense of self-efficacy, and higher rates of depression (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Rogers & Tolman, 1991; Mackoff, 1996). Messerschmidt's (2000) research on young, violent male offenders suggest that one component of male crime is the internalization of an ideal masculinity that mandates that a boy be powerful.

Central to the creation of strong ethnic and gender identities is the individual's ability to shape a personal, expressive, and self-defined point of view that empowers him or her to move from silence to speech, and from object to subject (Collins, 1991). Collins suggests that "Because self definition is key to individual and group empowerment, using an epistemology that ceded the power

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[4] Hyers measured three constructs a sense of shared fate, acknowledgement of racial inequality and separatism.

of self definition to other groups, no matter how well meaning, in essence perpetuates subordination" (Collins, 1991, p.34). People outside of the mainstream establish a strong sense of their ethnic and gender identities "by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, and telling their story" (hooks, 1989, pp. 42-43).

Skill development. A range of scholars also recognizes the protective effects of skill development. To develop into a confident, competent, and connected individual, a person must learn a wide assortment of skills. In turn, well-developed skills buffer the negative impact of exposure to risk factors and oppression by fostering positive self-esteem, positively influencing social interactions, and helping individuals to understand and solve problems (Corwin, 2000; Delpit, 1988, Foster, 1990; Garmezy, Matsen, & Tellegen, 1984; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Rutter, 1990; Werner, 1989b).

Prevention research indicates that three sets of skills help young people respond to adversity with resilience (Felsman & Valliant, 1987; Garmezy, 1985, 991; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1992). They are:

- Coping skills, including techniques that help an individual avoid or get out of difficult situations (Bernard, 1991; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1992) and the skills (such as job or cooking) necessary for self-sufficiency (Carnegie, 1995; McLaughlin et al., 1994).
- Interpersonal skills, including responsiveness, flexibility, empathy and caring, a sense of humor, and good communication (Bernard, 1991; Fellowman &

Valliant, 1987; Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1992). These skills help individuals engage the support of others in that people are attracted to, willing to help, and less likely to project negative expectations on socially skilled people (Garmezy, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992).

- Intrapersonal skills that allow individuals to manage emotions in ways that create emotional stability even within a context of external chaos. Typically, this includes an ability to recognize emotions, to control when and how they are expressed, and to restore self-esteem after it has been battered (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1987).

In a similar vein, some multicultural scholars point to the importance of providing non-mainstream youth with the opportunity to develop effective coping, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills in order to operate effectively within multiple cultures, successfully handle oppression and marginalization, and limit the internalization of negative expectations (Corwin, 2000; Delpit, 1988; Foster, 1990; Hamm & Coleman, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1992; Worrell et al., 2001). Most non-mainstream youth interact with mainstream society in school, at work, or in the community. Discontinuities often exist between the role requirements of their homes, neighborhoods, and schools, which can result in differential levels of perceived and demonstrated competence (Comer, 1988; Cozzarelli & Karafa, 1998; Hamm & Coleman, 2001; Holiday, 1985). For example, several researchers have identified cultural and linguistic discontinuities between their home, community, and school as important barriers to academic

success for some African Americans and other ethnic groups of color. These discontinuities can interfere with their full participation in class, result in negative evaluations by teachers, and inhibit academic success (Comer, 1988; Brice-Heath, 1983; Foster, 1992; Rist, 1970).

Given the lack of cultural responsiveness of most mainstream institutions, to ethnic diversity non-mainstream youth are called on to master the skills necessary to negotiate the transition between communities as well as the skills to successfully function in their own communities. Delpit (1988) suggests that many African American youths do not learn the rules of power that prevail in mainstream society such as how to talk, dress, write, and interact in ways that are accepted by people in power. Without knowing these rules and having the skills necessary to follow them, African American youths are limited in the number of arenas in which they can be successful.

However, when non-mainstream youth incorporate mainstream rules of power and the value system that accompanies them to the exclusion of the role requirements of their ethnic community, they often become lonely, depressed, and estranged (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Fordham, 1988; Rodriguez, 1982; Steinberg, 1996). Cozzarelli and Karafa (1998) found that feelings of rejection due to cultural estrangement were associated with anxiety, depression, and low levels of self-esteem. Consequently, some scholars see assimilation—adopting the dominant culture's values, norms and standards of behavior—as a type of problem behavior and argue that non-mainstream youth should be taught how to move

back and forth between cultures (Benjamin, 1988; Fine, 1994; Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1989; Rodriguez, 1982).

Non-mainstream youth must also learn the skills necessary to deal with racism, sexism, and classism. They have to devise strategies for dealing with the personal and cultural insults they face. Many ethnic minorities are confronted with situations throughout their lives where they have to decide whether to (1) take an active or passive role in confronting racism, (2) engage or disengage from mainstream institutions, (3) work toward system maintenance or system change, and (4) choose whether to blame the system or themselves for difficulties (Barlow et al., 2000; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Phelps et al., 2001). Foster (1990) and Ladson-Billings (1994) suggest that minority youth are better able to make these decisions when they understand the structural constraints of racism, know how to confront and correct the negative portrayals they encounter, and engage in dialogues that prepare them to "effect change in society, not merely to fit into it" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p.382).

In summary, coping, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills can be a protective buffer that shelters individuals from the negative consequences of being exposed to risk and oppressive conditions. The specific constellation of skills necessary to create an effective buffer depends on the context in which the individuals function as well as whom the individuals are personally, culturally, ethnically, socially, and racially.

Protective relationships with adults. A wide range of scholarly literature underscores the central role relationships with adults play in fostering positive youth development. The literature on attachment suggests that these relationships are particularly important because youth identify with the individuals to whom they are bonded or attached, incorporate these relationships into their sense of self, and internalize lessons about how to meet different developmental challenges (Cicchetti, et al., 1995).

Regardless of the research tradition, scholars suggest that certain relationships with adults are protective for youth. Prevention research consistently identifies strong relationship bonds with prosocial adults as a protective factor (Hawkins et al., 1992; Resnick et al., 1997; Rutter, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992). These relationships provide youth with concrete support (including financial assistance, a safe place to stay, and opportunities), specific skill development (problem-solving skills and social skills), caring (meeting the youth's need for affection, nurturing, recognition, respect, and belonging), a competent picture of the self (high expectations), and reinforcement for seeking to meet these expectations.

Multicultural scholars also points to the importance of strong bonds between adults and youth in fostering positive youth development (Edwards & Polite, 1992; Lightfoot, 1997). They suggest that relationships with adults who have strong positive ethnic, cultural, and gender identities can be protective, even if the adults who are not considered prosocial by mainstream society. Think of

Angela Davis, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Nat Turner, Malcolm X, Zora Neale Hurston, and Louis Farrakhan. For many African Americans, these individuals serve as inspiring models of resistance even thought mainstream society may have considered their activities undesirable, and in some cases illegal. Through relationships with individuals who represent resistance, ethnic minority youth can learn the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the face of persistent racism, sexism, and classism (Edwards & Polite, 1992; Lightfoot, 1997).

Why Study Developmental Pathways Intensively and From Multiple Perspectives?

There are several reasons why it is important to learn about the role of protective and resistance factors in shaping the developmental pathways of individual adolescents who fail in school and commit crimes. First, an examination of the developmental pathways of such individuals would help to clarify whether protective and resistance factors have a role in modifying developmental trajectories and, if so, how these factors figure into youth development. Second, a careful examination of the ways in which both perspectives explain the differences in the developmental pathways of youth could provide a richer conceptual model of how developmental trajectories are or can be modified. Third, exploring the joint role of protective and resistance factors and the relationship between them may clarify the role of ethnicity and gender in developmental pathways. Finally, by identifying forces and conditions that differentiate developmental pathways, and by understanding how they are

interpreted by both youth and by others, research can inform the work of those who seek to nurture their development.

Areas that Need Further Exploration

Although there is a large body of literature on protective factors, resistance factors, and protective processes, more research is needed to clarify the ways in which protective and resistance factors may jointly alter the developmental trajectories of young people who are failing in school and criminally involved. Most of the research on protective factors focuses on preventing problem behaviors for this kind of population (Dryfoos, 1990; Hawkins et al., 1992; Resnick et al., 1997; Werner & Smith, 1992). Other literatures shed light on how youth can be helped to overcome oppression, but have not been applied to the kind of population that are the focus of prevention research. It remains to be seen if and how protective and resistance factors, separately or together, can alter the developmental trajectory of youth who experience multiple health and behavior problems.

Furthermore, the research on the relationship between protective and resistance factors is practically nonexistent. Research is needed to clarify the areas in which protective and resistance factors overlap. For example, the skills necessary to prevail over oppression (a resistance factor) may be a subset of problem solving (a protective factor). Research is also needed on how the two sets of factors may operate in parallel within the individual's developmental pathway and how they may interact. For example, a positive ethnic identity

(resistance factor) may enable the development of optimism and self-worth (protective factors).

In addition, research is needed on the role of internal models in changing the trajectories of these youth. Research may be able to provide insight into this arena by showing how the internal models of individuals who continue to have difficulty with conventional society contrast with those of comparable individuals who do not. Intensive qualitative studies may help to illuminate the nature of these internal models and point to their possible sources.

Some aspects of protective relationships have been studied extensively (Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor et al., 1995; Resnick, et al., 1997; Werner & Smith, 1992). However, the ways in which these relationships develop and provide protection to youth who are in trouble with school and crime are not clear. Good qualitative descriptions of these relationships may help us to learn more about how they might differ according to context, race, and gender, the ways in which they may influence youth development, and the environmental conditions that promote their development.

Research Focus

It is not possible to address all these issues in this dissertation. Instead, the goal here is to generate empirically grounded hypotheses that may extend prevention research and inform the work of those who seek to nurture these youths' development by:

1) Describing in rich detail the range and interaction of environmental conditions and personal factors that differentiate the lives of young people who were failing in school and committing crimes in early adolescence. Specifically, I seek to determine the differences and similarities in the situations and circumstances that shaped their early years, psychosocial qualities (including internal models and skills), and significant relationships.
2) Clarifying the ways in which protective and resistance factors may explain these differences.

CHAPTER II
CONCEPTUALIZING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Youth development is a complex, unfolding process that occurs over time. It involves many different aspects: physical, emotional and cognitive growth, identity formation, and socialization, to name a few. Each of these processes has been studied extensively (Erickson, 1963; Kolberg; 1981; Piaget, 1954). The conceptual model presented here does not take into account all of the different ways in which youth develop. Instead, it focuses on certain features that, for theoretical and empirical reasons, seem especially central to the stories of youth who have had difficulties with academic failure and delinquency during early adolescence. Specifically, I explore the role of risk and protective factors in altering the developmental trajectories of these youth.

This chapter is divided into four sections. First, I describe two basic elements of a developmental path. Then I explain the roles personal characteristics, history, and events may take in shaping this path. I follow this with a description of how societal, social and organizational environments may influence the direction of a developmental path. I then conclude with my research questions.

Conception of Developmental Pathways

For the purposes of this study, the basic elements of a developmental pathway include both the individual's "outer" and "inner" lives as represented in Figure 1.

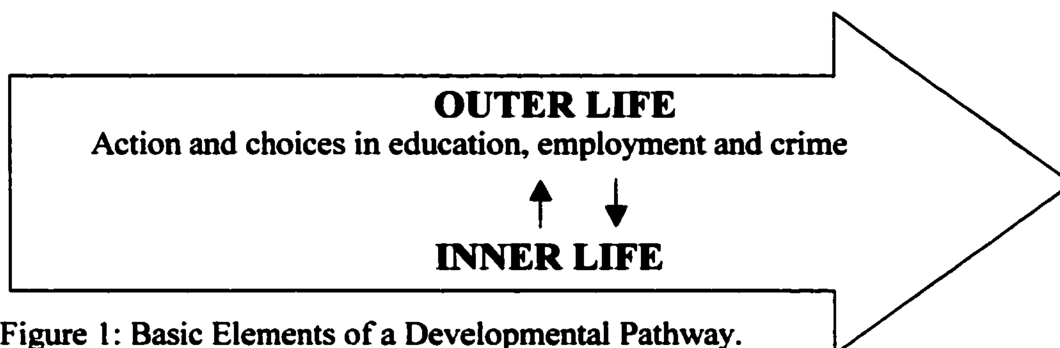

Figure 1: Basic Elements of a Developmental Pathway.

Outer Lives: Observable Actions and Choices

In this model, the individual's outer life consists of his or her choices and actions in three realms: education, employment, and following society's laws. Behaviors in these three realms are particularly important because performance in each of these arenas determines, in part, the ways in which mainstream society responds to the individual, and therefore are visible signs of an individual's inner states. Furthermore, there is an interrelationship between behaviors in these three realms. An individual who has serious difficulties in any one of these arenas is more likely to have difficulties in the others as well. Consider the following:

- Dropping out of school significantly impairs an individual's employability and economic future (Dryfoos, 1990). College graduates earn twice as much as high school graduates, and nearly triple the wages of high school drop-outs (Children's Defense Fund, 1997).

- Unemployment and underemployment are linked with various psychiatric and psychological disorders including anxiety, depression, suicide, low self-esteem, a loss of hope, and various health problems including alcoholism and other drug abuse (Dale, 1976; Fryer, 1992; Steinweg, 1990).
- Individuals who are involved in criminal activity are more likely to be unemployed, addicted, incarcerated and victimized (Howell et al., 1997). The unemployment rate for ex-offenders is three times the rate for the general public (Dale, 1976). Unemployed or underemployed parolees are four times more likely to be returned to prison than are their fully employed counterparts (Dale, 1976).

Undoubtedly an individual can be at odds with mainstream society and still have a high degree of fulfillment and personal satisfaction. However, the research cited above indicates that conflicting with society in a manner that results in dropping out of school, unemployment, and incarceration is frequently related to personal dissatisfaction. However, it is not clear whether all of this research applies equally to majority and non-majority people.

Adolescents' behavior in education and crime are also strong predictors of their future direction. Adolescents who drop out of school are more likely to experience chronic unemployment, welfare dependence, repeated job changes, low lifetime earnings, physical and mental health problems, incarceration, divorce, and early childbearing. They are also likely to regret their poor performance in school (Dryfoos, 1990). Convicted delinquents are more likely to

follow a life path that includes drug abuse, incarceration, marital instability, severe unemployment, low status jobs and low income, reliance on welfare and personal dissatisfaction in adulthood (Dryfoos, 1990; Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor et al., 1995).

This is not to say that the individual's outer life could not be measured by behavior in other realms, for example, involvement with family and friends or personal self-satisfaction. These realms are more personal and private and, therefore, not as open to external observation and not as indicative of the individual's relationship with mainstream society. Nor is this to say that behavior in the realms of education, employment, and crime has the same meaning to all people. The causes and meanings of an individual's choices and actions may differ. However, being unemployed is an observable feature of the individual's developmental path.

Inner Lives: Knowledge, Skills, and Internal Models

In this model, the subjective component of the individual's developmental path lies in his or her inner life. The inner life is composed of the individual's knowledge, skills and internal models. Together they appear to function as an internal compass, acting as a guide that helps the individual know what to do and how to do it. In doing so they play an important role in shaping the individual's developmental path (Branscombe et al., 1999; Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Cicchetti et al., 1995; O'Connor, 1997; Werner & Smith, 1992).

Knowledge and skills. Prevention researchers and multicultural scholars have identified a range of knowledge and skills that may be protective. Specifically, prevention research indicates that social competence and problem-solving skills protect young people from dropping out of school and engaging in crime (Felsman & Valliant, 1987; Garmezy, 1991; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1992).

Social competence includes a constellation of skills that help the individual to obtain support. Typically, this includes responsiveness, flexibility, empathy and caring, a sense of humor, and good communication skills (Bernard, 1991; Felsman & Valliant, 1987; Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1992). Resilient children tend to be able to laugh at themselves and at situations, to elicit positive responses from others, and to establish positive peer relationships (Berndt & Ladd, 1989; Matsen, 1986; Werner & Smith, 1992) while delinquent youth are consistently identified as lacking in these skills (Hawkins et al., 1992).

Problem-solving skills include the abilities to think abstractly, to generate alternative solutions, and to plan for the future. These skills help young people to avoid and escape from difficult situations (Bernard, 1991; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1992). For example, Rutter and Quinton (1984) found that women who were raised in institutions and planned for their future were less likely to marry deviant men and more likely to find solid work than women with similar backgrounds who tended to make impulsive decisions.

Scholars working in multicultural traditions suggest that non-mainstream youth may need additional specialized knowledge and skills in order to thrive in an oppressive society (Delpit, 1988; Edwards & Polite, 1992; Hamm & Colemen, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Lightfoot, 1997; McAdoo, 1985). Included in this skill set is the ability to 1) simultaneously do well in two cultures, 2) prevail over racism, classism, and sexism, and 3) facilitate social change.

Having the skills to do well in two cultures may empower youth to pursue a range of mainstream and alternative life paths (Cross, 1995; Edwards & Polite, 1992; Hamm & Colemen, 2001; Holiday, 1985). For example, Delpit (1988) suggests that explicitly teaching non-mainstream youth the "rules of power" may improve their ability to engage powerful people, increasing their access to power and their ability to succeed in mainstream endeavors. However, multicultural scholars point out that non-mainstream youth need to learn these rules while having their cultural and linguistic styles acknowledged and affirmed (Cozzarelli & Karafa, 1998; Foster, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Otherwise they may experience loneliness and estrangement that frequently accompanies assimilation (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Cozzarelli & Karafa, 1998; Fordham, 1988; Steinberg, 1996).

In addition to knowing the rules of power, multicultural scholars suggest that it is essential for non-mainstream youth to have the skills to prevail over oppression (Barlow et al., 2000; Feldman & Swim, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1994). This involves:

- Understanding the dynamics of racism, sexism and classism and knowing when and how to confront, deflect or accommodate their presence (Edwards & Polite, 1992; Feldman, & Swim, 1998).
- Making decisions about how to live within the confines of the dominant society (Corwin, 2000; Cross, 1991; Edwards & Polite, 1992; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985). This includes making decisions about whether to engage or disengage from mainstream institutions and people, whether and how much to blame the system or individuals for problems, and whether and how much to change the system from within or from without (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Cross, 1991).
- Learning skills to facilitate social change (Foster, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The knowledge and skills described above may help non-mainstream youth make decisions about how they want to live and equip them to function in a variety of oppressive situations without getting emotionally or psychologically lost (Edwards & Polite, 1992, Cross, 1995).

Internal models. Attachment theorists suggest that people's internal models may protect them from academic failure and delinquency. Internal models may provide protection by promoting individuals' beliefs in their value and competence and interfering with their internalization of negative expectations and marginalizing experiences (Corwin, 2000; Cross, 1991; Rutter, 1987).

Prevention research suggests that internal models that have self worth, efficacy, and optimism foster resiliency (Felsman & Valliant, 1987; Garmezy, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1989a). These qualities seem to promote confidence and competence, and protect against the internalization of negative expectations. Furthermore, establishing clear ethnic and gender identities may provide protection by giving non-mainstream youth internal cultural reference points, which create a personal gyroscope that keeps them anchored and clear about who they are even in hostile environments (Cross, 1995; Edwards & Polite, 1992; Hyers, 2001).

Generalized and Domain-Specific Functions

Prevention research has tended to focus on the ways in which individuals' inner lives underscore their social interaction. Knowledge, skills and internal models are frequently seen as global qualities (Garmezy, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1992). However, Dubois' (1998) study of 213 early adolescents suggests that a global self-esteem is a compilation of self-esteem in various domains including body, peer group, family and school. In other words, individuals have self-esteem as workers, learners, friends and partners. Esteem in one domain may have little relationship to a sense of worth in another. Seeing oneself as an excellent worker does not necessarily translate into believing that one is a valuable friend.

In a similar way, knowledge and skills may be both domain-specific and generalized. An individual may have effective social competence skills with his or her friends but not with colleagues at work. However some social competence

skills may generalize across domains. The skills used at work may also be effective at school. Furthermore, the personal qualities that serve a protective function in one domain may not be protective in another. For example, using the linguistic codes of the dominant culture may provide protection at work but not in the individual's home or ethnic communities (Oosterwegle & Oppenheimer, 1993; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Rodriguez, 1982).

Internal Protective and Resistance Factors' Influence on One's Outer Life

Internal protective and resistance factors appear to have a direct and indirect impact on the path of a person's outer life. The direct effect may lie in their ability to shape choices and actions. A socially and academically skilled person may be less likely to drop out of school than his or her less skillful counterpart. Their indirect effect may come through their influence on relationships. Socially skilled people may be more likely to attract others, which in turn may influence the choices they make. Finally, the number and intensity of protective and resistance factors within an individual's inner life may account for some of the differences in the life paths of people who continue to conflict with mainstream society from those who do not.

Personal Characteristics and History

Two other ideas are helpful in understanding the evolution of a developmental path: an individual's personal characteristics and history, set against the chronology of events and milestones, as shown schematically in Figure 2.

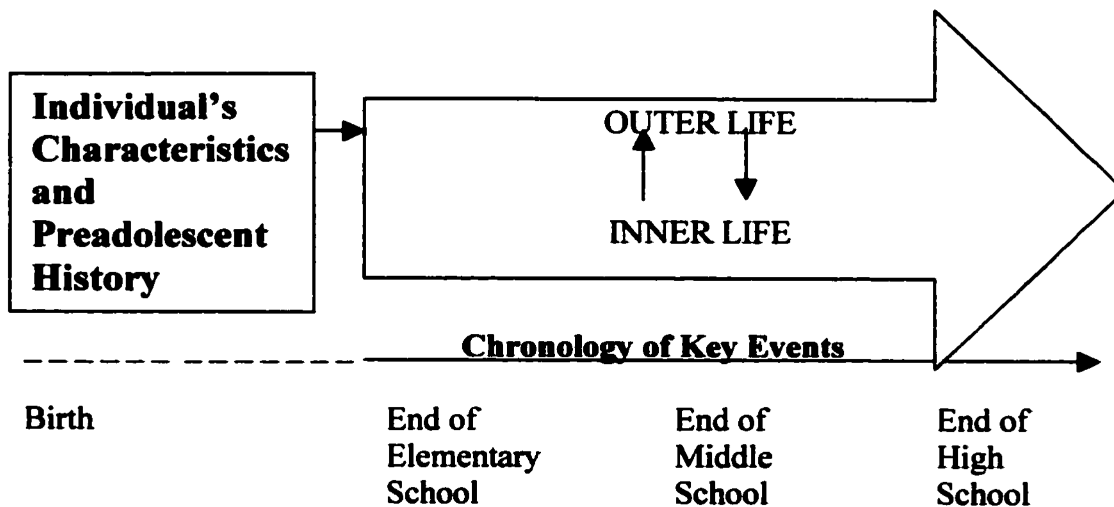

Figure 2: Developmental Pathways.

Although the focus of this study is on adolescents moving into young adulthood, the characteristics and histories that people bring to this period of life are also important. They offer a partial explanation for the direction of an individual's developmental paths.

Personal and constitutional characteristics give shape to the way the individual negotiates with and accommodates to the environment, influencing the ways in which the environment responds to the individual. Prevention research indicates that certain constitutional characteristics protect against an array of difficulties including dropping out of school and delinquency. These characteristics include a resilient temperament, positive social orientation, high intelligence, and being female (Radke-Yarrow & Sherman, 1990; Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992). Delinquency research indicates that certain constitutional characteristics such as high sensation seeking are common among delinquent youth (Howell et al., 1995).

Personal preadolescent history, which captures the individual's experiences prior to the onset of adolescence, also affects the way adolescents interact with their environment. Early family experiences have a powerful influence on intellectual capabilities, the ability to establish healthy relationships, and the formation of values (Bowlby, 1988; Sagan, 1988). A family's social class establishes a broad context in which an individual forms values and norms, powerfully influencing the degree to which he or she adopts mainstream values, norms, and standards of behavior (Polakow, 1993; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995).

Across time, particular milestones frame the individual's evolving story. In particular, entrances and exits from educational institutions and employment mark significant transitions both developmentally and experientially. Research indicates that these transitions are particularly challenging periods, which often leave the individual vulnerable to developing life difficulties including academic failure, substance abuse and delinquency (Hawkins et al., 1992).

External Influences on Developmental Pathways: The Immediate Social and Organizational Environment

Just as personal characteristics and preadolescent history shape adolescent development, the environment shapes individuals as well. A person negotiates with and acclimates to the environments in which she or he lives. Figure 3 depicts the interactive process takes place within a system of nested contexts that influence each other and the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The contexts may support or conflict with each other, and in general, the more immediate the context, the more influential.

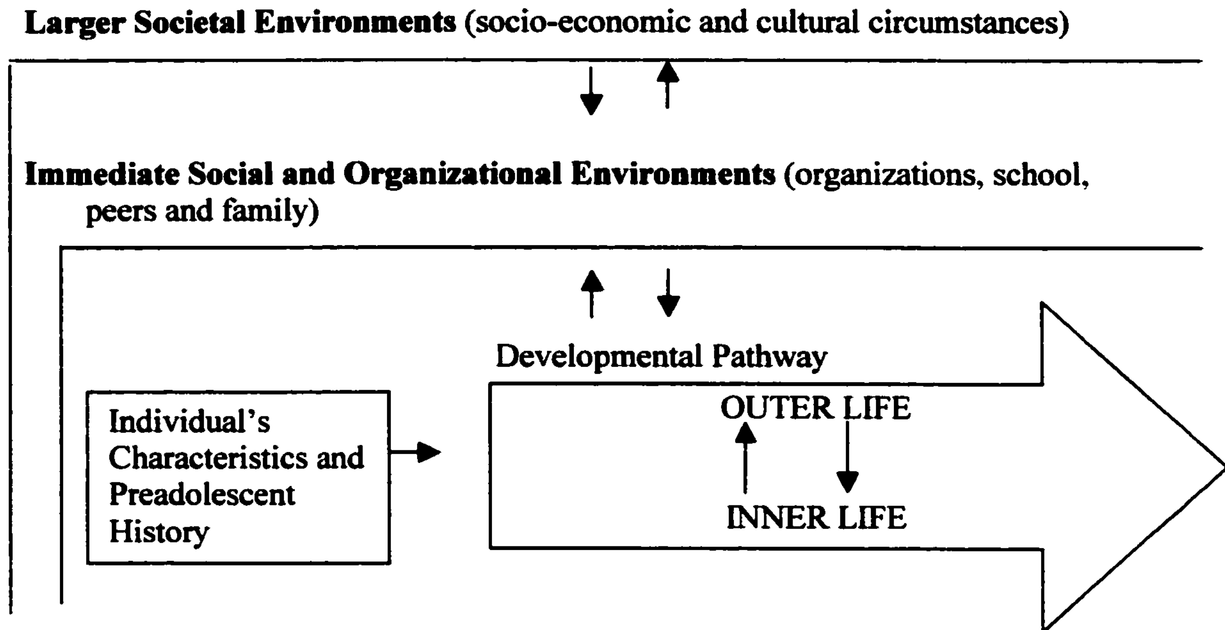

Figure 3. External Influences on Developmental Pathways

Larger societal environments include the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of both mainstream society and the communities to which the individual belongs. They influence development by setting parameters on the range and kinds of choices available and by shaping social and organizational environments.

Immediate social and organizational environments include social groups and institutions, such as family, peer group, school and organizations to which the individual is linked. Figure 4 illustrates how, within each of these environments, the individual may be exposed to adverse and protective conditions.

Environments (large and immediate)

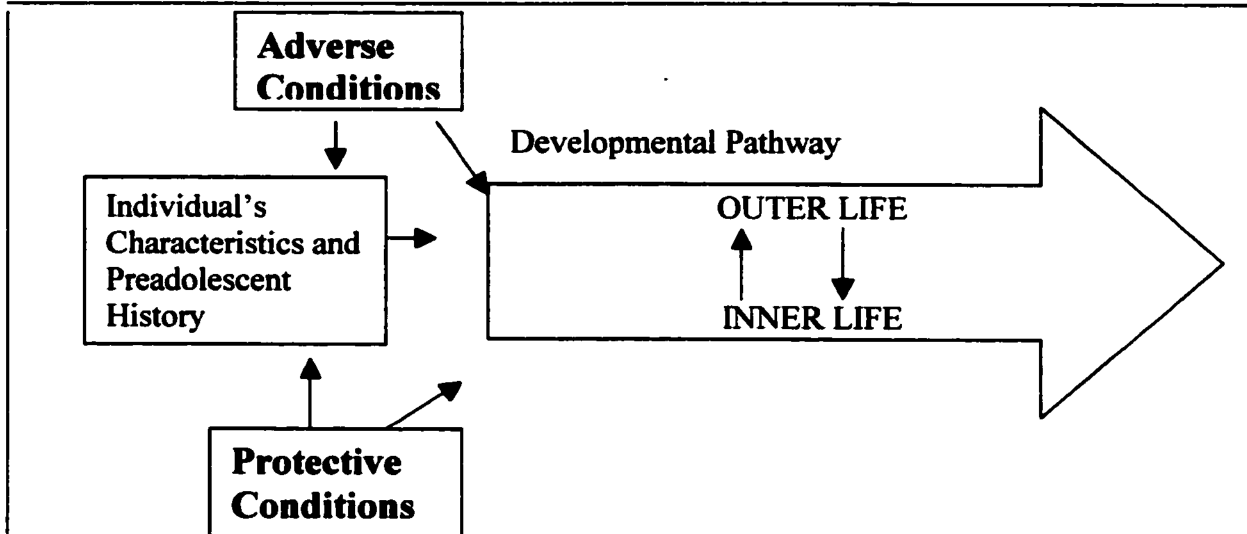

Figure 4. External Influences: Adverse and Protective Conditions

Adverse Conditions

Adverse conditions are environmental forces and circumstances that contribute to a wide variety of adolescent health and behavior problems including dropping out of school and delinquency. Prevention research and more "critical" perspectives differ in their explanation of the kinds of conditions that lead to these difficulties.

Risk factors. Prevention research suggests that some youth get into trouble while others do not because they are exposed to different levels of risk factors (Hawkins et al., 1992; Institute of Medicine, 1994). Some risk factors that predict both delinquency and school drop-out rates, such as extreme economic deprivation and high rates of mobility, reflect socio-economic and cultural circumstances. Statistically, the more risk factors the individual is exposed to the

stronger the likelihood he or she will develop one or more problem behaviors. In addition the more proximal the risks the more influence they appear to have (Howell et al., 1997; 1992; Jessor & Jessor, 1977).

Oppressive factors. Multicultural scholars argue that most of the social problems that affect non-mainstream youth are the result of oppressive conditions (McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985; Banks & Banks, 1995). Oppressive conditions are those forces and circumstances that unjustly burden and obstruct non-dominant people including racism, classism and sexism.

From this perspective, institutions are the primary vehicles through which the dominant culture reproduces the existing power structure and oppresses non-dominant people (Hurn, 1993; Polakow, 1993; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). This exploitation occurs both through public policies that have a disproportionately punitive effect on non-dominant people and through discrimination by the people who work in mainstream institutions.

An example of public policies that reinforce the existing power structure can be found in tax policies. In the 1980s changes in the tax structure created an upward redistribution of wealth. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the gap between the after-tax incomes of the richest and poorest fifths of the U.S. working population increased from a ratio of 8 to 1 in 1980 to 20 to 1 in 1989 (Philips, 1990).

Discrimination within mainstream institutions, such as schools, has been well documented (Foster, 1992; Oakes, 1985). Through teachers and

administrators' subjective evaluations of students and accepted educational processes such as ability grouping, schools establish a hierarchy that frequently restricts the opportunities of non-mainstream youth to learn complex intellectual skills (Comer, 1980; Foster, 1992; Knapp & Associates, 1995; Oakes, 1985; Rist, 1970).

Finally, some multicultural scholars suggest that relationships within the social environments of an individual may contribute to oppression when they dismiss or minimize the individual's world-view; impose mainstream values, norms and standards of behavior; and assume incompetence (Collins, 1990; Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1989). By teaching youth to subjugate their own personal truth, these relationships invite individuals to internalize oppression (Collins, 1990; hooks, 1989).

Differences and possible overlap. Prevention research and multicultural scholarship differ in the weight they assign to societal, interpersonal and individual causes responsible for social problems. Some scholars suggest that a focus on risk factors tends to put the primary weight of responsibility for children's problems on individuals: parents, friends, and children themselves (Polakaw, 1993; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). From this standpoint, greater responsibility lies with public policies and emphasizes the relationship between family stress, public policies and economic forces (McAdoo, 1988; Nelson-Pallmeyer, 1996).

Prevention research does not see community factors and social position as the primary cause of adolescent health and behavior problems, giving equal weight to family, school and individual factors. They acknowledge the importance of both individual and environmental prevention strategies (Hawkins et al, 1992; Robert Wood Johnson, 2000), with environmental prevention focusing on changing the underlying economic, social, cultural and legal factors that contribute to adolescent health and behavior problems.

Although prevention research and multicultural scholarship describe adverse conditions differently, there may be a relationship between the two. Oppressive societal conditions may be an underlying "macro" factor that facilitates the emergence of localized risk factors such as high degrees of mobility, academic failure, family conflict and rebelliousness. The difference may be one of focus and level of analysis, with multicultural scholars placing the societal environment in the foreground.

Protective Conditions

Protective conditions are environmental forces and circumstances that promote growth and buffer the individual from the negative consequences of exposure to adverse conditions. They can be found at all levels of social interactions and include institutions and relationships that promote strong relationship bonds, set high expectations, furnish the opportunities and skills, provide structure and safety, and reinforce efforts to meet expectations and take advantage of opportunities (Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor et al., 1995; Rutter, 1985;

Resnick et al., 1997; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Wehlage et al., 1989; Werner & Smith, 1992). Each of these protective conditions is described below.

There is a substantial body of evidence indicating that supportive relationships and environments foster development (Comer, 1980; McLaughlin et al., 1994; Rutter, 1990; Steinberg, 1996; Wehlage, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1992). In these contexts youth receive support for their development, experience acceptance, and are encouraged to establish their own identity (Comer, 1980; McLaughlin et al., 1994; Steinberg, 1996). They are recognized for who they are and wish to become. However these supportive relationships are protective only when they encourage competence (Werner & Smith, 1992).

Encouraging competence is a form of high expectations, believing in the capabilities of an individual. They can take many forms such as a family telling their teen, "you can do it," or a high school teacher believing his students are capable of doing college-level work. Regardless of the form, the message is consistent: you are bright and capable (Garmezy, & Nuechterlein, 1972; McLaughlin et al., 1994; Werner & Smith, 1992).

One way to encourage competence is to provide young people with opportunities to be meaningfully involved in prosocial activities and teach them the skills they need to be successful. These techniques protect young people in three ways. They give them 1) skills they need to succeed, 2) the experience of meeting challenges, which teaches them they can do things that are difficult, and 3) approval from others, which encourages them to establish positive expectancy

(McLaughlin et al., 1994; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Rutter, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992).

In addition to setting high expectations, providing opportunities and teaching skills, protective environments supply recognition and reinforcement to young people who make an effort to meet the high expectations and take advantage of the opportunities they have been provided. This acknowledgement motivates youth to strive even in the face of difficult challenges (Hawkins et al., 1992; Catalano & Hawkins, 1996).

Finally, protective environments provide young people with safety and structure in a chaotic world (McLaughlin et al., 1994; Rutter, 1985; Werner, 1989b). Safety involves protecting youth from dangerous situations and reducing their exposure to overwhelming difficulties. Without a safety net youth are not free to let down their defenses and learn about something other than how to protect themselves. Structure involves teaching the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. It helps youth to feel emotionally secure by giving them a clear picture of how the world works and what is expected of them (McLaughlin et al., 1994; Steinberg, 1996; Wehlage et al., 1989).

Historically, most of the research on protective factors has been conducted with majority youth. Therefore more is known about the ways in which protective conditions influence the development of majority youth. However, in the past decade, prevention research has conducted more ethnic and gender specific research, which indicates that ethnicity and gender influence the relative

strength protective factors (Books, 1994; Seyfried, 1998; Winfield, 1991). In addition behavioral manifestations of protection look different in different cultures. For example, in some cultures the acknowledgement of individual effort is reinforcing while for others it is not.

In summary, support, high expectations; opportunities, skill building; reinforcement, safety and structure work together to create a protective environment. Exposure to these protective conditions may account for some of the differences between the developmental paths of youth who continue to conflict with mainstream society and those who do not (Rutter, 1990; Wehlage et al., 1989).

Resistance Conditions

According to multicultural scholars there are other environmental conditions that protect non-mainstream youth from the negative consequences of being oppressed (Foster, 1990; Hollins, 1982; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lightfoot, 1997). Because these researchers see most of non-mainstream youth's difficulties as being the result of oppression, they suggest the difficulties can be avoided by changing society and its institutions and helping youth learn to oppose oppression. These resistance conditions include institutions and relationships that affirm cultural identity, hold high expectations and challenge social inequalities. They can be found at all levels of social interactions.

The fundamental difference between resistance conditions and protective conditions lies in assumption that non-mainstream youth need to be prepared to

resist aspects of mainstream society. They have to be invited, encouraged and taught to value their subjective experience, challenge the status quo, and identify with their cultural communities (Collins, 1990; Gilligan, 1982; hooks, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

From this perspective, establishing high expectations involves socializing youth into a set of self-affirming norms. Some prevention researchers see this as coming to accept mainstream norms (Hawkins et al., 1993; Jessor et al., 1995). Others disagree suggesting that accepting these norms at face value can be self-defeating for non-mainstream youth (McDermott, 1977; Rist, 1970). Resistance conditions may account for some of the differences between non-mainstream youth who continue to conflict with society and those who do not, given that evidence suggests that ethnic minorities who achieve mainstream success also resist oppression (Edwards & Polite, 1992; Lightfoot, 1997; O'Connor, 1997).

The Important Role of Relationships in Youth Development

Prevention research and multicultural scholarship have paid particular attention to the importance of relationships with adults in shaping the life paths of youth, as depicted in Figure 5. Werner and Smith (1992) identified competent caregivers and supportive adults as a core protective factor. The resilient youth in their study "had at least one person in their lives that accepted them unconditionally, regardless of temperamental idiosyncrasies, physical attractiveness, or intelligence" (p.205). Furthermore, they all established this close bond early in their lives.

Bonding is the condition of being close to, committed to, and having a strong belief in the individual to whom one is connected (Hawkins, 1996; Wehlage et al, 1989). Youth who are bonded care about, want to please, believe in, and invest in the person to whom they are bonded. These relationships are thought to be protective when the individual or group to whom one bonds has healthy beliefs and clear standards.

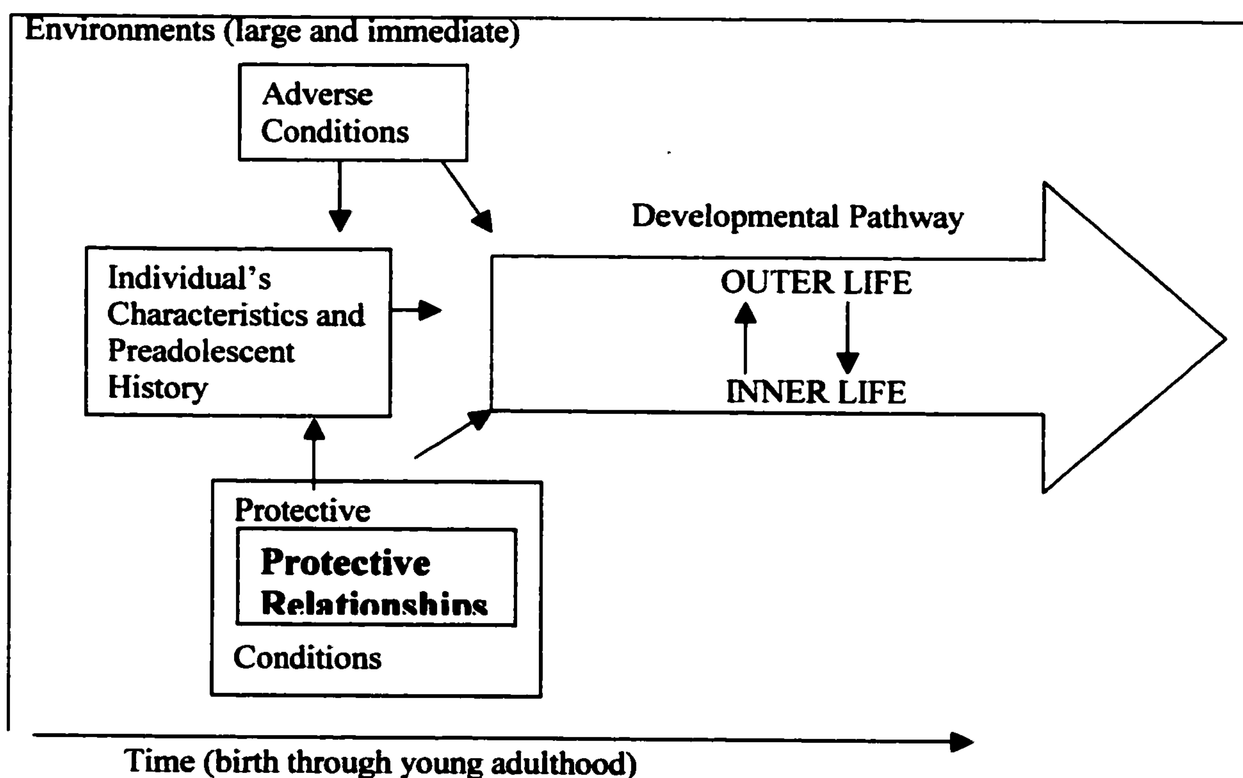

Figure 5. Protective Relationships

These relationships are thought to serve a protective function when they provide youth with the motivation necessary to adopt the values and norms esteemed by mainstream society and to learn skills. This suggests that there is a broad norm consensus within mainstream society (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996).

Some multicultural scholars suggest that non-mainstream youth need to be in protective relationships with adults who have the same ethnic background and who have successfully confronted oppression in a wide array of circumstances. These individuals teach non-mainstream youth the skills necessary to cope with and learn from their experience of oppression (e.g.; "rules of power," non-violent resistance, assertiveness with authority figures, political action, goal setting and ways to overcome obstacles) (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

There is also evidence that peer relationships can be protective. Research indicates that resilient youth tend to establish positive relationships with prosocial peers (Berndt & Ladd, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1982). Academic success and failure are also strongly influenced by the values and norms of an individual's peer group (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Steinberg, 1996).

The Impact of Protective Relationships

Relationships with adults, in which the other person has more social power and greater knowledge, and with peers, in which the other person has the same amount of social power and knowledge, appear to be necessary for optimum development. Hartup (1989) suggests that relationships with adults provide youth with protection and security within which basic social skills emerge, and youth elaborate on these skills in peer relationships.

Close relationships also affect the development of internal models (Bowlby, 1988; Cicchetti et al., 1995; Sagan, 1988; Taylor, 1992). Through the process of identification, people incorporate significant relationships into their

identities, and define themselves in relationship to and sometimes in opposition to the people to whom they are bonded (Cicchetti et al., 1995; Sagan, 1988; Taylor, 1992). With each new bond the process of identification and incorporation repeats itself. The cumulative result is the internalization of multiple relationships that form a value system that guides behavior (Sagan, 1988).

Furthermore, the number, kind and longevity of significant relationships youth have with adults may help to differentiate the developmental paths of youth who continue to conflict with mainstream society from those who do not. In this conceptual framework bonded relationships with adults are thought to serve both protective and resistance functions by teaching youth knowledge and skills and by shaping their internal model. The types of knowledge, skills and internal models that help the individual avoid trouble may also be strongly affected by the individual's ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender.

Research Questions

Some individuals who were in trouble in school and with the law during early adolescence continue to commit crimes, struggle to find on-going employment and have difficulty forming a strong social support system as young adults, while others do not. In this study I describe the differences in their developmental paths of these two groups of young people. The research questions are:

1. What developmental pathways have these individuals followed from early adolescence to young adulthood? What explains their differences and similarities?

   a. How do the young adults explain their own development? In particular, what role do they give to their internal models, interpersonal relationships, and involvement in organizations, racial/ethnic background and gender?

   b. In what ways do the dynamics of risk, oppressive, protective and resistance factors account for the similarities and differences?

2. What internal models do these young adults hold of themselves as family members, friends, learners, workers, participants in mainstream society and members of particular sociocultural and ethnic communities? What explains the differences and similarities in their internal models? In what ways have their internal models influenced their development?

   a. How do these individuals explain the evolution of their internal model and its influence on their development? In what ways have their knowledge and skills, interpersonal relationships, organizational context and sociocultural circumstances influenced the evolution of their internal model?

   b. In what ways are the individual's racial and ethnic background and gender related to differences in their internal models? In particular, how has their racial and gender identity evolved from adolescence to adulthood and what role has that evolution played in their development?

3. What bonded relationships have these youths had with adults? What explains their similarities and differences? In what ways have these relationships influenced their development?

   a. Which of their relationships with adults were the most meaningful and significant to the youth? With what sorts of adults did they form close bonds?

   b. What accounts for the depth and nature of the most significant relationships with an adult (e.g., proximity and frequency of contact; shared interests, values, or cultural background; the youth's vulnerability; the adult's belief in the youth's personal value and competence; emotional and instrumental support, and the provision of a safe and secure environment)?

   c. In what ways have the youths' developmental paths been influenced by their significant relationships with adults? In particular, in what ways have these relationships influenced the youths':

      - internal model including his or her cultural identity, self-worth, efficacy and optimism?
      - knowledge and skills including social competence, problem-solving and cultural competence including the ability to critique the culture, to prevail over racism, sexism and classism, and to function in both mainstream society and in a specific sociocultural community?
      - opportunities for meaningful involvement in mainstream culture and the youths' sociocultural community?

Preview of the Dissertation

The first three chapters of this dissertation lay out the theoretical underpinnings of the study. In the introductory chapter I established the need for further research to describe and explain the developmental pathways of young people who get in trouble in school and with the law. In this chapter, I presented a conceptual model that incorporates ideas from prevention research and alternative traditions, described some of the important forces and conditions that may differentiate the developmental pathways, and laid out my research questions. In Chapter Three, I describe the research strategy I used to compare and contrast the pathways of the respondents who continue to experience serious life difficulties as adults with those who do not.

The next three chapters compare the developmental pathways of those respondents who are thriving with those who are struggling, and explore the implications of these findings for research and practice. In Chapter Four, I investigate the similarities and differences in their exposure to risk factors and oppression. In Chapter Five, I examine the similarities and differences in the respondents' exposure to protective and resistance factors. In Chapter Six, I summarize these findings, investigate the implications of my findings for those individuals who seek to nurture the development of young people who have grown up in exceptionally difficult situations, and examine the need for further research.

In the appendices the reader will find detailed descriptions of the developmental paths of six respondents, three of whom are thriving at age 25, and three who are struggling. Appendix E, describes the lives of the three respondents who are thriving, while Appendix F, chronicles the life path of three respondents who are struggling.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the research methods used to compare and contrast the pathways of individuals who continue, as adults, to be in "trouble" with those who do not. First, I characterize the research strategy and explain why it is an appropriate way to explore the questions of interest in this study. I follow with a depiction of the sample and data collection procedures. The chapter concludes with a description of how the data are organized and analyzed and the quality checks that are implemented.

Research Strategy and their Appropriateness to the Research Problem

The purpose of this study is to describe the developmental pathways, from early adolescence to adulthood, of individuals who were failing in school and committing crimes during early adolescence. By comparing and contrasting the pathways of individuals who continue to be in trouble as adults with those who are not, I seek to refine and extend the theoretical work of prevention research and inform the work of those who facilitate these youths' development.

Research Tradition

Over the past two decades there have been several longitudinal studies that have looked at the developmental pathways of adolescents. They have focused on the role of risk and protective factors in the development and prevention of adolescent health and behavior problems (Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor et al., 1995; Resnick et al., 1997; Werner & Smith, 1992). These studies are the primary building blocks of my conceptual framework.

The strength of the longitudinal design used in these studies rests in its ability to generalize to populations, measure interactions between variables over time, and establish a causal influence of specific variables (Farber & Egeland, 1987; Mitchell & Jolley, 1992). The limitation of this design lies in its quantifying of complex human relationships into discrete variables. Breaking down the causes of social problems into measurable variables may result in the exclusion of important factors and confusion over the meaning of specific variables (e.g., Are alienation and rebelliousness causes of delinquency, symptoms of the stress of being poor or a combination of both?). In addition, studies of risk factors have been criticized for minimizing the role of culture and context. Often health and behavior problems are assumed to lie with the youth, family or community, which can discount the ways institutions create or contribute to risk (Polokaw, 1993; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995).

In order to address some of these difficulties, I refined my conceptual model by supplementing these longitudinal studies with case studies (Edwards & Polite, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lightfoot, 1997; Corwin, 2000), and social commentary from multicultural scholarship (Banks & Banks, 1995; Collins, 1994; hooks, 1989) and other alternative theorists. The methodological assumptions underlying these studies differ from quantitative studies. The case studies take into consideration context and culture, and focus on the richness of individuals' lives, including their relationships with people and institutions. However, because they are retrospective they are subject to the limitations of memory and

cannot determine causal relationships (Felsman & Vaillant, 1987; Glesne & Peskin, 1992; Knapp, 1980). Social commentaries assess states of knowledge and claims, expose assumptions, and provide intellectual support for a line of thought (Husen & Postlethwaite, 1985). I used them to sharpen the kinds of questions and issues I address.

The research tradition underlying this study. I chose to locate my study in qualitative research traditions. For the most part, the goal of qualitative research is to describe and explain rather than to prove or disprove a research hypothesis (Owens, 1982; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Eisner, 1991). Underlying this approach is the assumption that there are multiple perceptions of reality, and that reality is an ever-changing, complex system that is composed of many, intricately interwoven parts. Consequently, qualitative methods emphasize the need to look at the whole, on the premise that by breaking down what is measured into small discrete pieces, the very nature of the thing being measured may be lost (Owens, 1982; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Eisner, 1991).

A qualitative approach is best suited to answer my research questions because:

1) The questions are broad and related to theoretical problems (Miles & Huberman, 1984).
2) The goals are to modify theory and to illuminate the subtle detail of a complex process by asking "how" questions (Yin, 1984).

3) The purpose is to understand the ways in which young people interpret the world and make sense out of their lives (Erickson, 1986; Finnan et al., 1989; Shulman, 1981).

Research Design

Within qualitative traditions, I use a retrospective, comparative case study and graft it onto a large longitudinal study. By doing so I strengthen the validity of my findings.

Case Study. The case study is an appropriate vehicle for exploring my research questions. Case studies tap into the lived experiences of individuals, closely examining their lives from their perspective. To conceptualize the developmental paths of youth who were failing in school and participating in delinquent activity, it is critical to appreciate how they construct and make sense of their particular world, and to understand how they interpret their lives (Messerschmidt, 2000).

The case study is used when the research asks how and why questions. The focus is contemporary rather than historical, and the researcher has little or no control over events (Yin, 1984). Unlike ethnography where everything in a given environment is studied, a case study looks at very specific phenomena. In this case, the phenomenon is the developmental paths of individuals who were failing in school and committing crimes during early adolescence.

In a case study, the researcher studies specific phenomena over a predetermined, limited period of time (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The researcher

enters into the study with a conceptual framework, a research design, and a broad set of research questions. This allows the researcher to produce relevant data over a short period of time. The cases are purposely selected to increase the likelihood that the researcher will gather data relevant to the phenomena being studied.

In addition, a case study allows the researcher to investigate multiple implications of specific lines of research (Knapp, 1980). In this study, I look at the role of adverse and protective conditions from the frame of reference of prevention research and alternative perspectives rooted in a postmodern frame of reference and multicultural scholarship.

Finally, a case study that compares multiple cases of the same or similar phenomena allows for possible comparability across cases. In order for cases to be compared to one another there must be some standardization of instruments. However, preplanning and standardization does not restrict the possibility of revisions. Unlike traditional survey research, the multiple case study design calls for the researcher to modify his or her instruments in order to explore emerging phenomena (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

The retrospective aspect of my case study adds the dimension of time to the study's capabilities. By asking the respondents to describe their personal history, I can explore long-term phenomena in a time efficient manner. By documenting personal experiences and transformations over time, I may be able to illuminate complex developmental processes (Messerschmidt, 2000). Furthermore conducting cross-case comparisons allows me to explore the slow-

developing phenomena of developmental pathways (Knapp, 1980). Another benefit of a retrospective study is that it permits the reinterpretation of events by the respondent. Events and behaviors may take on different meanings when looked at retrospectively. For example, the way an individual at age 15 interprets his dropping out of school may be very different from his interpretation at age 25.

An alternative research strategy that could be used to address my research questions is a prospective, longitudinal design. This design has many advantages including its ability to document changes over time without the distortion of memory. In a rigorous, quantitative study of this kind researchers can generalize to populations, and determine when factors exerted a causal influence (Farber & Egeland, 1987). However, such a design would be very time-consuming and require extensive funding. The variables of this study are not well enough defined to effectively operationalize them at the level necessary to conduct a quantitative study.

Grafting the case study onto a longitudinal study. Instead, I grafted my retrospective case study onto a large, quantitative longitudinal study. The participants were drawn from a pool of subjects participating in the Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP). SSDP is a longitudinal study of consenting fifth grade students in 18 public schools serving high crime areas of Seattle, Washington. It was conducted by the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington's School of Social Work.

I used the data gathered by SSDP to help establish a context for the respondents' lives, to discover differences between what the respondents remembered about their lives and what they said at the time, and to make comparisons across time within a given case. Comparing earlier data collected from each case with more recent data allows the case to act as its own control. For example, I used the SSDP data to monitor each respondent's attachment to school. I compared these feelings about school, and I looked to see if the respondent's memory of school matched what he or said about school at the time. In addition I used the SSDP data to (1) compare the basic background information of my respondents with the entire SSDP sample, (2) compare the basic background information of individuals who continued to get into trouble with those who did not, and (3) to explore the history of concepts that revealed themselves to be important during the semi-structured interviews. By doing so, I triangulated my case-study findings with the data collected by SSDP.

This integration of quantitative and qualitative methods strengthens the validity of my research findings (Shulman, 1981). The existence of the SSDP database offers me an opportunity to learn about phenomena that take place over a long period of time. The qualitative case study approach allows me to explore the lived experiences of the respondents, finding out what they think has been important to their lives. Together they inform each other and gave a more comprehensive view of the landscape being explored.

Limitations.

The limitations of a retrospective case study design include individuals' distortion of the past on the basis of their present perspective and selective or incomplete memories as well as distortions that reflect the interpersonal relationship between the respondent and the researcher (Knapp, 1980; Glesne & Peskin, 1992). In addition, this design cannot directly capture a complete picture of the unfolding of events and the internal process of the respondents, although it can reconstruct key features or milestones of the process. In addition, because of its nature, it cannot make claims of causality and the conclusions are suggestive (Farber & Egeland, 1987; Messerschmidt, 2000).

I sought to minimize the limitations of this design by collecting data from multiple sources, collecting data in non-threatening circumstances, searching the data for disconfirming evidence, revising propositions to reflect such disconfirmations, and using historical data from SSDP to anchor the chronology of events. Although my design addresses some of the limitations of a retrospective case study, it is impossible to completely compensate for such limitations. In this study I trade off the ability to establish causality and to gather a great deal of detail about the process of development for efficiency and the ability to interpret events in a longer-term perspective.

What this study does is to compare and contrast, in detail, the characteristics of the developmental pathways of young people who got out of trouble with conventional institutions with those who did not. Included in this

description is the role of risk factors, oppression, protective and resistance factors, internal models, and bonded relationships in shaping development. These descriptions, when generalized to theory, may increase the richness of our conceptual models of youth development and prevention research.

The Sample

The participants in this study were drawn from the Seattle Social Development Project pool of 808 subjects. The sample for this study was constructed by using existing SSDP measures that capture, in rough terms, the relationship of the individual to educational institutions and the criminal justice system, at two points in time (early adolescence and young adulthood).

First, I identified young European-American and African American adolescents who were "in trouble" at the end of eighth grade[5]. The measures used to indicate trouble included self-reported criminal involvement (property damage, theft of more than $50, assault, extortion, breaking and entry, stealing cars, drug selling or use of weapons) and school failure (a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.0 at the end of junior high school).

I divided this group of adolescents into two, those who continue to be "in trouble" as adults and those who do not. The measures I used to indicate trouble in adulthood included whether or not the participant reported, on the 1996 SSDP survey interview, participating in criminal activity during the past year (e.g., assault, theft, drug trafficking or white-collar crime). Out of the 795 SSDP

subjects for whom all of these data were available, 58 met these criteria. Two of individuals were dropped from the sample. One was dead and one was living in Africa.

From this initial sample I matched by ethnicity and gender. Table 1 summarizes the results of this matching.

Table 1: Pool of Potential Subjects

Selection Criteria	African American	European American
Males who participate in criminal activity as adults	7	9
Females who participate in criminal activity as adults	5	2
Males who do not participate in criminal activity as adults	7	14
Females who do not participate in criminal activity as adults	6	6
Total	25	31

I included participants from different ethnic backgrounds to examine the role of ethnicity in shaping developmental pathways, and I limited the sample to two ethnic groups. To use youth with more varied ethnic backgrounds would have required me to be more knowledgeable about a wide variety of cultures and more linguistically fluent than I am.

After this initial matching I found that the sample was large enough to match subjects by their eligibility for free and reduced lunch in seventh grade.

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[5] Youth with these ethnic backgrounds make up more than 70% of the SSDP subjects (46.1% European-American and 24.5% African American).

Matching on this variable reduced the likelihood that the respondents would come from widely divergent economic backgrounds, thus limiting the possibility that the findings would be the result of variability in the respondents' socio-economic background. Twenty-seven of the SSDP subjects were eligible to participate after being matched on this variable, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pool of Potential Subjects when Matched for Eligibility for Free or Reduced Lunch in Seventh Grade

Selection Criteria	African American	European American
Males who participate in criminal activity as adults	5	4
Females who participate in criminal activity as adults	2	1
Males who do not participate in criminal activity as adults	4	4
Females who do not participate in criminal activity as adults	5	2
Total	16	11

SSDP hired me to administer their survey to the 27 subjects that met my sampling criteria (See data collection sources and procedures below). Upon completion of this interview I asked the first eleven subjects to participate in my study. The first two agreed to help me pilot my interview guides. The next refused, and the next eight agreed to participate. Of the four African-American respondents, two are biracial. Both have European American mothers and African American fathers.

These sampling measures were chosen for multiple reasons. First, delinquency and school failure indicate having major conflicts with mainstream society in ways that foreshadows similar difficulties in adulthood. Though, in some instances, these behaviors may be reasonable responses to unreasonable situations, in the aggregate, young people who are delinquent and failing in school are significantly more likely to be unemployed, incarcerated and dead at an early age (Dryfoos, 1990; Howell et al., 1995; Wehlage et al., 1989).

Second, requiring that the respondents have experienced two types of "trouble" (delinquency and school failure) that were identified by two sources (self-report and grades) increased the probability that the sample would be composed of individuals who, at that point in their lives, demonstrated a substantial, consistent pattern of behavior that was not acceptable to mainstream society. This, in turn, reduced the likelihood that the sample would be composed of young people who had transitory difficulties.

However, the measures used to select the subjects have only provisional importance in the analysis plan. They are traditional outcome measures that are widely used to identify "problem behavior" (Dryfoos, 1990; Hawkins et al., 1992; Jessor et al., 1995), although they may have different meanings for different youth (McAdoo, 1985; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Stanfield, 1994; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). In this study, these outcome measures are only reference points for analysis, which explores different possible interpretations of the outcomes and

the ways in which they reflect or fail to reflect the personal experiences of the respondents.

Some researchers suggest that it is impossible to learn very much from such a small sample. However, a thorough investigation of a few cases may illuminate contributing factors that are concealed by other methodologies (Messerschmidt, 2000). Dowsett (1996) points out that in other disciplines, such as medicine, researchers often use a limited number of clinically observed cases.

Data Collection Sources and Procedures

I used three forms of data collection: structured survey interviews, semi-structured open-ended interviews, and historical data. In addition, I collected data from three sources: the respondent, an individual who could provide information on a respondent's development referred to here after as a "collateral," and data collected by SSDP over the past 15 years. All of the respondents and collaterals gave permission for their interviews to be audio recorded. The interviews were transcribed and the original tapes and transcriptions were retained in a locked, fireproof box.

Respondent Interviews

I conducted two interviews with each respondent, one structured survey interview and one semi-structured, open-ended interview. As a part of SSDP's on-going longitudinal study, I collected highly structured, survey data from all of the respondents. SSDP hired me to administer their survey to 27 subjects that met my sampling criteria. The SSDP interview lasted approximately three hours. During

the interview, the respondents were asked to answer questions, fill out a survey, and allow their blood pressure to be taken. The questions were about their current life including experiences with parents, partner or spouse, children, friends, school, employment, finances, neighborhood, involvement in crime, use of alcohol and other drugs; ethnic identity and experiences with racism; and values about education, work, drug use, crime, and honesty. In addition the respondent completed the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS), which assesses the presence of mental health difficulties such as depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress syndrome[6]. Finally, he or she filled out a paper and pencil survey that contained questions about their health, family and sexual history, relationship with their spouse or partner, and attitudes towards people of different races.

I used this interview for several purposes. First, it offered an opportunity to begin establishing rapport and served as a vehicle to invite the respondents to participate in my study. I also used the information collected in the interview to establish a context in which to locate the respondents' answers on a semi-structured interview. For example, SSDP collects considerable data on their subjects' criminal activities. I used these questions both as a reference and as a way to verify what the respondents told me during the semi-structured interview.

At the end of the SSDP interview I told each respondent that I was in the process of conducting a follow-up interview with a sub-group of participants who

[6] The National Institute of Mental Health developed the DIS. A short version is given to SSDP participants.

reported having mostly C's and D's in their junior high school years and who reported involvement in criminal activity during this same time period. I told them that they qualified for this study, and I wanted to interview them again to learn more about their life experiences and the things that have helped or hindered them along the way. I explained that if they agreed we would do one interview that would last for about three hours. It would be different from the SSDP interview in that it would be more like having a conversation. Instead of focusing on what they were doing now, we would look back on their life and the direction it has taken. In addition, I told them that they would be asked to suggest someone who knows them well whom I would also interview about the respondent's life. Finally, they were told that they would be paid $50.00 for the interview. I told the interested respondents that I would contact them at a later date to tell them more about the interview, answer any questions, and get their permission. All of the respondents I asked were interested in participating in this second interview.

A few days after the SSDP interview I called the respondents back, discussed the follow-up study, answered questions, asked permission to interview them, and set up an interview time. One respondent declined because he did not want to take any additional time away from his family. One respondent wanted assurances that all of the information would be kept confidential and, after being given this assurance, agreed. Two respondents said yes, but were reluctant to have a collateral interviewed. Five respondents agreed without hesitation.

The three-hour semi-structured interview covered three major questions:

1) "Imagine that you ran into someone you haven't seen since high school. This person used to be a friend and s/he asks you to join him/her for lunch. After you sit down and order, s/he says, 'Tell me about yourself.' What would you say?"
2) "How did you become the person that you are today?"
3) "Looking back over you life, are there any people who have had a big influence on you, made a difference in how your life has turned out so far? If so, tell me about them."

The purpose of this interview was to understand how the respondents viewed their world, histories, lives, and selves. The questions were broad and open-ended to avoid imposing my view of what was important in their development. In this way, I hoped to understand their perspective in their own words.

At the end of the semi-structured interview I asked the respondents to identify the name and phone number of someone they have known well since high school or before and would allow me to interview them. The respondents were asked to contact these individuals to let them know that they had granted their permission to talk to me. All but one of the respondents agreed and made the initial contact.

Interviews with Collateral Contacts

All seven collaterals agreed to be interviewed. After the collateral gave permission, we set up a time and place for the interview. All but one of these

interviews were conducted in person. The other interview was conducted over the phone because the individual lived too far away.

Each collateral was interviewed once for approximately two hours and was paid $40.00. The interview consisted of three major questions

1) "Describe the respondent."
2) "Why do you think he or she has become the person s/he is today?"
3) "Tell me about your relationship with participant's name.

Probes were used to elicit information that would either corroborate or refute what the respondent said in his or her interview.

Table 3 summarizes the respondents and collaterals that were interviewed for the study.

Table 3: Completed Interviews

Selection Criteria	African American		European American	
	Respondent	Collateral	Respondent	Collateral
Males who participate in criminal activity as adults	1	1	1	1
Females who participate in criminal activity as adults	1	1	1	1
Males who do not participate in criminal activity as adults	1	1	1	0
Females who do not participate in criminal activity as adults	1	1	1	1 (by phone)

Historical Data

SSDP has collected data on the respondents for the past 15 years. These sources of data include subject interviews and surveys, parent surveys and teacher surveys, as well as school, legal, and Child Protective Services records. I used

some of these data in my study. First, I compared the basic background information of individuals who continued to get into trouble with those who did not, including their academic records and involvement in crime. I also used SSDP data to explore the history of concepts that revealed themselves to be important in the semi-structured interviews. The SSDP data I used focused on four arenas:

- Crime. I examined whether the respondent was involved in a violent or non-violent delinquency trajectory.
- School. I explored the history of the respondent's academic performance and attachment to school[7], commitment to school[8], years of school completed in fifth through eighth grades, and whether they graduated from high school.
- Family. I looked at the subject's family bonding[9], family management practices[10] and family conflict[11] in fifth through eighth grades.
- Peers. I explored the respondent's involvement in antisocial[12] and prosocial[13] peer groups in fifth through eighth grades.

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[7] Attachment to school includes feeling safe in and around school, liking school, liking teachers, feeling cared about and having a feeling of belonging to school.
[8] Commitment to school includes doing extra work, continuing to work until an assignment is completed and teacher's assessment of how hard the student is working.
[9] Family bonding includes being attached to one's parents as indicated by feeling close and cared about by family members and being committed to the family (i.e.; being involved in family activities, indicating that the family is important).
[10] Family management includes family rules, degree and type of supervision, and degree and type of discipline.
[11] Family conflict includes frequency of family upset, criticism, arguments, and yelling, shouting and screaming.
[12] Antisocial peer group includes first, second, third and fourth best friends getting in trouble at school, using alcohol and other drugs, doing something that could have gotten him or her arrested, and encouraging the respondent to do things that could get him or her in trouble.

In all cases I compared the respondents to the entire SSDP sample and, within my sample, compared those who continued to be in-trouble with those who were not.

Collecting data from multiple sources allowed me to examine each case from several perspectives. Using the historical data allowed me to gain insight into developmental progression of certain aspects of the respondents' lives. In addition it allowed me to identify historical similarities and differences between respondents who have avoided trouble as adults and those who have not.

Instrumentation

Because this study was largely exploratory and there was not a clear understanding of the social dynamics or parameters of the social situation, heavy front-end instrumentation was not appropriate. Instead, an iterative process was used to refine and further generate research questions during data collection. This process brought the research questions and data collection into a consistent yet evolving relationship (Erickson, 1986).

Given time constraints and topic sensitivity, semi-structured interview guides were developed from the research questions before entering the field. The interview guides were piloted with an African American male and European American female from the large sample. I piloted the interview guides with these individuals, asked them to think with me about how to approach the participants, how to sensitize myself to the participants' needs, and how to shape my questions

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[13] Prosocial peer groups includes first, second, third and fourth best friends being involved in organized after school activities, trying to do well in school, giving help when needed, encouraging the respondent to do a good job, and work hard at school.

so they accurately reflected the participants' lives. See Appendix A for the respondents and collaterals' interview guides.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected for this study started with a loose, inductive design because the concepts of developmental pathways, internal models and protective relationships are complex, and the purpose of the study is descriptive and explanatory (Finnan et al., 1989). In the following section I describe my method of coding, the within-case and between-case analysis, and the ways I addressed issues of bias and error.

Coding

In order to distinguish each case and source, I utilized a color-coding scheme, assigning each respondent and data source a color. Then I coded each piece of data to identify its important themes and concepts. Data from all sources were coded into overlapping categories in order to classify them by themes. The codes were abbreviations or symbols that reflected the concepts and themes found in the data, and they were applied to the portions of text they represented (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Each code had three parts: 1) whether the concept was a part of the respondent's inner life or outer life, 2) the major construct it represented, and 3) the way in which the construct was manifested. For example, if the respondent had a strong bond to an adult, it was coded as O/Bo/Adult. O stands for outer life, Bo for bond and A for to an adult. If the respondent was bonded to a sibling the

code would be O/Bo/Sibling. Similarly, if the respondent talked about believing he was capable of shaping his own destiny it was coded as I/Im/SE with I symbolizing for inner life, Im for internal model and SE for self-efficacy. I also coded the data according to the domain(s) in which the skill or concept manifests itself (i.e.; community, school, family, peers, work or within oneself).

All interviews, including the pilot interviews, were coded using a wide left-hand margin. The initial codes were developed to reflect the study's conceptual framework and research questions. After each interview was coded, it was examined for patterns that identified overarching themes or constructs. These patterns were translated into new codes, integrated into the coding scheme and checked out in the next round of data collection. After the data were collected and coded, the final coding scheme was used to recode the data. See Appendix B for the coding scheme and Appendix C for an example of coded data.

In addition, I developed summary sheets for each respondent. These sheets were essentially tallies that reflected the importance of each construct on the respondents' lives (Diero, 1994). Each summary sheet included a list of all of the codes. After each code was the page number where the code was used in either the respondent's interviews or in the collateral interview. This allowed me to quickly see the frequency with which a respondent and his or her collateral used a given concept. It provided an initial look at the concepts that were most important to each respondent. Appendix D includes portions of one respondent's summary sheet. I then compared the differences between the respondents'

summary sheets, which allowed me to look across cases at similarities and differences in the importance of specific concepts.

I did not review the SSDP data before I interviewed the subjects because I did not want to enter the interviews with preconceived notions, beyond what was in my conceptual model, about what was responsible for shaping each individual's developmental path. Instead, I waited until I finished my initial analysis of the data.

Analysis

Analysis began during data collection. I kept analytical memos on observations, insights, and conversations I had with others regarding the study. After the interviews were completed, analysis proceeded more formally, first through a within-case analysis, followed by a cross-case analysis. Both sets of analyses are described below.

Within-case analysis. While coding the data, I reviewed the coding, reflective comments, memos and SSDP interview. I noted overarching patterns and themes and turned them into propositions (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Within each case, I sorted the propositions into categories that reflected the components of my conceptual model. Within each analytic category, I sorted data according to the participant's role (e.g., respondent or collateral). Finally, I searched the propositions and evidence to find confirming and disconfirming evidence for each proposition. I then developed alternative propositions to accommodate the disconfirming evidence and reexamined the data in light of the

new propositions. After the evidence in each component was analyzed, I reviewed the entire dataset to determine whether there were conflicts between the propositions and evidence found in the various components (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Finally, within each case, I used two perspectives as analytic focuses, prevention research as well as alternative critical scholarship. The first time I read a transcript, I specifically looked for the constructs emphasized in prevention research. Then I took a clean transcript and reread it from multicultural and more "critical" frames of reference. By consciously reading the transcripts from two perspectives I was able to find subtleties I would have overlooked otherwise.

Cross case analysis. After my within-case analyses were completed, I compared and contrasted themes across cases. I was able to do so because I had a degree of standardization in my instruments and analytic categories (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

First, I divided the respondents into three groups according to whether they had committed crimes, were consistently employed or in school, and were a part of a strong social support network[14] over the preceding two years (See Table 4). After dividing the respondents into three analytic categories, I identified the weak and strong themes in each group. I kept summary sheets, similar to ones kept on individual respondents, for each group. These tallies reflected the importance of each construct for each group. Taking the information gleaned

from the tally sheets, I developed a list of propositions or assertions about concepts that I thought might apply across cases. I searched the data to find confirming and disconfirming evidence for each proposition. Then I developed alternative propositions to accommodate the disconfirming evidence and reexamined the data in light of the new propositions.

Table 4: Selection Criteria

GROUP	SELECTION CRITERIA
Group One	Respondents who: • Had not committed a crime • Were consistently employed or in school • Were a member of a strong social support system
Group Two	Respondents who had some but not all of the following: • Had not committed a crime • Were consistently employed or in school • Were a member of a strong social support system
Group Three	Respondents who: • Had committed crimes • Were not consistently employed or in school • Did not have a strong social support system

After the evidence in each component was analyzed, the entire data set was reviewed to determine whether there were conflicts between the propositions and evidence found in the various components. The goal was to identify themes that ran across multiple cases, which may indicate commonalties in the how

[14] A strong social support system is defined as having people beyond the immediate family that provide emotional and concrete support to the respondent.

developmental pathways were shaped, and contrasting themes that may indicate differences in the individual or the contexts of their lives.

After I compared and contrasted the stories of the individuals in these three categories, I regrouped the respondents into two ethnic backgrounds: African Americans and European Americans. I then used the same process to identify themes that may indicate the influence of ethnicity in shaping the respondents' developmental paths. Finally, I used the same process to examine the role gender played in shaping developmental paths.

In addition, I examined the historical data I collected from the Seattle Social Development Project and compared those who continued to be in-trouble in adulthood with those who were not to look for similarities and differences in the groups. Triangulating the findings of the semi-structured interviews with the SSDP quantitative data strengthens the validity of my conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Bias and Error

Because I am a middle-class, European-American female, and half of my participants were African American and all were from low-income backgrounds, it was essential for me to take steps to reduce the likelihood that I would appropriate and misinterpret the respondents' voices. White women often define others in terms of their own experience, thus distorting and trivializing the experiences of non-white people and taking the participant's story out of context (Collins, 1991; Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Thompson, 1991). Although it

was not possible for me to guarantee that I would not misinterpret the thoughts, opinions and feelings of my respondents, I took the following steps to increase my own and my study's integrity.

I made a concerted effort to ensure informed consent. At the end of the 1999 SSDP interview, I asked the subject if it would be all right for me to contact them again about the possibility of participating in another study. If they agreed, I told them I would phone them at a later date. During the follow-up phone call, I explained the proposed study in depth and asked the respondents if they were willing to participate. If they agreed, I set up an initial meeting at a place of the respondent's choosing. During that meeting I reviewed the consent form and answered the respondent's questions.

To increase the appropriateness of my interview questions and research protocol, I selected an African American male and a European American female from the large sample and hired them to be my research consultants. I asked them to think with me about how to approach the participants, how to sensitize myself to the participants' need, and how to shape my questions so they accurately reflected the reality of the participants' lives.

Once my sample was chosen, I checked to see where the respondents lived. Before the interviews I spent time in their communities so that I could increase my comfort level with their environments. Particularly because the interviews were conducted at a private location to be chosen by the respondent, it was important for me to reduce any anxiety I might have about being in an

unfamiliar setting. Fortunately, all but two of the participants lived in communities that I had worked or lived in previously. The remaining participants lived in middle-class, suburban communities not unlike my own.

I recognized that it might be emotionally taxing for the respondents and collaterals to reflect on their histories, change processes, and relationships. At the beginning of the interview I let the respondents know they could refrain from answering any question and stop the interview any time. I have been a mental health counselor for 20 years. I have a Master's degree in counseling and am a state-registered counselor (#020701). I have worked extensively with individuals who have backgrounds that are similar to the respondents. I used my clinical judgement to determine the pace and depth of the interview. On one occasion a respondent seemed to experience significant discomfort. I talked to her about how difficult it was to think about her childhood and gave her the opportunity to discontinue the interview. She declined. At no time did I see the need to refer a respondent for follow-up care.

In addition, I consulted with an African American woman who is also a Mental Health Professional, about my analysis of the African Americans' stories in order to get feedback from an individual who is deeply rooted in the African American community and a mental health professional. I talked to her about my analysis of the African Americans' stories in order to reduce the likelihood that I would inadvertently stereotype my African American respondents and in doing so appropriate their voices. Her knowledge of multicultural scholarship, the aspects

of the African American community and psychiatric disorders made her particularly well suited to provide feedback about those aspects of the respondents' stories that can be interpreted as both psychiatric disorders and cultural responses.

Finally, I was comfortable with all of the respondents. For the past 25 years I have worked with young people and their families. The majority of the young people I have worked with are low-income youth who had been incarcerated and struggled in school and with addictions. Consequently, the content of our conversations was not unfamiliar. However, I made a concerted effort to paraphrase and summarize the respondents' answers to try and lessen the chance that I was appropriating their voices.

Differences Between the SSDP Sample and the Eight Respondents

SSDP surveys and the qualitative interviews indicate that, at age 25, the respondents fell into three, not two, groups: those who are thriving, those who are sinking into deeper levels of trouble, and those who are in between (See Table 5). Within the thriving group, Peter is a biracial, Madeline is a European-American, and Lynette is an African American. In the sinking group Ron is African American, Simon a European-American and Catherine is European-American. In the in-between group Daniel is a European-American and Carla is a biracial[15].

[15] Both biracial respondents have African American fathers and European American mothers.

Table 5: Description of the Respondents

Respondent	Crime	Work/ School	Substance Abuse[16]	Mental Health Problem[17]	Social Support	Happy with Life
Thriving						
Peter	No	Yes	No	No	Extensive[18]	Yes
Madeline	No	Yes	Recovery	No	Extensive	Yes
Lynette	No	Yes	No	No	Extensive	Yes
In between						
Daniel	No	No	No	Situational Anxiety	Extensive	Yes
Carla	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bipolar	Some[19]	Yes
Sinking						
Ron	Yes	No	Yes	Anxiety/ Depression	Little[20]	No
Simon	Yes	No	Yes	Bipolar	Little	No
Catherine	Yes	No	Yes	Depression	Little	No

The three thriving respondents are pursuing careers, feel good about the direction of their lives, have supportive families and friends, do not have a psychiatric disorder or a problem with alcohol or other drugs, and have high hopes for their future. The three who are sinking into ever worsening problems are unemployed or sporadically employed, live with a parent(s), have been in jail

[16] As measured by the Diagnostic Interview Schedule, which was developed by the National Institute of Mental Health.
[17] As measured by the Diagnostic Interview Schedule, which was developed by the National Institute of Mental Health.
[18] Extensive social support means a network of three or more sources of support, including family members, friends or a significant other.
[19] Some social support includes emotional support from a family member and a significant other, but not a friendship network.
[20] Those with little social support have one family member who provides at least food, clothing and shelter. However, they do not have a relationship with a significant other or a friendship network.

during the past three years, and suffer from both substance abuse and psychiatric disorders. The two who are in between have characteristics in common with both groups; some aspects of their lives are running smoothly while others are problematic.

In order to gain a clearer picture of the ways in which these respondents differed from the overall sample I compared the mean scores of both groups on the following SSDP constructs:

- Family bonding, family management, and family conflict[21].
- Attachment and commitment to school, school trouble[22], and number of years of school completed.
- Involvement with antisocial and prosocial peers.
- Aggressive and covert delinquency[23] and following a violent offending trajectory[24].

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[22] School trouble scale includes suspension and expulsion, getting in trouble with teachers, being sent out of class for doing something wrong, and hitting a teacher.
[23] Aggressive delinquency scale includes hitting a teacher, purposely damaging or destroying property that does not belong to the subject, breaking into a house, store, school or other building without the owner's permission, picking a fight with someone, throwing objects such as rocks, or bottles at cars or people, and hitting someone with the idea of seriously hurting them. Covert delinquency scale includes drawing things or pictures on buildings or other property without the owner's permission, purposely damaging or destroying property that does not belong to the subject, taking things worth more than $5.00, buying, holding or selling stolen goods that the subject knew were stolen, and selling illegal drugs.
[24] This measure has to do with the pattern of criminal offenses the respondent followed including non-offending, to late onset offending, to decreasing offending, and chronic offenders.

Table 6 summarizes the differences between the means of these two groups on the above scales in fifth and sixth grades[25], seventh grade, and eighth grade[26]. Given the small sample size used this study it was not possible to evaluate the statistical significance of the differences. However the data does offer some insight into the developmental trajectories of the respondents. At the end of elementary school the two groups differed substantially on two scales. The respondents experienced more family conflict, and had more friends who were in trouble. On the other scales there were only slight differences. The respondents were somewhat more bonded to their families, less attached and committed to school; got into more trouble at school, and had fewer friends that followed conventional norms. Furthermore, their families used slightly fewer proactive family management practices and had more management problems.

The differences between the SSDP sample and the respondents, when they were in seventh and eighth grades, provide clues about how the respondents' developmental paths diverged in junior high school. In seventh grade, when the respondents moved from elementary school to junior high school, the differences between the SSDP subjects and the respondents widened dramatically. The respondents became much less bonded to their family and attached and committed to school. They also got into considerably more trouble at school, had far more

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[25] The fifth and sixth grade data is combined to best capture the quality of the respondents' lives at the end of elementary school. Fifth grade is the first year in which data were available for all eight respondents. The family conflict construct was not used in SSDP's seventh and eighth grade data sets.

[26] Negative scores mean the respondents had less of the quality than the overall sample and positive score mean they had more of the quality.

antisocial friends, and committed far more aggressive and non-aggressive crimes. At the same time their families used more proactive management practices and had far fewer family management problems.

Table 6: Degrees of Difference between the Groups in Late Elementary School and Junior High School

Construct	Difference in means (SSDP vs. respondents) in 5th & 6th grades [27]	Difference in means (SSDP vs. respondents) in 7th grade	Difference in means (SSDP vs. respondents) in 8th grade
Family Bonding	.04	-.83	-.35
Proactive management	-.21	.35	.32
Management Problems	-.38	.60	-.78
Family Conflict	.86	Not Available	Not Available
Attachment to School	-.11	-.60	-.28
Commitment to School	-.40	-.2.07	-.72
School Trouble	.05	1.10	.84
Antisocial Peers	1.04	2.1	1.48
Conventional Peers	-.24	-.20	-.93
Aggressive Delinquency	Not Available	1.00	.60
Covert Delinquency	Not Available	1.49	1.15

Although many of the differences between the overall SSDP sample and the respondents lessened in eighth grade, they continued. The respondents who were substantially less committed to school, in more trouble at school, more

[27] A negative difference means the respondents had less of the quality being measured than the overall sample. A positive score means they had more of the quality

involved with antisocial peers, less involved with conventional peers, and more involved in delinquent activity than their counterparts. In addition, their families had many more family management problems.

Finally, there was a substantial difference between the two groups on their violent offending trajectory (1.9 vs. 3.1 on a four-point scale). The eight respondents in this study were far more likely to be chronic, violent offenders in than were the SSDP subjects. In addition, there was a substantial difference between the two groups in the number of years of school completed. Only one of the eight respondents graduated from high school, three earned the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and four did not earn a diploma. In short, the respondents in this study were more likely to grow up in families in which there was a high degree of conflict, leave school before graduating, belong to peer groups who used alcohol and other drugs and committed crimes, and be chronic violent offenders than were the other SSDP participants.

Summary

I used a retrospective, comparative case study to describe the developmental pathways of individuals who were failing in school and committing crimes during early adolescence. This approach was particularly well suited to my study because it allowed me to explore the 'lived experiences' of the respondents and address the dimension of time. In order to reduce some of the limitations of this design and strengthen the validity of my conclusions, I selected my respondents from a pool of subjects who were participants in a quantitative,

longitudinal study since 1985, and triangulated my findings with data that had been collected earlier in that study. In addition, I took steps to reduce the likelihood that I would appropriate and misinterpret the voices of the respondents by making significant efforts to ensure informed consent, testing my interview questions beforehand with individuals who were similar to the respondents, familiarizing myself with the neighborhoods my respondents lived in, and consulting with an individuals who are familiar with the sociocultural backgrounds of many of the respondents.

CHAPTER IV
WHERE DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS DIVERGE: EXPOSURE TO RISK AND OPPRESSIVE FACTORS

In early adulthood three of the respondents are thriving, three are sinking into deeper levels of trouble, and two share characteristics with both groups. Peter, Lynette and Madeline, the thriving respondents, are pursuing careers, have supportive families and friends, feel good about the direction of their lives, and have high hopes for their future. For at least the past three years, they have not committed any crimes except for marijuana use, had problems with alcohol or other drugs, or suffered from a psychiatric disorder.

Ron, Simon and Catherine are sinking into despair. Simon and Ron are unemployed and Catherine is working in a fast food restaurant. All three are living with one of their parents and, during the past three years, each has committed multiple felonies including drug sales, fraud, and assault. All have problems with alcohol or other drugs and have a diagnosable mental illness. Finally, they are frustrated with their lives and confused about what they should do next.

Daniel and Carla are in-between; they have characteristics of both groups. For the most part Daniel's life works for him. He has solid friendships, a girlfriend, and a stable work history. It is his recent lack of employment, situational anxiety and recreational use of cocaine that separate him from the respondents who are thriving. Carla's compulsive cocaine use and gambling,

involvement in criminal activity, and history of a bipolar disorder would put her into the group of respondents who are sinking into trouble. However, the fact that she has a stable job and marriage, as well as her assessment that her life is better than it ever has been, keeps her from joining this group.

In this chapter and the next I explore possible explanations for the divergence between the developmental paths of the respondents. The first set of explanations, the focus of this chapter, center on exposure to risks factors and oppressive conditions. Chapter V does a similar analysis for a second set of explanations: exposure to protective and resistance factors.

Setting the Stage

Before looking at the similarities and differences in the respondents' exposure to adversity, it is important to get a sense of the larger societal context in which they grew up. When asked to describe the forces and conditions that influenced the direction of their lives and shaped who they are today, all stressed personal factors such as their parents, extended family members, friends, teachers, and employers. Therefore, the primary focus of this study is on the individuals themselves and their immediate social environment. However the personal context of their lives is profoundly influenced by and reflective of societal factors (Nelson-Pallmeyer, 1996; Polakaw, 1986; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). Therefore, it is important to understand the larger societal environment in which they grew up.

The respondents were adolescents from 1986 through 1994, during the Reagan and Bush Senior presidencies. During this time, millions of well-paid industrial jobs were eliminated and replaced by low-paying service industry jobs. Though the Gross National Product grew considerably during the 1980s, the majority of Americans had less money and lower incomes at the end of the decade than they did at the beginning (Nelson-Palmer, 1996).

Not only was there a massive upward redistribution of wealth, there was a decline in benefits to the poor including federal cuts for low-income housing, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, Head Start, and child nutrition and health programs (Hewlett, 1991). By 1990 more than two of every three poor workers had no employer-based or union-subsidized health insurance (Hewlett 1999).

These economic changes reflected, in part, a shift in social values. The poor, once viewed with sympathy, were often blamed for the breakdown of the family, their own poverty, and the decline of the nation. In the mid-term elections of 1994, the Republicans made significant gains at the polls by cultivating a politics of resentment against individuals who were getting public assistance and by pledging to cut taxes even further (Nelson-Pallmeyer, 1996).

As a consequence of these economic and political shifts, poverty rates soared, especially for people of color, the working poor, households headed by women, and children (Eitzen, 1992). By 1995, one in five full-time workers was earning poverty- level wages, and the incidence of child poverty increased from

16% to 20% (Eitzen, 1992; Sabo, 1995). Furthermore, the value of the 1994 minimum wage was at its second lowest point in real terms since 1955, 26% below its average in the 1970s and 35% below its peak value in 1968. In short, the purchasing power of minimum-wage workers declined significantly.

The respondents and their families would have been affected by these changes given that the majority of the respondents' parents were either on public assistance or working in minimum-wage jobs. The increasing cost of living and the shrinking value of the money they brought home, combined with other personal factors, likely made it difficult for many of the respondents' parents to feed, cloth, and shelter their families.

Exposure to Environmental Risks

All of the respondents were exposed to high levels of adversity within their immediate social and organizational environments. The differences among them are a matter of degrees. For the most part, those who faced more extreme, persistent or intense risk exposure, during their childhood and adolescence, face greater difficulties at age 25 (See appendices E and F for a description of the individual respondents' life stories).

Community Risks

All of the respondents lived in communities that had multiple environmental risks. For the most part they were poor communities, where there was a high degree of mobility and low neighborhood attachment. Alcohol and

other drugs were readily available, and adults did not prohibit adolescents from using them as can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Respondents' Reports of Community Risks[28]

Respondents	Extreme Economic Deprivation	Mobility	Availability of Drugs	Norms Favoring Drug Use
Thriving				
Peter	Continual	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madeline	Situational	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lynette	Continual	No	Yes	Yes
In-between				
Daniel	Situational	No	Yes	Yes
Carla	Continual	No	Yes	Yes
Sinking				
Ron	Continual	No	Yes	Yes
Simon	Situational	Early	Yes	Yes
Catherine	Continual	Yes	Yes	Yes

Poverty. In junior high school all of the respondents qualified for the federal free and reduced lunch program, indicating that their parents were poor. Yet, there were differences in the texture of the poverty they faced. Three experienced situational poverty. For example, Simon was poor when he lived with his parents in shacks up in the hills, but after his mother divorced and remarried, his family got itself out of debt.

[28] Tables 7, 8, 12, 13 and 15 are based on the descriptions the respondents gave in their qualitative interviews. Confirming or refuting evidence from SSDP data is found in the text.

In contrast, five of the respondents were poor throughout their childhood and early adolescence. For most if not all of their growing-up years, they lived in government-subsidized housing projects in high-crime neighborhoods. Peter remembers, "It was so bad when we were little that my mom would send me out to play and I would come home naked because somebody actually stole the clothes right off my back."

However, living in situational or continual poverty did not appear to play a major role in shaping the respondents' lives as young adults. Two of the individuals who are now thriving, Peter and Lynette, were poor throughout their childhood and adolescence.

Availability of drugs and norms favorable their use. In the same way that the type of poverty did not seem to discriminate between the thriving respondents and the others, neither did the availability of alcohol and other drugs. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, adolescent drinking and drug use were high (Johnson, O'Malley & Bachman, 1991). All of the respondents report that alcohol and marijuana were readily available among their peers, and many adults were willing to provide them with a variety of substances.

Madeline found it easy to get adults to buy alcohol for her. She saw it as a game in which everyone knew what was happening and played his or her roles perfectly. At 15, she would stand outside of a local convenience store and ask customers to "buy her a pint." It was always easy to find some man who would say yes. The storeowner would watch her give the customer money. The

customer would go in and buy his groceries and her beer. Then he would walk out of the store and give Madeline "a bottle of Old English." The storeowner made a sale, Madeline got her beer, and everyone "was happy." As she puts it, "They did not really enforce the law… it was like no big deal."

School Risks

Similarly, the difference between the respondents' early school experience does not appear to foreshadow their life at 25, as suggested in Table 8. One individual who is thriving, one who is in-between, and one who is sinking did quite well in elementary school. Two, Peter who is thriving and Ron who is sinking, report being in a program for highly capable children. In addition, respondents from across the thriving-sinking continuum were in trouble in elementary school, primarily for fighting.

Table 9 shows the differences between the respondents who are thriving and those who are sinking on the SSDP school variables[29]. These data indicate that most of the respondents felt safe in and around school, liked school, liked their teachers, felt cared about and had a feeling of belonging to school as fifth through eighth graders. In fact, the respondents who are currently struggling were more attached to school than those who are thriving. However, they were less committed to school, particularly in late elementary school. Finally, the respondents who are sinking into deeper trouble at 25 were more likely to be in trouble at school, especially in seventh grade, than were those who are thriving.

[29] For analytic purposes I placed Daniel in the thriving group and Carla in the sinking.

Table 8: Respondents' Reports of School and Peer Risks

Respondent	Academic Failure in Elementary School	Lack of Commitment to Middle School	Grade Dropped Out of School	Antisocial Peers
Thriving				
Peter	No	Yes	9th	Yes
Madeline	Yes	Yes	No.	Yes
Lynette	Yes	Yes	8th	Yes
In-between				
Daniel	No	Yes	8th	Yes
Carla	Yes	Yes	7th	Yes
Sinking				
Ron	No	Yes	10th	Yes
Simon	Yes	Yes	9th	Yes
Catherine	Yes	Yes	7th	Yes

Regardless of their experience in elementary school, all of the respondents report that they lost interest during junior high school. Universally, they remember being bored and thinking, "You're not teaching me anything that I do not already know… I mean, I could care less." In response, they skipped class and started "blanking-out." Four respondents dropped out of school in junior high. Three made it to high school, primarily attending for the social aspects of school. Out of those three only Madeline graduated.

Table 9: Mean Differences in SSDP School Variables

Construct	Mean Scores in 5/6th Grades (Thrivers vs. Sinkers)	Mean Scores in 7th Grade (Thrivers vs. Sinkers)	Mean Scores in 8th Grade (Thrivers vs. Sinkers)
Attachment to School[30]	2.42 vs. 2.44	2.17 vs. 2.83	2.46 vs. 3.18
Commitment to School[31]	-.372 vs. -1.09	-1.13 vs. -1.13	-.71 vs. -.83
School Trouble[32]	.176 vs. .573	.87 vs. 1.27	.84 vs. .85

Peer Risks

The respondents report that in junior high and high school they were more interested in their friends than in school, and became deeply attached to their peer group. All of the respondents believe that their decisions to quit school, use drugs, and commit crimes were encouraged by their desire to be like their friends. Perhaps Peter said it best: "I tried to be what other people at that time wanted me to be. The people I hung out with were older and had a lot of influence on me in that way. I was trying to be like them... I got bad grades because I was so busy trying to do what everybody else was doing."

Table 10 depicts the differences between the thriving and sinking respondents on the SSDP peer variables. In late elementary school, those who are thriving were much less likely to have best friends who were getting in trouble at school, using alcohol and other drugs, breaking the law, and encouraging the

[30] Higher scores indicate greater attachment
[31] Higher scores indicate greater commitment to school.
[32] Higher scores equal more trouble in school

respondent to do things that could get him or her in trouble. Upon entering junior high school, they became more involved with antisocial peers, even more so than those who are currently sinking. In eighth grade the pattern that was established in elementary school returned, and those who are thriving had fewer antisocial friends than those who are sinking.

In late elementary school, the thriving respondents had at least a few friends who were involved in organized after-school activities, trying to do well in school, and encouraging the respondent to do a good job, and work hard at school Those who are sinking had virtually none. In junior high school, both groups established relationships with more conventional peers. In eighth grade those who are sinking had a few more friendships with conventional peers than those who are currently thriving.

Table 10: Mean Differences in SSDP Peer Network Variables

Construct	Difference in Means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 5/6th grades	Difference in Means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 7th grade	Difference in Means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 8th grade
Antisocial Peers[33]	-.37 vs. 2.34	3.66 vs. 3.33	2.75 vs. 4.0
Conventional Peers[34]	.07 vs. -.37	3.22 vs. 3.0	2.75 vs. 2.89

For these eight respondents, the transition between elementary school and junior high school appears to have been quite difficult. Five of the eight respondents became less committed to school, and six of the eight got into more

[33] Higher scores indicate more involvement with antisocial peer group.
[34] Higher scores mean more involvement with conventional peer group.

trouble in junior high school than they had before. In late elementary school all of the thriving respondents were engaged in peer networks that were composed primarily of prosocial youth, but in junior high this trend was reversed. In contrast, all but one of those who are currently sinking were involved with an antisocial peer group in late elementary school, which continued through junior high school in spite of the fact that they added more conventional friends to their network.

Family Risks

The SSDP data indicate that there were also changes within the respondents' families, as noted in Table 11. In late elementary school, the thriving respondents were more closely bonded to their families. However, in junior high school this bond weakened to the point that it was virtually indistinguishable from the bond the other respondents had with their families. Throughout late elementary school and junior high school, the families of the thriving respondents used more proactive family management practices and had more family management problems than the families of the respondents who are sinking further into trouble.

These data do not parallel the respondents' memory of what it was like to grow up in their families. Looking back on their lives, they report that the risks they faced in the community and in school paled in comparison to the risks they faced at home. In their qualitative interviews, they indicate that the characteristics

that differentiated their life paths are nested within the families they grew up in, as shown in Table 12.

Table 11: Mean Differences in SSDP Family Variables

Construct	Difference in Means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 5/6th Grades	Difference in Means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 7th Grade	Difference in Means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 8th Grade
Family Bonding[35]	2.78 vs. 2.12	1.98 vs. 2.0	2.43 vs. 2.5
Proactive Management[36]	3.3 vs. 2.78	3.44 vs. 2.9	3.50 vs. 2.79
Family Management Probs.[37]	3.4 vs. 2.7	3.5 vs. 2.75	3.25 vs. 2.25

The degree of violation. What separates the thriving respondents from those who are not is the degree of violence and exploitation in their families. All report violence of one kind or another. However, those who are currently thriving were not subjected to as much violence for as prolonged a period of time as those who are currently struggling. For example, Lynette, Carla, Simon and Ron all saw their fathers beat their mothers, and Peter repeatedly rescued his mother from beatings she received from her prostitution clientele. However, neither Peter nor Lynette, two thriving respondents, lived with their abusers. In addition, Lynette was rarely present when her parents' conflicts escalated into violence. Her older sister usually sensed when trouble was brewing and would get Lynette out of the house.

[35] 1-4 scale with 4 = high bonding
[36] 1-4 scale with 4 = more proactive family management practices
[37] 1-4 scale with 1 = more family management problems

Table 12: Respondents' Reports of Family Risks

Respondent	Family History of Health and Behavior Problems	Family Management Problems	Family Conflict	Child Abuse	Sexual Abuse
Thriving					
Peter	Drug Use	No Supervision	Yes	No	No
Madeline	Alcoholism, Depression	No Supervision	Yes	No	No
Lynette	Drug Use	No Supervision	Domestic Violence	No	No
In-between					
Daniel	Alcoholism	No Supervision	Yes	No	No
Carla	Drug Use	No Supervision	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sinking					
Ron	Drug Use Crime	Harsh Discipline/No Supervision	Domestic Violence	Yes	No
Simon	Alcoholism	Harsh Discipline/No Supervision	Domestic Violence	Yes	No
Catherine	Drug Use Alcoholism	Harsh Discipline/No Supervision	Between parents and children	Yes	Yes

In contrast, Simon and Ron, both of whom are sinking, lived with their fathers and regularly witnessed their mothers' beatings. Research on the impact of domestic violence suggests children who witness parental violence have more behavior problems and emotional difficulties, are more aggressive with their

peers, and have fewer social skills than children who come from non-violent families (Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998).

Children are often overwhelmed by their exposure to violence, especially when both the victim and the perpetrator are well known and emotionally important to the child (Osofsky, 1996). In a study that used two longitudinal data sources, researchers found that marital violence predicted children's negative outcomes in early adulthood including poorer parent-child relationships, lower psychological well-being and more violence within their own relationships (McNeal & Amato, 1998).

Finally, research indicates that there is a 30 – 60% overlap between violence against women and violence against children in the same families (Dykstra & Alsop, 1996; English, 1998). This was true for both Ron and Simon. In addition, none of the thriving respondents report being hit by their parents with an object such as a belt or paddle, but all of those who are in serious trouble do. In Simon and Ron's cases their fathers used enough physical force, on at least one occasion, to require medical attention (see Appendix F).

Both Ron and his mother and Simon and his stepfather describe the respondents' fathers as very cruel men. In both instances when the mothers decided to get a divorce, the fathers mounted vicious custody battles. Ron's father went so far as to kidnap Ron and his sister. Yet, in the opinion of both Ron's mother and Simon's stepfather, both fathers fought for custody more to

harass their wives than to get their children. Once the mothers received custody the fathers stopped paying child support and visiting their children.

Sexual abuse. For the women who participated in this study, a history of sexual exploitation is a repeated refrain. A peer raped Madeline. Catherine was molested by her brother, and Carla was sexually abused by both her sister's and her mother's boyfriends. Only Lynette grew up sexually unscathed.

Madeline's rape was excruciatingly painful, but did not have an apparent long-term effect. This may be because it was committed by an acquaintance, happened once, and she received tremendous support from her family. In contrast, Catherine and Carla's sexual abuse was ongoing, a part of a much larger pattern of family neglect, and its negative consequences appear to be long lasting[38].

Catherine's brother molested her for five years. When the abuse was discovered, her family did not rally around her. They were not appalled by what her brother did, but angry at the embarrassment it caused them. Similarly, Carla's family did not support her when she was sexually exploited. When she was 14 a man who rented a room in her house came to her bed and started touching her. She ran to her sister for help. The next day when she and her sister talked to their mother about what happened, their mother said, "Men will be men," and let the man continue to live in their home.

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[38] For analytic purposes, I contrast Carla and Catherine with Madeline and Lynette in those instances where I am looking at issues that affected only women. Although Carla does not meet all of the criteria to be classified as someone who is sinking into greater trouble, she is more like Catherine than she is like Madeline and Lynette on almost every measure.

Research on child sexual abuse indicates that there are serious long-term effects on the victims. These effects include an increased rate of psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and social isolation. Young victims are also more likely to be sexual assaulted in adulthood (Banyard, Williams & Siegel, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Oddone-Paolucci, Genuis & Violato, 2001). Although there are psychosocial consequences to being raped by an adolescent peer they tend not to be as severe or long lasting (Allison & Wrightman, 1993; Wonderlich, Crosby, Mitchell, Thompson, Smyth, Redlin & Jones-Paxton, 2001).

In summary, the sinking respondents got into more trouble, suffered deeper despair, and were exposed to a wider range of family problems, violence and exploitation than were the other respondents. This finding is consistent with research. Findings from a study that compared childhood experiences of 9,500 adults in several areas including psychological, physical or sexual abuse; violence against the mother; and living in a household with members who were substance abusers, mentally ill, suicidal or ever imprisoned indicate that people who experienced four or more of the above childhood difficulties had a four to twelve-fold increase in health risks for alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and suicide attempts; and a two to four-fold increase in poor self-rated health, more than fifty sexual intercourse partners, and incidence of sexually transmitted disease (Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, & Williamson, 1998).

Family risks do not exist in isolation of the community risks. Although the family difficulties that permeated the respondents' childhood were not

necessarily caused by economic policies that exacerbated their poverty, the stress of trying to provide for a family in difficult economic times may have made it hard for the respondents' parents to find the energy and maintain the patience necessary to raise children.

Exposure to Oppressive Factors

Throughout the qualitative interviews many of the respondents described experiences where they felt unjustly dominated, dismissed or discriminated against, as summarized in Table 13.

Table 13: Respondents' Reports of Oppressive Factors

Respondents	Low Immediate Family Expectations due to Race	Low Family Expectations due to Gender	Low Extended Family Expectations	Societal Discrimination due to Race or Gender
Thriving				
Peter	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Madeline	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lynette	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
In-between				
Daniel	No	No	No	No
Carla	Yes	Yes	No	No
Sinking				
Ron	No	Yes	No	Yes
Simon	No	No	No	No
Catherine	No	Yes	Yes	No

Many were repeatedly told, in subtle and not so subtle ways, that not much was expected of them because of their race, gender, or family background.

Family Expectations

In most of the respondents' families there were naysayers, people who implied that there was something fundamentally wrong with the respondents. Sometimes the negativity involved active discrimination, and at other times it was subtler. Peter, Lynette, and Carla, perceived racism in their families. They were told, directly and indirectly, that they would never amount to anything because they were Black[39]. For example, Lynette's father had two families, one White and the other Black. While she was growing up, her father lived with and only supported his white family. In addition, her father's wife called Lynette a "nigger." As a child, Lynette believed that her father's other family was more "important" because it was White.

Peter believed his mother's family discriminated against him because of he was "more Black" than his brother and sister. One example he cites occurred when Child Protective Services (CPS) sought to terminate his mother's custody of her four children. Peter's aunts took custody of two of the children; the two lightest skinned ones, who could easily be mistaken for being White. While Peter's brother speculates that these two because they were the oldest and the aunts knew them best, Peter believes they discriminated against him and the

[39] Throughout the text I use the term black when discussing the African American respondents and their families. I do so because this is how the respondents referred to themselves and their families.

sibling who was taken by CPS because of their darker skin color. In his heart he knows that his mother's family did not like him because he was "more black" than the others.

For Carla, the racism revolved around her sexuality. Her mother repeatedly told her never to date a Black man because they were "bad news." When her mother found out that a neighborhood White girl was dating a Black man she told Carla, "If she was my daughter, there's no way I would let her be with no nigger." Carla remembers thinking, "What's wrong with me? I'm Black."

Sexism. For Madeline, it was sexism that took its toll. Her father gave her the message; boys are more valuable than girls. He modeled misogyny, beating Madeline's mother and blatantly disrespected his girlfriends. After Madeline's mother and stepfather moved to Seattle, her father would write letters to her brother but not to her. As Madeline says, "He made it very clear he never wanted a daughter," and she remembers thinking, "There had to be something wrong with me" or else her father would want to have a relationship with her.

The low expectations of Catherine and Carla's families appeared to come from an assumption that girls were sexual objects, something for men to use. As noted earlier, Catherine's mother was more worried about her son being arrested for sexually abusing Catherine than she was about the abuse itself. Carla's mother believed "men will be men" and was unconcerned when one of her tenants tried to molest Carla.

Finally, the expectations of Ron's family were also colored by his gender. His mother expected that men would do "a lot of fighting and no working." From her perspective this was just what most men did.

The sins of the parents are visited on the child. Racism and sexism were not the only messengers of low expectations. Again and again the respondents' extended families told them they expected them to turn out just like their parents. Because their parents had serious problems, they expected their children to grow up to be troublemakers. Lynette remembered:

> [We] grew up with our mom just raising us, and she drank a lot and wasn't there. So [my aunt] would look at us as trash. She married this man who said, "I do not want my kids going over there to play ... because their mom is alcoholic. They thought I was a bad kid.

Peter also recalled his grandparents, aunts, and uncles expecting him to become a drug addict like his mother. In his case this expectation was embellished to include society's portrayal of young Black men as "thugs."

For Catherine, the knowledge that she was not as valuable as her other siblings was reinforced by her mother's sister who frequently took Catherine's two older siblings for the weekend. They would go to the movies, go roller-skating, or go to Canada, opportunities that Catherine coveted. It is possible that she never took Catherine because there was an eight-year age difference between the three children with Catherine being the youngest. Yet Catherine's perceived it to be because there was something wrong with her.

Discrimination and Societal Expectations

The racism and sexism that were lodged within the respondents' families were situated within and grew out of a societal context. All of the Black respondents have struggled to come to terms with the racism they have faced, within their families and within the larger society. All four of the Black respondents feel more comfortable with and accepted by Blacks. As Carla said, "There is a Black way and a White way."

Part of the Black respondents' lack of comfort with Whites comes from the discrimination each faced. All have been discriminated against: refused service at restaurants, denied apartments in all White neighborhoods, or told they were good enough only "to be flipping burgers." Consequently, they have ambivalent feelings toward Whites. They know their presence often makes Whites uncomfortable, and believe that Whites think racist thoughts even though they do not say so to their faces. Peter explained:

> It surprises me, playing that video game on the Internet how much racism comes out. So and so is a nigger, stuff like that. It is easy to sit in front of the computer and say stuff that is really on your mind. You know there are no repercussions for what you say. They wouldn't say it to your face. But they wouldn't even imagine that a guy like me would be sitting on the other side of the computer.

The Black males in this study have had a particularly difficult time. Mainstream society and the media repeatedly reinforce the image that the criminal subculture is African American (Bell, 2002). But this is inaccurate. In 2003 over 56% of the prison population was Caucasian (Bureau of Prisons, 2003). In this

study the criminally immersed respondents include a White woman, a Bi-racial woman and an African American man.

Regardless of the inaccuracy of the portrayal the stereotype still affected Peter and Ron. They report that people in authority repeatedly imply that they are thugs without taking the time to actually get to know them. For example, Peter remembers the first day of his sophomore year in high school. The new principal called him down to the office. She told him that he had to sign a contract saying he was going to show up for school every day, go to all of his classes and be on time, otherwise he was not going to be permitted to attend. He knew she was out to get him, so he simply dropped out.

In technical college, both Peter and Ron found that the instructors did not take them seriously. Peter believes they "think that I am just there to play school and I am not really interested in learning" while Ron remembers one of his teachers telling him, "You're just a thug." For both of these African American men discrimination has left a bitter taste in their mouths. Perhaps Peter put it best when he said, "I do not like the way White people treat me a lot of the times.... [and] I built up a lot of resentment towards being treated like that."

In summary, most of the respondents have been given the message that not much was expected of them. The Black respondents have faced a particularly pervasive form of inequity. All of them have had Whites imply that they were not good enough: not good enough to attend a particular school, to have the job they

have, and to date White men. Discrimination is part of an ongoing pattern in their lives, one with which they have had to cope with.

Personal Risks

Finally, all of the respondents acted in ways that increased the likelihood that they would drop out of school and become criminally involved. According to the data collected by SSDP, it is the relationships with antisocial peers and the degree of involvement in both aggressive and covert delinquency during early adolescence that most dramatically distinguish the respondents who are thriving from those who are not, as shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Mean Differences in SSDP Personal Risk Variables

Construct	Difference in means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 5/6th grades	Difference in means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 7th grade	Difference in means (Thrivers vs. Sinkers) in 8th grade
Antisocial Peer Network	-.37 vs. 2.34	3.6 vs. 3.3	2.75 vs. 4.0
Aggressive Delinquency	Not Available	.83 vs. 1.63	.33 vs. 1.13
Covert Delinquency	Not Available	.89 vs.2.38	.75 vs. 1.89

None of the respondents who are currently thriving were involved with antisocial peers in late elementary school, while all but one of the others were. They participated in covert delinquency such as drawing things or pictures on buildings or other property without the owner's permission; purposely damaging or destroying property that did not belong to them; taking things worth more than $5.00; buying, holding, or selling goods they knew were stolen; and selling illegal

drugs. This covert delinquency distinguishes the two groups more than aggressive delinquency.

Looking back on their lives, most of the respondents remember fighting and, in some cases, stealing when they were in elementary school. For the females the seriousness of their crimes and onset of their involvement with antisocial peers differentiates those who are thriving from those who are not. Although Madeline and Lynette both sold drugs they didn't do so for long, and it was not central to their identity. During late elementary school, neither had close friends who got in trouble at school, used alcohol and other drugs, or did things that could have gotten them arrested.

In contrast, Catherine and Carla committed serious crimes including prostitution, theft, fraud, and assault. They were involved with antisocial peers starting in elementary school and, according to SSDP data, both were chronic offenders who followed a violent offending trajectory throughout their adolescence.

All of the male respondents recall stealing cars, burglarizing houses, committing assaults, and using weapons in junior high school. According to the SSDP data only Peter and Daniel, one who is currently thriving and the other in between, were chronic offenders that followed a violent offending trajectory. In contrast, Simon was a violent offender in early adolescence, but his use of violence decreased in late adolescence.

The SSDP data collected on Ron is significantly different from the other respondents. He did not participate in either aggressive or covert delinquency. He had a conventional peer network throughout junior high school, and did not have any close friends who were involved in antisocial behavior. This is in marked contrast to his and his mother's description of his adolescence, which included fighting, associating with gang members, and getting shot.

During the qualitative interviews the respondents reflected on their personal risks, as shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Respondents' Reports of Personal Risks

Respondent	Early Anti-Social Behavior	Crime Violent/ Nonviolent	First Alcohol Use	Substance Abuse Problem	Mental Health Problem	Teen Parent
Thriving						
Peter	No	Violent	12 yrs.	No	No	Yes
Madeline	Yes	Nonviolent	12 yrs.	Yes	No	No
Lynette	Yes	Nonviolent	15 yrs.	No	No	Yes
In-between						
Daniel	No	Violent	12 yrs.	Maybe	No	No
Carla	Yes	Violent	11 yrs.	No	Yes	Yes
Sinking						
Ron	Yes	Violent	12 yrs.	Yes	Yes	No
Simon	Yes	Violent	9 yrs.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Catherine	Yes	Violent	10 yrs.	Yes	Yes	Yes

From this perspective, three personal attributes distinguish the respondents who are thriving from the others: 1) problems with alcohol and other drugs, 2) a history of psychiatric disorders and 3) differences in the meanings the respondents attribute to their behavior. In addition, being in abusive relationships distinguishes the women who are sinking from those who are thriving.

Alcohol and Other Drug Use

All of the respondents began using alcohol and marijuana before they were 15, which research indicates more than triples the risk of developing a substance abuse problem (Hawkins et al., 1992). Both those who are thriving and those who are not have wrestled with addiction. None of the thriving respondents currently uses alcohol and other drugs in ways that interfere with their functioning, and all of those who are sinking into despair do.

Two of the thriving respondents report that they have never used illicit drugs, except marijuana. Lynette was never particularly interested in drinking and using drugs. Peter made a conscious decision not to use drugs because, given his family history, he believed that if he "ever tried anything" he would become an addict.

In contrast to the other thriving respondents, Madeline is an alcoholic. By the time she was 14 she was drinking every day. She remembers that she "liked being drunk… [and] could have been drunk from morning till night every single day." By the time she was in her early twenties she was drinking heavily every night, and often took a drink first thing in the morning. When she woke up and

realized that she did not remember putting her two-year old daughter to bed she told herself, "This has got to stop." She quit drinking and has been sober for three years.

Like Madeline, Ron, Simon and Catherine began drinking in early adolescence. As the years went past they developed serious substance abuse problems that has defined their lives. Ron spends most of his days "kickin' it" with a few friends, getting high, drinking and making money selling drugs. At night Catherine and Simon go to the clubs or to a friend's house and enter a swirling collage of alcohol and drug use, which frequently lasts until the early morning hours. All three have paid a high price for their behavior. Catherine has spent time in jail because of her possession and sale of controlled substances. Simon has spent a year in jail for two driving under the influence convictions. Ron has overdosed on ecstasy, and his paranoia and flashbacks have made it difficult for him to function.

There may be a connection between these three respondents' current patterns of substance abuse and their earlier exposure to domestic violence and physical or sexual abuse. The respondents who are struggling with addiction grew up in homes where there was domestic violence (Ron, Simon and Carla), sexual abuse (Catherine and Carla), or physical abuse (Simon and Ron). Research indicates that there is a strong relationship between problems with alcohol and drug use in adulthood and domestic violence (English, Marshall & Orme, 1999), child sexual abuse (Easton, Swan & Sinha, 2000), and physical

child abuse (Kellener, Chaffin, Hollenberg & Fisher, 1994; Miller, Fox, & Garcia-Beckworth, 1999). With the exception of Peter's experience protecting his mother from her abusive prostitution clientele, none of the thriving respondents grew up in homes that were as violent.

Finally, all of the respondents sold drugs at some point in their adolescence, but their motivation and degree of immersion in the drug culture differ. For example, Lynette sold drugs because her friends and cousins were doing it. She never particularly liked being high and was not captivated by the idea of making money. Simon loved being high and needed to make money to support his use, so he tended to spend his time with an assortment of individuals who used and sold alcohol and other drugs.

Peter, Ron and Catherine's motivation for selling drugs was more complex. They were looking for a place to belong and were enthralled by the power and money they believed selling drugs could provide. Each became gang involved and defined themselves as drug dealers.

For Peter, selling drugs met several needs. It was a way to rebel against his family, a route to peer acceptance, a way to come to terms with his racial identity, and a path to power and money. Selling drugs gave Peter a sense of power he had never experienced, and he could make a lot of money. He remembers how excited he was after he made his first $80.00 selling cocaine: "I was just so enamored with making money. I never made money like that before.

I remember going to sleep at night and being so excited about making money the next day, I couldn't go to sleep. I was excited like a little kid."

In some respects Ron's story is similar. He, too, had a compelling desire to belong to a group, and to have money and control. Unlike Peter, Ron's drug involvement was not part of a rebellion against his family or other people's expectations of him. It was, in many ways, fulfillment of an expectation and a continuation of his father's profession. His father and most of his father's friends had been drug dealers.

Catherine's story is a bit different due to her early addiction and gender. By the time she was 14 she had already left home, and her alcoholism had progressed to the point that she was having blackouts. Like Simon, she found that selling drugs was the best way to survive and feed her addiction. Like Ron and Peter, Catherine also wanted power, money, influence and control. Because she was female she could not be a gang member. So a way for her to gain acceptance, recognition, and esteem was through sexual relationships with the gang members themselves. Dealing drugs gave her access to them. As she says, she is addicted not just to the drugs, but also to the excitement and danger that dealing and being with violent men provide.

In summary, neither alcohol and drug use, selling drugs, nor addiction distinguishes the respondents who are thriving at age 25 from those who are not. What does separate them is whether they have been able to drink and use drugs in moderation or, failing to do so, whether they have stopped using. None of the

respondents who are thriving have an active alcohol and drug problem, and all of the respondents who are struggling do.

Why did Peter, who was deeply immersed in drug dealing, and Madeline, who was addicted, stop dealing and using while Ron, Simon and Catherine are still dependent on alcohol and drugs? Why was Peter, whose need for belonging, power and money closely parallels Ron and Catherine's, able to leave a gang lifestyle while the others were not? Part of the answer may lie in the psychiatric disorders that Ron, Simon and Catherine appear to suffer from.

Psychiatric Disorders

At age 25 none of the thriving respondents have diagnosable psychiatric disorders, but all those who are sinking do. Simon has been treated for a bipolar disorder, and Catherine and Ron have been treated for depression. The mental status examination given during the SSDP interview confirmed these diagnoses.

Without a thorough evaluation it is not possible to accurately determine the respondents' histories of psychiatric disorders. However, there is evidence that the three sinking respondents have had one or more psychiatric disorders since childhood or early adolescence. Catherine has been treated for depression since childhood. Simon appears to have had a conduct disorder as a child, and his parents suspect he suffered from Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity. As an adult he has been diagnosed and treated for a bipolar disorder. Ron showed signs of depression and paranoia well before he overdosed on ecstasy (see Appendix F for a more detailed description).

If these three did have psychiatric disorders in adolescence, it may have contributed to their substance abuse problem. While the evidence is far from conclusive, psychiatric disorders tend to precede substance abuse problems (Boyle & Oxford, 1991; Burke, Burke & Rae, 1994, Kessler et al., 1996). Thus, an individual with a psychiatric disorder may use alcohol and other drugs as a means of self-medicating against the effects of the psychiatric disorder.

It is not clear is when and how many psychiatric disorders Catherine, Simon and Ron had and for how long, and whether the disorders were the result of the respondents' lifestyle and drug use or a cause. Without this information it is impossible to know how and to what degree psychiatric disorders have influenced the other difficulties these respondents have faced. Nevertheless, it is clear that individuals who have a co-occurrence of substance abuse and other psychiatric disorders tend to face extraordinary difficulties (Drake & Mueser, 2000; Evans, 2000; Lyddon & Jones, 2001).

Participation in Abusive Relationships

Among the women, another factor that separates the thriving from the sinking respondents is their victimization as adults. The women who are currently thriving have partners who are supportive and helpful whereas the women who are not thriving tend to have partners who abuse them. Madeline and Lynette have both been in stable relationships for several years with men whom they trust and respect. In high school, Madeline dated men who treated her badly, but her husband treats her like "the greatest thing in the world." Lynette has had

only two significant relationships with men. In both cases she routinely advocated for herself, and demanded that she be treated with respect.

The relationships Catherine and Carla have had are very different. Catherine says she has gone through too many "bad relationships" to count. Not every man she has been with has beaten her, but the ones she has stayed with have. One of her fiancés beat her so badly that she fled to a battered woman's shelter, and her husband was a "crack head" drug dealer who had a reputation for being really "mean." As her sister says, "It is like, 'I like bad boys,' is tattooed on her forehead."

Carla, too, has a history of being with men who treat her badly. For example, one night the man she lived with hit her on the head with a pair of nunchakus. She could feel "the warm blood going down [her] face" and knew she needed stitches, but he wouldn't let her leave the house. The next morning, when he went to work, he tried to stop her from leaving by taking her shoes with him. Although she continued to be abused by this man, she did not leave him until four years after this incident.

There were similarities in Catherine and Carla's childhoods that were absent in Madeline and Lynette's. Madeline and Lynette acknowledge their mothers' faults and weaknesses, and both can name qualities about their mothers that they admire. In contrast, Catherine and Carla have nothing positive to say about their mothers. What they remember is their mothers' distance and seeming inability to show love. Indeed, their mothers seemed to find it difficult to

prioritize or even acknowledge the needs of their daughters. For example, Catherine remembers her mother picking her up from detention for the first time and saying, "I do not even know why the fuck I brought you home." When Carla was 14 she left home for two months, and her mother did not report her as a runaway.

Both Catherine and Carla were sexually abused and became sexually active when they were very young. Catherine started having sex when she was nine and Carla at 13. Research suggests that a history of sexual abuse and being a domestic violence victim as an adult is strongly correlated with early sexual activity (Calam, Horne, Glasgow & Cox, 1998; Johnson, 2001; Maker, Kemmelmeier & Peterson, 1998).

Differences in the Meanings the Respondents Attribute to their Behavior

The reasons behind the respondents' behavior either intensified or reduced their risk of continuing down a developmental path that led to more trouble with mainstream society. A vivid example is the difference between Peter and Ron's gang involvement.

Peter is a light-skinned biracial male whose mother is White and father is Black. His struggle to establish a positive ethnic identity as a Black male occurred in an environment that was nearly devoid of positive role models. His mother and stepmother, both White, raised him and his extended family identified with White mainstream culture. In elementary school Peter was placed in a

program for highly capable children where the vast majority of his peers were White.

It was difficult for Peter to establish a positive ethnic identity. Although he knew other African American men, primarily those who attended his church, he was not close to them. He did not have many opportunities to learn and integrate the attitudes and skills that could have helped him to develop cultural reference points that might have kept him anchored and clear about who he was as an African American man (Edwards & Polite, 1992). Instead, he identified with White mainstream society.

In middle school things began to change, and he became more aware of his race. He explained, "They use to call me 'White Boy' because I'm so light and the way my hair is and how I talk… It's like I'm not this and I'm not that." This came as a shock to Peter, given that within his family he had always been considered the dark- skinned child. After words he attached himself to a gang, and stopped associating with his White and Asian friends.

By the time Peter was in high school he had adopted a gang persona and began monitoring his behavior to make sure it was consistent with his distorted image of Black masculinity. His brother remembers him saying things like, "Hey, I'm not able to do this because I'm a Black man." Then, at 16, he made the decision to become a father and have a baby, not just any baby but a Black baby. Being a father gave Peter "an excuse" to get out of the gang. He had another

vehicle to express his Black identity. He was going to raise his son to be a strong, confident Black male.

The reasons behind Ron's gang involvement and the meaning he attached to it were quite different. Instead of being a departure from the developmental path he had been following in elementary school, it was the logical next step. The men in Ron's extended family and in his parents' friendship network were involved in illegal and often violent activities. According to his mother all Ron saw from most of the men in his family and neighborhood was "a lot of fighting and no working." Being in the gang continued the identity his father had modeled, engaging in illegal activities and being opposed to mainstream, White society. Unlike Peter, Ron has not moved on from his gang involvement. For him, the gang is a defining cornerstone of his life. Without it he has no other well-defined vision of who he could be or what he could do with himself.

Peter and Ron's definition of a Black man as a gangster is located in a particular time and place, and is influenced by their personal problems. They were adolescents in the late 80's and early 90's, when gang activity was at it peak in Seattle. Their involvement was simply a continuation of the life they saw around them. Neither saw a viable mainstream option for a strong, proud Black man and consequently adopted a distorted image.

Peter and Ron are not the only two respondents for whom the same behavior reflected different developmental processes. Both Madeline and Catherine were fighters from the time they were in elementary school. For

Madeline, fighting was a way to gain her father's attention by proving she was as good as any boy. Once she found a way to be a "strong, powerful" woman her "problem with authority" abated. Catherine's violence, on the other hand, appears to be the external response to victimization and psychiatric disorders. In both of these pairs, the reason behind the behavior was as important as the behavior itself.

Summary

All of the respondents in this study were exposed to multiple environmental and personal risk factors. Their adverse childhood experiences did not, in and of themselves, prevent them from thriving in early adulthood. A single problem, like being an alcoholic, did not curtail their positive development. The respondents who are currently thriving had experienced both of these. Instead, it appears to be the cumulative weight of multiple, violent, exploitive childhood experiences and multiple personal problems that weigh down an individual's ability to overcome the challenges he or she faces.

The intensity and number of risks and the depths of problems the respondents faced while growing up seem to differentiate those who are thriving from those who are not. The men who are struggling were repeatedly exposed to domestic violence between their parents, while the women have extensive histories of sexual exploitation and neglect by their parents. In addition, those who are experiencing significant troubles in their adult lives have an active substance abuse problem and at least one other diagnosable psychiatric disorder.

The question of whether the domestic violence, parental neglect, and sexual exploitation caused the alcohol and drug problems or the mental illnesses cannot be answered in this study. Research suggests that there is a relationship between them (Calam et al., 1998; English et al., 1999; Kellener et al., 1994; Maker et al., 1998; Oddone-Paolucci, et al., 2001). Nor is it possible for this study to clearly define the relationship between the respondents' substance abuse and their psychiatric disorders. Research also suggests that there is a relationship here too (Drake & Mueser, 2000; Easton et al., 2000).

Finally, the same behavior has different meanings for different individuals, and the meaning behind the behavior appears to influence the individual's developmental path. Peter's gang involvement and Madeline's fighting were attempts to establish an ethnic and gender identity that was different from their parents. As such, their antisocial behavior continued until they had developed an identity that gave them a sense of power and pride. For the respondents who are currently struggling these behaviors were a reinforcement and continuation of their family's expectations and have not abated.

CHAPTER V
WHERE DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS DIVERGE: EXPOSURE TO PROTECTIVE AND RESISTANCE FACTORS

While growing up, the thriving respondents faced somewhat less adversity and received more protection. For some, protection took the form of an environment of safety and support. In other cases, it came from a relationship that taught valuable life lessons and skills. Sometimes these protective environments and relationships enabled the respondents to redirect their life trajectories; for others their impact was not as far reaching.

In this chapter, I explore in what ways and how well protective environments and relationships accounts for the divergence in the developmental pathways of the respondents. First, I examine their experiences with protective environments, settings and circumstances. Then, I explore protective relationships. Finally, I look at the ways in which these environments and relationships take on different meanings for people of color. I conclude with an examination of how protective environments and relationships shaped the respondents' developmental paths.

Protective Environments: Opportunities, Expectations and Support

As summarized in Table 16, all of the respondents, except Ron, describe themselves as successful, but there are differences in the ways in which they define their success. Those who are struggling see their accomplishments in purely personal terms, such as being a "good mom," or having "overcome a lot of things." In contrast, the respondents who are thriving describe their achievements

in both private (i.e., being a good parent) and public terms (i.e., getting on the honor roll at school).

Table 16: Self- reported Protective Environments

Respondents	Opportunities in Mainstream Institutions	Expectations for Success in Mainstream	Types of Support
Thriving			
Peter	Highly capable program in elementary school and church.	Family believes in his capabilities (GED, college, & employment).	Siblings respond to crisis and promote achievement.
Lynette	GED program and employment.	Family told her she "could do it" (GED, job and employment).	Family responds to crisis and promotes achievement.
Madeline	After-school employment and new high school.	Teacher and employers believe in her capabilities.	Mother responds to crisis. Teacher and employers promote achievement.
In-between			
Daniel	Work with stepfather and employment.	Mother believes he will 'grow out' of it (rebelliousness).	Mother responds to crisis and reinforces employment.
Carla	Boys & Girls Club.	Family seems to expect victimization and crisis.	Mother responds to crisis.
Sinking			
Ron	Highly capable program in elementary school.	Mother believes he will be fighting and not working.	Family responds to crisis.
Simon	None.	Parents believe in his capabilities, but make excuses for troubles.	Family responds to crisis.
Catherine	None	Family seems to expect victimization and crisis.	Family responds to crisis.

Opportunities

The differences in the ways they define success are, in part, reflections of their experience with success. Each of the thriving respondents has had multiple

opportunities to succeed in mainstream society, particularly in regular employment, and in school. Their experience of success bolstered their sense of self-confidence, taught them a wide range of skills and expanded their view of what they could become. For example, when Madeline was a senior in high school, she worked for a manufacturing company running errands. The people she worked for valued the job she did and the way she did it, and they told her so. She remembers:

> And they fought over who got what time in what division or department. They're, like, "no, no. We get her here." And it made me want to work even harder and made me want to do even better. And that's what I would do. I wanted to make everybody happy. I wanted to make sure I did everything exactly right. And I loved that. I loved going to work. It was just great.

Another success came when she graduated from high school and received an award for being the "most improved" student. She remembers her family's pride and her recognition that she had "made such a great improvement from point A to point B" that, for the first time, she could imagine doing great things with her future.

Madeline's success is unusual. She is the only respondent who reports being strongly attached to people and organizations outside her family. She completely immersed herself in her junior and senior years of high school, an after-school job, and the Navy. In all three environments she thrived.

While the other two thriving respondents, Peter and Lynette, had some involvement in community organizations, their commitment was limited. Peter regularly attended church throughout his childhood and early adolescence. He

had to; his mother insisted, but he never committed himself to the church or its youth groups. Similarly, when Lynette went to school to get her GED and got a job to support herself and her baby, her investment in the organizations where she studied and worked was narrow. They were vehicles that could help her meet her goals, not environments and experiences where she thrived.

The lack of investment in the institutions they belonged to did not prevent Peter and Lynette from learning important lessons from these institutions. Being on time, keeping commitments, following directions and rules, responding to authority figures, and interacting with adults are a few examples.

Delpit (1988) suggests that some youth, particularly African Americans, have difficulty succeeding in mainstream society because of cultural and linguistic discontinuities among their home, community, and school. She indicates that non-mainstream youth need to be explicitly taught the "rules of power," the ways of talking, dressing, writing and interacting that are used by people who are in power. Knowing the rules enables non-mainstream youth to engage the support of powerful people, thus increasing their access to power and their ability to pursue a range of life paths.

Madeline learned the rules of power from her family and in school. Her stepfather was in the Navy and during most of her formative years she lived in Navy housing. The rules of power were all around her, at the dinner table and in her parents' conversations. Both she and her brother were so familiar and

comfortable with the Navy that, when they faced the difficult task of deciding what to do after high school, they both almost reflexively enlisted.

Peter and Lynette's families were not immersed in the rules of power, but they encouraged their children to participate in institutions and organizations that could reinforce and expand their knowledge of the rules. Lynette's tutelage in the rules came after she had a baby. When she was 16, her father got her a job on his clean-up crew at the airport. Later, her family encouraged her to go to a technical college where she could learn clerical and business skills. After she graduated, when she felt like she was being discriminated against at work, her grandmother urged her to "just hang in there… do what you have to do and get the experience." At work she received on-the-job-training in power by watching the dynamics of the office and learning the skills she needed to "fit in."

In short, the thriving respondents learned at least the rudimentary rules of power from their families and the institutions in which they were involved, which may have increased opportunities to be involved in mainstream institutions and contributed to their ability to take advantage of these opportunities. The experience of success, in turn, reinforced their sense of personal efficacy and value.

Madeline may not have gotten her after-school job if she did not know how to impress the boss when she was being interviewed. Once she got the job, knowing how to interact with the people she worked for helped her succeed and,

in turn, the experience of success made her want "to do even better," not just in the job but in life.

Carla, Ron, Simon, and Catherine, respondents who are not thriving do not report having had protective experiences with mainstream institutions and organizations. They followed developmental path that emphasized opposition to mainstream norms and institutions.

These four respondents were less involved in mainstream institutions and organizations than were their counterparts. School was always a chore. None remember any great teachers, wonderful classes or appealing after-school activities. Only one remembers being involved with an organization outside of school. Carla was a member of the Boys and Girls Club from the time she was six until she was about 10. However, the only time she really enjoyed the club was the time that one of the group leaders "took a liking" to her.

Given that these respondents were not actively involved in community organizations, they were dependent on their families and schools to teach them the rules of power. Simon, a White male, learned the basic rules in the same way Madeline did, by observing the people close to him. Both his mother and stepfather were members of mainstream society. They went to work every day, obeyed the law and lived fairly conventional lives. His father, who was a hard drinking, drug-taking, fighter was seen as a problem, not someone for Simon to emulate.

In contrast, the families of Ron, Carla, and Catherine did not teach them the rules of mainstream society; they had neither the inclination nor the skills to do so. They lived on the fringes of mainstream society and learned how to survive from the communities in which they lived, communities that had different sets of rules and standards. In all three of these families the line between legal and illegal barely existed. Selling drugs, receiving stolen property, fighting and stealing were just part of life, what you did to survive. Mainstream society and its institutions were something to be avoided (i.e., do not work for "the man") or something to be used (i.e., lying to be eligible for welfare).

Expectations

Entwined with the thriving respondents' success in work and school were the expectations of others. Peter's brother and sister, Lynette's family, and Madeline's teachers had expectations that exuded a sense of hope, optimism, and a belief in the respondents' capabilities and the possibility that they would achieve great things. In contrast, the struggling respondents were given the message that their families did not really expect them to succeed in mainstream endeavors. It was not considered a realistic possibility.

From the time Peter and Lynette were little, their immediate family told them they could do and be anything they wanted to be. There was never any doubt in Peter's immediate family that he was the smartest member of his family, and his mother stressed the importance of his getting a good education. When

Peter returned to school to get his GED she told him she was so happy that she could die without regrets.

As a child, Lynette's encouragement came primarily from her sister, Sherril. She was the chorus that repeatedly whispered in Lynette's ear, "You can do this… There's going to be obstacles in your life that's going to stop you. But you have to go around them, over them." After Lynette had her baby and went back to school and work, her entire family joined Sherril's chorus. At no time did her parents, grandmother or sister express doubts that she would complete school, get a job, and take care of her son.

In contrast, Madeline had very little encouragement from her family. The first time she knew people thought she was competent was at her after-school job where her employer treated her "like an adult," and "never talked down to (her)." Later, in the Navy, her commanding officer put her in charge of preparing her fellow recruits for their tests. In both instances she was given responsibility and was the expectation that she would perform.

The families of the respondents who are struggling conveyed the message that the respondents were not capable of meeting difficult challenges. Nowhere is this more apparent than in their responses to teenage pregnancies. Carla, Catherine, and Simon's parents tried to prevent their children from taking on the responsibilities of parenting at a young age. When Carla's mother found out that she was pregnant at 14, she cried and begged Carla to have an abortion. She told Carla that having a child at this age would ruin her life, but Carla refused. After

the baby was born, Carla was not particularly interested in taking care of him and she did not know how. In response, her mother took over and became the baby's primary parent. Simon's parents blamed his girlfriend for the pregnancy and thought it was unfair for the court to order him to pay child support.

In contrast, when Peter's girlfriend and Lynette got pregnant their families expected them to "do what was right," to take care of their babies. When Lynette told her mother she was pregnant and was thinking about getting an abortion, her mother talked her out of it. After the baby was born, her parents and sister taught Lynette how to parent and parents made it clear, she was the parent and had to take care of her baby. They would care for him while she was in school or at work, but the child was her primary responsibility.

Support

Although there were differences in the respondents' opportunities and in the expectations for their behavior, almost all of the respondents received a wealth of support from their families. Only rarely did a family fail to provide emotional and physical support to a respondent who was in crisis. What differentiates the families of the respondents who are thriving from those who are not is that thee families of the thriving respondents not only helped during a crisis, they also championed the respondents' efforts to attain a specific goal.

Entwined with the message that the thriving respondents were capable was the message that they were valuable. For Peter and Lynette, this sense of being

valued came almost exclusively from their families and was all encompassing. Their families loved them, paid attention to them, and cared about them.

For Madeline, it was a bit different. Her sense of value was more domain-specific. For example, she felt valued at her after-school job because of the way her superiors respected her work. Support came from specific individuals both inside and outside of her family but was, for the most part, limited to a specific time and addressed a particular developmental challenge.

Lynette learned how valuable she was to her family after her son was born. For the first time her mother, father, and sister worked together to support her. Her mother virtually stopped drinking and family fights almost ceased. Her parents joined together to do what it took to help Lynette. They invited her to live at home, which she did on and off until she was 21. At no time did she have to worry about how to shelter, clothe, or feed herself or her baby. Nor did she have to worry about childcare. When she was in school or at work her mother, father or sister took care of her baby. When she needed a job, her father got her one. When she did not think she could continue with the grueling routine of going to school, working, and taking care of her baby, her grandmother offered succor and advice. At every step, from getting her GED to being promoted at work, her family cheered her on and provided her with whatever was necessary.

Support for Peter came from his extended family's efforts to minimize the devastation brought on by his mother's addiction. Peter's father's girlfriend, Georgette, provided him with a measure of stability. She opened her home to

him. Whenever his mother was in bad shape, either because she was in jail or using so much heroin that she was incapacitated, Peter knew Georgette would take him in.

In addition, his siblings Rich and Sadie protected him from some of the negative consequences of their mother's addiction. Peter knew he could always call Rich to come over and defend him against his mother's violent boyfriends. Even after Peter was an adult, they continued to protect him by pooling their mother's inheritance and using it to support Peter. For six months, they paid for his apartment, bought him food, and included him in the sanctuary of their families.

In both Lynette and Peter's cases family support was interlaced with expectations. When Peter's brother and sister paid for his room and board, it was with the expectation that he had to get his life together. He had to go to school or get a full-time job that would allow him to support himself and his son. They would not continue to support him financially if he continued to sell drugs and hang on the streets. They not only wanted to help Peter out of a jam; they wanted to help him attain something.

Madeline's story is different. She did not have a group of people who pulled together in order to nurture her. She does not remember feeling supported, valued, or cared about by her family or the schools she attended. Instead, she had individuals who supported and helped her through bad times. Her mother helped her recover after she was raped; a teacher helped to launch her into adulthood, and

a supervisor taught her how to be a powerful woman. Consequently, her experience of being treated as someone with value came from specific protective relationships instead of through an organization, institution, or group of people.

Like the thriving respondents, the others report that they felt loved by their families and, except for Catherine, believe that their families have been a source of strength. Indeed, their families have provided them with a lot of support.

Since they became adolescents, Ron, Simon, Catherine and Carla have routinely been on the brink of catastrophe. Jail is always a possibility, as is overdose, homelessness, and violence. Moving from one crisis to another is part of the norms of their families. For example, Simon's brother and Ron's father have both been in and out of jail. Catherine's sister ran away from home as a young adolescent, and her mother committed welfare fraud. In addition, Carla's sister was a prostitute.

In some respects, responding to crisis is a central organizing principle for these families. What unites them is struggle. When one member is in deep trouble, the other members pitch in and help. Ron's grandparents give him a place to stay; Simon's parents bail him out of jail and let him live in their home; and Carla's mother raises Carla's child.

In these families the unspoken rule is that family members help each other regardless of the circumstances. Ron and Simon's parents cannot imagine not helping their sons, even though their sons have a history of being poor stewards of their help. Even if they have to sacrifice their well-being, family members will

bail the respondents out of jail, provide them with a place to stay, or buy them a car. It is part of their ethos. In short, support and expectations are not tied together in these families.

Protective Relationships: How Many and What Kind

Some of the respondents formed protective relationships with key individuals. When asked the question, "Looking back over you life, are there any people who have had a big influence on you, made a difference in how your life has turned out so far?" five of the eight respondents answered yes. Catherine is the only person who identified a negative influence, stating that their lack of guidance and supervision was the primary reason for her life difficulties. Peter, Lynette, Madeline and Simon identified positive influences. They acknowledged parents, siblings, teachers, supervisors, girlfriends and husbands who provided protective relationship. These individuals are, for the purpose of this study, defined as the respondents' protective partners.

The thriving respondents had more protective relationships than the others, as shown in Table 17. All identified two or more people who have had a positive influence on their lives. In contrast, only one of the other six respondents, Simon, mentioned having had a protective relationship, and he had only one.

Table 17: Experiences with Protective Relationships

Respondents	Protective Relationship	Number
Thriving		
Peter	Yes	3
Madeline	Yes	4
Lynette	Yes	2
In-between		
David	No	
Carla	No	
Sinking		
Ron	No	
Simon	Yes	1
Catherine	No	

Describing Protective Relationships

The following is a summary of the attributes of protective relationships. These four qualities were found, to one degree or another, in all of the relationships the respondents identified as being powerful, positive forces in their lives.

- **Affirm personal value**. An affirmation of personal value appears to be the bedrock of protective relationships. It is the quality that the respondents mention most often and with the most emotion. In protective relationships the respondents feel known and liked. Their partners know their "dark side" intimately and still give them the benefit of the doubt when difficulties arise. They are emotionally responsive to the respondents' personal uniqueness, know how to approach them, when to listen and empathize, and when to push.

- **Hold high expectations**. The protective partner believed the respondents were capable, and had high expectations for them. Theirs were not expectations marked by a "no tolerance" policy requiring compliance and conformity. On the contrary, their expectations arose from a belief in their capabilities and a desire to encourage them to be their best. In most cases the protective partners pressed the respondents' to take responsibility for their behavior and to focus on their futures.
- **Provide opportunities**. Within the context of these relationships the respondents were given numerous opportunities they might not have otherwise had. Several of the protective partners "opened a lot of doors" for the respondents. Regardless of whether they needed financial help, a job, or a safe place to develop a skill, the partners helped them get what they needed. For example Peter's brother gave him the money he needed to go back to school. In other cases, the opportunities came through exposure to the partner's lifestyle, like Peter's introduction to his girlfriend's college friends.
- **Teach skills**. The protective partners also taught the respondents valuable skills. In most cases this skill training was an unplanned, natural part of the protective relationship. The partners modeled social competency skills. Rich showed Peter how to act in a romantic relationship and how to voice his needs. In other cases, the protective partner purposely taught the respondent specific skills. For example, Madeline's teacher and commanding officer taught her ways to comply with authority without giving up her integrity.

Finally, all of the partners provided the respondents with guidance at key points in their lives.

Although the protective relationships shared some characteristics, they did not manifest themselves in the same way or serve the same functions in all cases. There were differences in how long the relationships lasted, the roles they played, and the ways in which they helped the respondents.

Types of Protective Relationships.

The respondents' protective relationships can be divided into two types, continual and developmental, as shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Types of Protective Relationships

Respondent	Type of Relationship	
	Continual	Developmental (key issues)
Peter	Brother	• Girlfriend (coping with his mother's death and establishing a new friendship network.)
Madeline		• Mother (coping with being raped.) • High School Teacher (graduating from high school) • Commanding Officer (being a powerful woman) • Husband (stop drinking)
Lynette	Sister	• Husband (establishing a positive ethnic identity)
Simon	Stepfather	None

Continual relationships are long-term, spanning from childhood through early adulthood, and are intertwined in multiple aspects of the lives of the respondents. In contrast, the developmental relationships focus on helping the respondents

during a key turning point in their lives. The relationship itself may be a long-term, but the protection the respondent saw as important was limited to a specific time or function.

- **Continual relationships.** Simon, Lynette and Peter identify their continual relationships as the most important relationships in their lives. Although they go through periodic ups and downs, they provide continuity and stability. For example, Peter's older brother and Lynette's older sister sacrificed their schooling in order to care for their siblings. They protected Peter and Lynette from violence, included them in their personal activities, and provided them with guidance. Although, at times the protective partners have felt used and dismissed by the respondent, the relationships continue with almost daily contact.
- **Developmental relationships.** These relationships are shorter in duration. They helped the respondents through a particularly difficult time or taught an important life lesson. Madeline's relationship with her mother tended to be problematic, but after Madeline was raped, her mother helped her get through this traumatic experience. Consequently, Madeline does not see her overall relationship with her mother as a positive influence, but she does see her mother's help after the rape as pivotal.

Madeline is the only respondent who did not have a continual protective relationship, but she had more developmental relationships. Although no single relationship spanned the various stages of Madeline's life, combined they address

the school, work, family, and peer issues that Madeline faced from mid-adolescence through early adulthood. It may be that the patchwork of multiple developmental relationships met Madeline's needs in ways similar to the continual relationships the other respondents enjoyed. She is also the only respondent who reports having a protective relationship with someone other than a family member or love interest.

Primary and reinforcing functions. The protective relationships also seem to have performed different functions. Some played a primary role in shaping the respondents' lives. In these cases the protective partner was a principal character in the respondents' life story, and introduced them to important life lessons. In other protective relationships, the partner played a supporting role, reinforcing a lesson that had already been taught. These functions are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19: Functions of Protective Relationships

Respondent	With Whom	
	Primary	Reinforcing
Peter	Brother	Sister and Girlfriend
Madeline	Teacher and Commanding Officer	Mother and Husband
Lynette	Sister	Husband
Simon	Stepfather	None

- **Primary relationships.** All of the respondents' continual relationships were also primary relationships. For Madeline, two of her developmental relationships played a primary role in her life. Although they lasted for less

than two years, they were powerful. Mr. Bolton was Madeline's guide through her transition from high school to adulthood. She credits him with giving her the idea that she could make something of her life and could even earn a college degree. She remembers him treating her the way she "wanted to be viewed… as an intelligent, beautiful young woman with lots ahead of [her]." He stressed that she was getting ready to graduate, and talked to her about college, about "bachelor's degrees and master's degrees and doctorate degrees." No one had ever suggested that she could go to college, and be successful.

- **Reinforcing relationships.** In the reinforcing relationships, the protective partner strengthens a lesson that had been taught elsewhere, but was not integrated into the respondent's internal model or skill repertoire. For example, his brother repeatedly told Peter that he was a capable person. His girlfriend reinforced this message with her belief that Peter could do whatever he set out to do. In particular, she told Peter that she admired him for his intelligence and "ability to immediately know how to do something." When he had doubts about his ability to accomplish something, be it to go to school, get a job, or join a martial arts class she was the one who encouraged him.

In summary, the respondents' protective relationships shared common attributes, but served different functions in the respondents' lives.

When a Protective Relationship is Not Enough: The Case of Simon

Simon is the only respondent who had a protective relationship and is not thriving. As he says, he "couldn't ask for more" from his stepfather, Matt. Despite his best efforts, Matt has been unable to help Simon overcome his problems. A closer look at this relationship may shed some light on these possibilities.

Like the other protective partners, Matt provides Simon with vast quantities of emotional and concrete support. He clearly values Simon, and Simon does not doubt Matt's love, empathy, and acceptance. Like the other protective partners, Matt has given Simon advice and guidance. He has modeled the kind of stability and success that Simon hopes to achieve in the future. Matt also believes in Simon's capabilities, repeatedly noting how smart Simon is throughout our interview.

What is different about Simon and Matt's relationship is the absence of high expectations. In each of the other primary relationships, the protective partners encourage competence. This is not the case in Simon's relationship with Matt. Instead of encouraging Simon to take responsibility, Matt makes excuses for him. For example, he explains that Simon is "as responsible as (he) can be about paying child support" for his son. He excuses Simon's failures by explaining that Simon has had a hard time holding down a job, and for a year or so he was a fugitive, and so on. Similarly, Matt minimizes the seriousness of Simon's addiction. He admits that if Simon "were totally free of alcohol it would

probably be better," but defends Simon's drinking as being no more harmful than smoking cigarettes. Finally, Matt continues to support Simon, paying for his room and board, without asking anything in return. He wants Simon to work, but it is not a condition of being able to live with his parents. It is not an expectation.

It is hard to tell whether Matt's lack of high expectations for Simon is, at least in part, responsible for Simon's continuing trouble. Other explanations are possible. Simon's difficulties may simply be too numerous and severe to be modified by a protective relationship. His father's alcoholism and apparent mental disorder suggests that Simon may have a biological predisposition toward addiction and a bipolar psychiatric disorder (Alda, 1997; Miklowitz & Goldstein, 1997; Karr-Morse & Wiley, 1997). Perhaps Matt doesn't set high expectations because he realizes that Simon's mental disorder makes it impossible for him to meet such expectations.

The Meaning of "Protection" in the Face of Oppression

The non-white racial background of some respondents introduces an additional element into the protection equation. The African American respondents faced developmental tasks that European American respondents did not. The ways in which the African American respondents reconcile the differences between their home cultures and the mainstream reflects the tension between racism and participation in mainstream society.

The racism the respondents experienced made them question the level of relationship they wanted with whites. Edwards and Polite (1992) acknowledge that, deciding how to relate to whites is an African American's:

> greatest ambiguity, conflict and confusion. Yet the great truth of integration is that for blacks to succeed in America, there must be a network of relationships beyond blacks; there must be working, effective relationships with whites. It has become a tricky act, striking this psychic balance between black and being comfortable and effective working with people...who are born into a culture, which contains the hatred of blacks as an integral part. (p.124)

Catalano and Hawkins (1996) suggest that when young people are given meaningful opportunities to participate in an organization or institution, are taught skills to be successful and are recognized for their efforts and achievement, they bond to the organization or institution they are involved with. Although this appears to be the case for Madeline, a thriving, White respondent, it is not the case for Peter and Lynette, the two thriving Black respondents. Their bond to mainstream institutions and organizations is tenuous, in part, because of their experiences with racism. They are reluctant to associate too closely with White society. They have adopted goals and values that parallel Madeline's they do not want to fully integrate into the mainstream.

All four of the African American respondents have responded to racism by removing themselves to some degree from White mainstream society. Although Peter and Lynette go to school and work with White people, they do not socialize with them. Lynette doesn't invite her co-workers over to her house. Nor does she go out with them after work to have a drink. She limits her social life to her

extended family, spending time with her grandmother, mother, father, aunts, sister and their families. Peter, too, limits his personal life to a small group of family and friends. The only Whites he spends time with are the spouses of his sister and brother, and even these relationships are strained.

On the job and in school Peter and Lynette's motto seems to be "the best revenge is doing well." Peter reports experiencing racism at the technical college he attends. He explains:

> People have preconceived notions of me when they see me in class. My instructors are negative… I think they think that I am just there to play school and I am not really interested in learning… If I have a problem and I need help and I ask for help, I do not get the same amount of help as the [White] girl across the table from me. They aren't willing to spend as much time with me, or sometimes even come over and help me at all.

He responds to his instructor's neglect in two ways. Sometimes he says, "Forget it, I'm leaving," but most of the time he just works hard to get good grades. He focuses on himself, not on the people who discriminate against him. As he says:

> You know when it comes time to take the test or the final I know how to do everything. Because now I have expectations of myself and I expect more of me. So I take the time to learn the stuff and study… I feel good when I get good grades. I want to do good. It's like I am proud of it.

When Ron faced discrimination in another branch of the same technical college he responded differently. At first, he let his instructor's derogatory comment "slide," and then, when it happened again, he told the instructor's supervisor. One day he raised the issue in class, trying to embarrass the instructor. When the instructor became "vindictive" and tried to "get under

[Ron's] skin," Ron took his complaint to the department chair. When he couldn't get satisfaction there he filed a lawsuit against the college. It may be that, for Ron, standing up to racism was more important than graduating. Yet the way in which Ron addressed this conflict was about more than just standing up to discrimination; for Ron it was also taking advantage of an opportunity. If he wins the lawsuit he won't have to get a job and work for "the man."

In contrast to Peter and Lynette, Ron does not socialize with Whites, and e actively tries to avoid mainstream society. He opposes White society because, in his view, it oppresses him and other Black males. He knows that chances are he will "end up dead or in prison" and society is not going to "give [him] any breaks." For Ron, being successful means surviving, being loyal to his partners, and making money without "working for the man."

Regardless of their differences, all three of these respondents believe that, as African Americans, they must learn how to protect themselves from racism in order to thrive. The difference between the ways in which they respond to racism points to differences in their values, skills and styles. Peter and Lynette accommodate mainstream society when they believe it is in their best interest to do so, when they think accommodating will get them where they want to be. Ron doesn't believe in accommodating, and doesn't want to go in the same direction that Peter and Lynette do.

Summary

In answer to the question, "How did you become the person you are today?" most of the respondents gave substantial credit or blame to their families. One-way families exerted influence was by encouraging the respondents to be involved in mainstream society and its institutions. The families of all of the thriving respondents encouraged them to go to school and to work. In turn, school and work provided the thriving respondents with multiple opportunities to learn the rules of power and to find ways to come to terms with the differences between the mainstream culture and the culture of the communities they grew up in.

Given the opportunities, expectations and support for being involved in mainstream institutions, it is not surprising that Peter, Lynette and Madeline have adopted many conventional values and ideals. They describe themselves as hard workers who have well-defined goals. They all want to own their own homes and have "furniture that matches." They want their children to be able to bring home their friends and not be ashamed.

This is not to say that Peter and Lynette, the thriving African-American respondents, have totally assimilated into White mainstream culture. Instead, they have become skilled at moving back and forth between cultures. In their personal lives they distance themselves from White society. They have created nurturing Black family and friends where they are not confronted with negativity

and racism. In their public lives, at school and work, they used the rules of power to help them to get what they want.

It would be a mistake to conclude that young people who become acculturated into mainstream society thrive and those who do not struggle. There is another possibility. For Ron, Catherine and Carla there seemed to be one choice. Either be a member of the street culture, which includes being involved in criminal activity, or a member of the mainstream. It seemed like an either-or choice, one where there was no room for a both-and solution. Neither of them were they involved in alternative organizations where they could have learned a third way of being. For example, they were not intimately involved in a black church; they were not part of a neighborhood organization; and they did not go to the African American Academy as Lynette's son now does.

CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

What explains the differences and similarities in the developmental paths of low-income individuals who were failing in school and committing crimes at the end of eighth-grade? What sets the stage for change or reinforces self-destructive behavior? In Chapter Four I explored how differences in exposure to risk and oppressive factors influenced the respondents' developmental paths. In Chapter Five I did a similar analysis for the role of protective and resistance factors.

In this chapter, I summarize and interpret these findings. First, I look at the ways in which key environments, relationships, and internal models influenced the developmental trajectories of the respondents. Then I reflect on the implications both for those seeking to nurture adolescents who have serious emotional and behavioral problems and for policy makers whose actions affect the lives of these adolescents. Finally, I raise a series of questions that may benefit from further research.

Forces and Conditions the Shape Developmental Pathways

The conceptual model presented in Chapter 2 depicts youth development as a process of negotiation between the individual and the environment. Research indicates that organizational and societal environments influence the developmental trajectories of youth (Duncan, Duncan & Strycker, 2002; Howell et al., 1995; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985; O'Connor, 1997). In this study the

respondents gave detailed descriptions of the influence of family and friends, but were unclear about the ways in which neighborhoods, organizations, institutions, and socio-economic and cultural circumstances shaped their development. Therefore the findings of this study primarily focus on the ways in which the immediate environment shapes development.

The Role of Environmental Forces

All of the individuals who participated in this study were exposed to numerous risks as children and adolescents. By the time they left junior high school, all had multiple health and behavior problems such as school failure, delinquency, substance abuse, and depression that were influenced by multiple risk factors. However, the number of risks that each was exposed to did not predict the extent of their life difficulties at age 25. Instead, the ways in which risks interacted with each other and their intensity seem more influential.

Risk factors appear to interact with each other and function as both causes and symptoms of problems. Research suggests that the kind of early and persistent antisocial behavior that Madeline, Lynette, Catherine, Simon, and Carla exhibited is related to variables that existed within their families including, low socioeconomic status (Sameriff & Emde, 1989), maternal depression (Williams, Anderson, McGee, & Silva, 1990), and parental conflict (Jouriles, Murphy, & O'Leary, 1989). Research also indicates that the management practices used by their families (i.e., inconsistent discipline, lack of communication between parents and children, and lack of monitoring and supervision) are proximal correlates of

early antisocial behavior (Greenberg, Speltz, & DeKlyen, 1993). In other words, there appears to be a relationship between the early antisocial behavior of the respondents and the way their families function.

Similarly, antisocial behavior may have contributed to the respondents' failure in school. Several of the participants in this study had disruptive behavior that was difficult for school personnel to manage. Disruptive students are often the recipients of a constant focus on order, compliance, and containment. Their teachers responded to them with punitive attitudes, creating a daily experience of harassment (Polakow, 1986; Knapp & Associates, 1995). As Greenberg and his colleagues (1993) suggest, an interrelation among risk factors may be *necessary* to bring about adolescent health and behavior problems.

Not only did the relationship among risk conditions matter, the intensity of exposure risks played an important role. In particular, the severity and nature of family conflict distinguished the thriving and struggling respondents. Those who came from families in which there was extensive domestic violence or child abuse fared far worse in adulthood than did their counterparts.

Some of the respondents also appeared to have biological vulnerabilities that contributed to their difficulties. In many cases a susceptibility to addiction, depressive disorders like the one Catherine has, and bipolar disorders like Simon's are inherited (Alda, 1997; Berlin & Davis, 1989; Egeland et al., 1987; Kessler et al., 1996). The combination of psychiatric disorders and addiction

makes it exceptionally difficult to achieve sobriety (Brooner et al., 1997; Drake, 2000). In all probability this was the case for Ron, Simon, and Catherine.

Domestic violence, child abuse, and biological vulnerability also may limit the ability of individuals to be resilient in the face of adversity. Although addiction has been a problem for both thriving and struggling respondents, only Madeline, who had neither a psychiatric disorder nor a history of domestic violence, has been able to achieve and maintain sobriety.

The role of oppression. The influence of race and gender on the respondents' development was complex. Neither completely determined their developmental trajectories. Of the three thriving respondents, two are African American, one is European American, one is male, and two are female. Yet some unique developmental challenges were associated with race and gender.

All of the African American and three of the four female respondents report struggling to establish racial and gender identities in the face of domination by Whites, males, or both. This oppression and its implied rejection inhibited the African American respondents from bonding with mainstream institutions. Even though Peter and Lynette shared many mainstream values, they were suspicious of its institutions.

The African American respondents and Catherine who, although European American, has identified with African Americans since childhood, felt that the number of developmental paths open to them was limited. They sensed that their choice was to be involved in mainstream activities and organizations and identify

with people, who were not like them, or to assert primary affiliation with their own ethnic communities and peer groups.

Only Lynette reported finding a way to successfully identify with her community of color and to excel in mainstream society. Several factors may contribute to this. First, she is a part of a large African American extended family where virtually all of her personal needs are met. From her family she receives advice about how to cope with racism, support for her efforts to excel at work, and models of strong racial identity and cultural pride.

The influence of gender is less noticeable. The families of Carla, Catherine and Madeline believed that females were not as valuable as males. Madeline's father made it clear he wanted a son, not a daughter. Carla's and Catherine's families took a "boys will be boys" attitude when their daughters were molested. As children or teenagers, three of the four female respondents were sexually victimized, and Carla and Catherine have long been victims of domestic violence.

The delinquency and school difficulties of the respondents were, at least in part, responses to racism and sexism when domestic violence and child abuse are seen as a patriarchal attempt to achieve and maintain power. It may be that issues of power and domination undergird many risk factors.

The relationship between risk factors and oppression. The interrelationship between oppression and risk factors is complex. In several of the respondents' stories racism and sexism appear to create, facilitate, or augment the

role of risk factors. Peter's desire "to be darker" and his definition of himself as Black rather than biracial may be, in part, a reflection of his distrust of Whites. His experiences with racism and discrimination have caused him to "build up resentment" towards Whites and contributes to his alienation and rebelliousness.

Sexism appears to have contributed to at least one respondent's academic failure and lack of commitment to school. Madeline reports that her argumentative disposition brought hostility from teachers. This is congruent with research that suggests that teachers tolerate, even expect, boy's disruptions, but girls are evaluated for being neat, on-time, obeying the rules, and getting along with others (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

The role of encouraging environments. Not all of the environmental forces in the respondents' lives were adverse. Even within the most difficult circumstances there was love, support, and encouragement. Catherine's mother helped her through her pregnancy; Peter's elementary school teachers encouraged his academic capabilities, and Lynette's mother was always willing to listen. Several respondents were exposed to warm and friendly environments, outside of their homes, where they felt welcomed and valued. Peter had church, Ron had his grandparents, and Carla had the Boys and Girls Club.

The thriving respondents had multiple opportunities to interact with institutions and organizations, which may have helped them to learn social skills. For instance, it may have been from experiences in a predominately African

American church that Peter learned how to size up a situation and respond appropriately.

In addition, the thriving respondents were bolstered by their successes at work and school. Each success empowered them to take on larger challenges. Every time Lynette experienced success, whether it was getting her GED, graduating from technical college, getting a job, or buying a house, her belief in herself grew. As her sister said:

> When she saw herself really doing it, she started seeing things coming through step-by-step. She saw herself getting there and said 'I can actually do it.' It made her more of a stronger, independent person.

It took more than one experience of success in more than one environment to instill in the respondents a belief in their capabilities. It took reinforcement from multiple people and experiences over a period of years. Her high school teacher' belief in Madeline may have had little effect if it had not been reinforced by her commanding officer in the military. Peter's siblings' belief in his capabilities may not had a strong positive influence if it had not been reinforced by Peter's making the honor roll in school.

The Role of Protective Partners

The negative consequences of the respondents' exposure to risks and oppression were partially countered by protective factors. Most of these protective factors were found in the thriving respondents' bonded relationships. In some cases, these relationships reduced risk exposure. In others, they

functioned like a shield, guarding the respondents when they were immersed in high-risk environments or engaged in risky behavior.

Some respondents had protective partners who reduced their exposure to danger and misfortune. Peter and Lynette's older siblings protected them throughout childhood. Without their ability to sense impending danger and their willingness to provide protection, Peter and Lynette's childhoods might have been substantially more violent and chaotic. Madeline was protected by her high school teacher and by her commanding officer; the first shielded her from another teacher who needed control and the latter from the humiliation that was sure to come in boot camp.

In these instances, protective relationships reduced the respondents' exposure to adversity, but did not necessarily buffer the impact of risk exposure. Rutter (1990) suggests that three mechanisms mediate against the negative impact of risk exposure. These are 1) reduction of the impact of the exposure, 2) reduction of the negative chain reaction that typically follows exposure, and 3) strengthening of self-esteem and self-efficacy. The findings of this study support these contentions.

Exposure to risk and oppression may rob individuals of essential life experiences that people need to develop into fully functioning human beings. Although there is no definitive list of these experiences, some have been identified including attachment to a caretaker during the first two years of life (Bowlby, 1988), fun and play during early childhood (Perry, 1998), and an

opportunity to exert autonomy (Erickson, 1963; Seligman, 1975). Lynette's sister gave her enough structure and safety for her to form a secure attachment, and Peter's brother provided him with fun outings and companionship. Research suggests these kinds of experiences soften the negative effects of exposure to risk and oppression (Karr-Morse & Wiley, 1997; Murphy, 1995).

Another way protective partners reduce the negative impact of risk exposure is to reframe the meaning of a risk in a way that empowers the individual to change. Madeline's commanding officer helped her to redefine her "problem with authority" as something that comes with being a strong woman, which allowed her to keep her sense of self-worth, while helping her to learn how to behave in ways that were less likely to elicit conflict from people in authority. By understanding her behavior as a response to oppressive conditions, the commanding officer helped Madeline reduce her sense of alienation. She became more responsible for her own behavior, and increased her belief that she could have a better life.

Rutter (1990) suggests another function of protective factors is to limit the downward spiral that often follows such exposure. The protective partners of the respondents provided needed emotional and physical support. They functioned as a safety net. Lynette's family and Peter's siblings provided room, board, childcare, access to jobs, and continual encouragement while they went to school. After Madeline was raped, her mother protected her. Madeline remembers, "She

puffed up like a mother hen... she was not going to put up with the wrath from his family. She was not about to stand down."

The last of Rutter's (1990) proposals for lessening the impact of exposure to risk factors is to enhance self-esteem and self-efficacy. The protective partners were pivotal in this arena as well. In a myriad of ways they told the respondents that they were valuable and capable. The protective partners' commitment to and investment in the respondents showed Peter, Lynette, and Madeline they were valuable. Although the partners did not approve of all of the respondents' behavior and were not willing to support their self-destruction, their love for and commitment to them were unconditional. They never closed the door. No matter how disappointed they were in the respondents the opportunity for a relationship with them was always available.

The fact that this commitment came from people who knew their "selfish and mean" sides was important, particularly to Peter and Madeline. Peter was comforted by the knowledge that his brother and girlfriend knew him when he was gang involved, and still love him. Madeline was reassured by the love of her husband even though he saw her when she was an "ugly drunk." Peter and Lynette indicated that their experience with racism and suspicion of Whites made it difficult for them to believe that Whites can really accept and value them as they are. They feel more comfortable accepting support and guidance from people who share their life experiences.

The protective partners told Peter, Lynette and Madeline that they could and should succeed in school and employment, despite whatever obstacles were placed in their paths. They made their financial and physical help contingent on the respondents striving to achieve their goals. In short, they had high expectations within the context of their unconditional care. Multiple people reinforced these high expectations. Lynette's sister told her to "take care of herself," "go for what you want," and "go around obstacles." Years later, when she was trying to simultaneously work, go to school, and be a good parent, her mother reinforced these messages. Lynette recalls:

> She [her mother] was never negative about anything I wanted to do. She always told me I could do it.... She probably thought to herself there's no way, but she always told me I could do it.

Her sister's and mother's belief in her has become part of her own internal model. As she says, "You have to have goals... if you set goals there is no reason why you can't achieve it."

The Role of Internal Models

One reason for the disparity in the respondents' developmental trajectories appears to be differences in their internal models. Internal models, as defined in Chapter 1, are the individual's conception of the nature, characteristics, and expected behavior of the world and those in it (Bowlby, 1973; Cassidy, 1988; Cicchetti, Toth, & Lynch, 1995).

Peter, Lynette, and Madeline believed their troublesome behavior was "just a stage." Even as teenagers, they did not want to be "too bad." They knew

some day they would have a family, home, and job. Their experiences with jail, death, rape, or pregnancy provoked an internal crisis and spurred them to change. In contrast, Ron, Carla, and Catherine defined themselves as being outside of the mainstream. They got a "thrill," an "adrenaline rush" from criminal activity. For them crises were parts of life, sometimes uncomfortable but not earth shattering. As Catherine said, she was and still is "addicted" to the lifestyle.

The internal models of the respondents also appear to influence their response to oppression. Bell (2002), as shown in Figure 6, suggests four possible ways to respond to oppression.

Possible Responses to Oppression	
Victim I am not okay because society will not or cannot change	**Survivor/Crusader** I'm okay but society must change for others to be okay
Self-Hate I am not okay and I must change to be accepted by society © Hazelton Foundation, 2002	**Self-actualization** I am okay whether or not society ever changes

Figure 6: Possible Responses to Oppression

Lynette and Madeline lived primarily in the self-actualization quadrant. Lynette knows what she wants and does not allow anyone to deter her from meeting her goals. She acknowledges racism, but does not let it affect her pride

in who she is and what she has accomplished. Racism has made her cautious, and has strengthened her determination.

Madeline has resolved her conflict with sexism. She no longer feels like she has to choose between being passive or aggressive. Her work as a dispatcher in a large police department provides an outlet for her need to be powerful and to exert leadership. She has redirected her need to prove that she is "as good as anyone." It no longer means being tougher than others. Now it means graduating from college.

Peter does not fit easily into any one quadrant. He is proud of being Black, and is dedicated to showing his son that a Black man can be successful. As he says, "If you ask me what I am, I don't say I'm Black and White, I say I'm Black." Yet he acknowledges that this may be an expression of disdain for his White side.

He struggles to define what it means to be Black in a profession that is dominated by Whites. At times, he asks himself, "Am I pretending to myself to be something I am not?" He lacks a clear image of how to be Black in a professional context, and he has not found a model or mentor. Still, his ambivalence does not shake his belief in himself or prevent him from responding to discrimination when necessary.

These thriving respondents have internal models that include a solid belief in their personal value and competence. They have faith that life makes sense. Although they find it difficult to trust others and are reluctant to share their

experiences with people outside of their intimate circle, they believe that if they work hard and play fair they will achieve the success they desire. This internal model may be, in part, what allows them to resist oppression and persevere in the face of enormous challenges.

Simon, Catherine, and Ron tend to see themselves as victims and blame others for their difficulties. Simon blames Washington State for taking away his "early manhood" by suspending his driver's license for driving under the influence. Catherine blames her father for her selling cocaine. If he had taken her in when she was homeless she would not have had to sell drugs. Ron blames racism for his difficulties. He asserts that the reason he has never been successful is because he was "raised as a black child." From his perspective, being Black also has inhibited his ability to be a successful drug dealer because he was "never going to be the government who can ship a hundred kilos." The belief in their powerlessness over the direction of their lives, that the responsibility is in the hands of others, suffocates their motivation to change.

The internal models of Ron, Simon, and Catherine are probably influenced by their mental health problems. Depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorders are known to distort an individual's perception of him or her self and their environment. This distortion often interferes with the individual's ability to respond appropriately to both internal and external cues, making it difficult to change one's internal model in response to experience (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

The Interaction between Environment, Relationships, and Internal Models

There was an interaction between the internal models, environments, and relationships of the respondents. Although each domain affected the other, the most pervasive influence came from bonded relationships. The people to whom the respondents bonded added protective factors into the environment, which both buffered the impact of prior risk exposure and reduced future exposure. In addition, relationship bonds provided protection in and of themselves. Research suggests that children and youth who have a strong bond usually do not threaten the relationship by acting in ways that contradict the other person's values and standards (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Sagan, 1988; Wehlage, 1989). The thriving respondents' desire to not disappoint their protective partners was a strong motivator. Peter explains:

> The people who are close to me are the ones I really care about and do good for. My brother and sister, I just can't let them down… As much support as they have given me coming out of that life, for me to [??] get put back in jail, I can't let them down.

It is his relationships that make his hard work in college both necessary and worthwhile.

In relationships that are built on dominance, this desire to please is fueled by the threat of punishment. This is not true in protective relationships. In these relationships the desire to please is not caused by anxiety or by concern that the individual will loose the partner's love if she or he does not do what the partner

wants. The distinction is crucial; "It emphasizes the longing to reciprocate in preference to the threat of punishment" (Sagan, p.165).

The bonded relationships of the respondents also seem to have influenced their internal models. People define and give meaning to the world and themselves through their interactions with others who matter to them (Taylor, 1993). Through identification relationships are incorporated into an individual's identity. With each new bonded relationship, the process of identification and incorporation repeats itself. The cumulative result is the development and internalization of multiple relationships that form a value system, which guides behavior (Sagan, 1988). Peter, Lynette, and Madeline appear to have incorporated their protective partners' belief that they are valuable and capable.

Catalano and Hawkins (1996) suggest that some of the ways protective partners expressed their belief in the respondents also promoted bonding. They indicate that people bond to others who provide them with the *opportunities* to be involved in healthy activities; the emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioral *skills* to successfully take advantage of these opportunities; and the *recognition* for their involvement. The protective partners provided the respondents with a wide variety of opportunities for relationship, jobs, schooling, leisure activities, and interactions with institutions and organizations. In doing so, they gave the respondents an alternative vision of the future. As Peter said:

> I can look at my sister and her husband and tell you that I am proud of them.... They have ultimately what I want. I want to have a child and be married. I want to be able to provide a home for my family and have just one special person in my life. They have that. They're somebody I can look at and say I would aspire to what they have.

This vision of achievement in combination with explicit messages that the respondents were responsible for their lives, and that they could succeed no matter how many barriers were placed in their path, were partially responsible for the thriving respondents' belief in the ultimate success of their efforts.

The protective partners also taught the respondents skills they needed to achieve their goals. They did this by involving them in the fabric of their lives, modeling skills, and providing feedback within the context in which the skills were being used. This type of skills training was somewhat like an apprenticeship where Lynette's parents taught her how to be a good parent, Madeline's commanding officer taught her how to assert herself without being aggressive, and Peter's brother spent hours with him taking apart and reassembling computers.

Finally, the partners reinforced the need for the thriving respondents to be involved with positive people and activities. So long as the respondents were working towards their goals, the partners continued to provide physical and emotional support. When the respondents were feeling overwhelmed, their partners encouraged them to press forward. When new opportunities were available, the partners encouraged them to meet the challenge. In this respect, new opportunities were recognition for jobs well done.

What seems essential in the thriving respondents' bonded relationships is the assurance that they are both valuable and capable. The partners seem to have a knack for knowing when the respondents need to be showered with unconditional love and care, and when they need to be reminded of their capabilities and pushed to set and achieve their goals.

How bonded relationships may contribute to life difficulties. Not all of the bonded relationships facilitated positive development. Some contributed to life difficulties. Research suggests that individuals who bond with adults who hold values that extol criminal behavior are more likely to adopt these values and behaviors themselves (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). This study corroborates these findings.

Ron, Catherine, and Carla were immersed in criminal environments-culture. Most of their families and friends had a "survival of the fittest" worldview, believed everyone was involved in some kind of hustle, and were somewhat contemptuous of mainstream society. Drinking, using drugs, going to jail, and moving from crisis to crisis were routine parts of the lives of their family and friends. They have continued this pattern of behavior as adults.

In other instances bonded relationships may have added to the respondents' difficulties by preventing them from experiencing the negative consequences of their behavior. This is called "enabling" in the addiction field, and is thought to be an important mechanism by which relationships facilitate the continuation of addiction and other self-destructive behavior (Miller, 1995;

Stevens, 2000). Enabling relationships express care and concern, but do not promote competence. Alcoholics Anonymous contends that enabling prevents an alcoholic from "hitting bottom," a condition that is necessary for genuine recovery to begin (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001).

From this perspective, Matt had an enabling relationship with Simon. By minimizing the extent of his alcoholism, defining his stealing and fighting as "little pranks," and continuing to let him live in the family home without paying room or board, Matt shielded Simon from experiencing the devastating consequences of his behavior. This may have contributed to Simon's difficulties, assuming that the negative consequences would have motivated him to change. Other interpretations are possible. Matt may not have set high expectations because he realized that Simon's bipolar disorder made it impossible for him to meet such expectations, or Simon's difficulties may simply have been too numerous and severe to be modified by a protective relationship.

Another possibility is that one protective relationship is not enough. All of the thriving respondents had at least two. Lynette and Peter had protective relationships with their siblings throughout their lives, but it was not until other circumstances and relationships intervened that they decided to change. It may simply be too much to expect any single relationship to significantly redirect someone's developmental trajectory.

Finally, the relationship with Matt may have been more protective than it seems to be on the surface. Given Simon's addiction, psychiatric disorders, and

exposure to domestic violence, perhaps he would be in far worse condition if it had not been the protection provided by Matt.

Reflections on Serving Adolescents who are Failing In School and Committing Crimes

What implications do these findings have for the people who seek to nurture adolescents who have multiple health and behavior problems? At the end of adolescence, all of the respondents appeared to be quite similar. All but one had dropped out of school; all had criminal histories; five were parents; five had serious substance abuse problems; and five had no steady employment. Nevertheless, there were important differences. The ability to understand, notice, and respond to these differences may allow people who work with troubled youth to better serve individuals who face similar difficulties.

Family Conflict

The respondents who, at age 25, are struggling with unemployment, addiction, incarceration, and victimization experienced high levels of domestic violence and child abuse while they were growing up. They also had few protective factors in their lives. Research suggests that it is exceedingly difficult to build protective factors in a high-risk environment, and people who live in such environments may not be able to overcome the negative consequences of exposure to multiple or chronic risks (Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 1997; Pollard, Hawkins, & Arthur, 1999). Therefore, reducing family violence may be essential to preventing adolescent health and behavior problems. The causes of

family violence are complex, ranging from the historical roles of men, women, and children; to poverty and social isolation, and to social and family norms about discipline (Dykstra & Alsop, 1996; Easton, Swan, & Sinha, 2000; Eitzen, 1992; English, 1998). Its eradication is an enormous task that requires societal, institutional, and personal change.

Even though the task is daunting, there are some proven ways of reducing family violence and child abuse (Karr-Morse & Wiley, 1997; Olds, 2002). Home visiting services, family support centers, respite care, parent education, and public education have all shown positive effects (Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992; Olds, 2002;Webster-Stratton, 1994). However, these programs are severely under-funded and unavailable in most communities. Public policies that prioritize the prevention of family violence could be the cornerstone of a comprehensive approach to preventing a wide range of adolescent health and behavior problems.

Psychiatric Disorders

How the causes of health and behavior problems are defined and understood directly influences how they are addressed. Adolescents who fail academically, are aggressive, and commit crimes are often lumped together and defined as "problems." Yet, sometimes these behaviors are manifestations of psychiatric disorders (Dyson, 1990; Felitti et al., 1998; Greenberg et al., 1993). Among teenagers in juvenile detention, almost two thirds of the boys and three quarters of the girls have at least one psychiatric disorder (Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002).

In elementary and junior high school Catherine, Lynette, and Madeline frequently got into fights. Catherine's fighting may have been a response to sexual abuse and chronic depression. Although it is not possible to retrospectively ascertain her mental status as a child, she did enter counseling when she was five-years old, was committed to a psychiatric hospital in early adolescence, and continues to be treated for depression. The nature and treatment of childhood mental illness is beyond the scope of this study, but it seems reasonable to assume that the needs of children suffering from psychiatric disorders differ from those of children who do not know how to appropriately express anger or are rebelling against humiliating institutions.

The difficulty is that it is hard to distinguish between children or teenagers who have psychiatric disorders and those who do not. The diagnosis and treatment of mental illness in childhood and adolescence lacks precision. Only recently has the range and extent of these kinds of difficulties been identified, and the effectiveness of treatment varies widely (National Institute for Mental Health, 2002). As with other kinds of problem behaviors, there may be a tendency to over identify children as mentally ill and in need of psychiatric care, and the act of labeling can cause more problems than it solves (Polakaw, 1993; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). When children are labeled as having serious problems or even at risk for developing such problems, adults tend to lower expectations and ignore capabilities, which all too frequently leads to self fulfilling prophecies of failure.

A more promising approach may be to teach all children the social and emotional competencies that are associated with decreases in emotional and behavioral problems. Examples of these skills include: identifying, monitoring and regulating feelings; establishing and working towards short and long term goals; conflict resolution; decision making/problem solving, and conveying and following through with one's decisions not to engage in unwanted, unsafe, unethical or unlawful behavior. There is a growing body of evidence that some of these programs, which are often taught in schools, decrease aggressiveness and increase frustration tolerance, cognitive skills, and self-control (Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994). Given that these skills are useful to a broad range of children and do not require problem identification, this approach may offer the most benefits with the least negative consequences.

There also is a substantial body of research that shows many mental illnesses in children and adolescents can be successfully treated. The key is early detection and access to adequate mental health services (Greenberg, Speltz, & DeKlyen, 1993; Webster-Stratton, 1994). This makes it difficult to balance the risks of over-identifying with the benefits of early intervention. Until good information about children's psychiatric disorders is available to people who work with and care for children and adolescents, and culturally competent and child-focused mental health services are more available in communities, care must be taken not to label children as mentally and emotionally disturbed.

Race and Gender

Differences in mental status are not the only factors that differentiated the thriving respondents from their counterparts. In several cases similar behavior was motivated by different goals. Ron's and Peter's gang activity appears to have meant something different for each of them. For Ron, it was a continuation of his father's behavior, and something almost expected of him. For Peter, it appears to have been part of his effort to establish a racial identity. This biracial teenager mistakenly assumed that being a member of a gang was a way for him to establish an unambiguous racial identity and affiliation.

People who work with troubled adolescents often overlook the role of race and gender. Adolescence is a time when people define who they are as individuals, as members of a race and culture, and as men or women (Bell, 2002; Erickson, 1963; Cross, 1991). Sometimes what may be perceived, as a behavior problem by mainstream standards may be an attempt to establish a particular racial or gender identity. For Madeline, being tough was an expression of her rebellion against the passive image of femininity her mother represented. For Simon, it was a way to prove his manhood, and to show the world that he was not a victim like his mother. Listening closely to the perceptions and explanations of adolescents may make it possible to better understand the meaning behind behavior and respond accordingly. An adolescent who needs help to establish his or her racial identity requires a different approach than an adolescent who is testing to see if the rules will be applied fairly.

Fostering Protective Relationships

Most of the protective factors found in the respondents' lives were introduced by their protective partners. These partners, most of whom were family members or romantic partners, were linchpins in the change process. Consequently, one way to foster the positive development of adolescents who have health and behavior problems is to strengthen and build upon their existing relationships, particularly within their extended families.

This is true even if the family members would not traditionally be identified as "ideal" mentors or protective partners. It is unlikely that a most counselors and educators would have seen Peter's brother or Lynette's sister as positive role models. Both were high school dropouts and had difficulties of their own. Yet they came to the aid of their younger siblings over and over again, and consistently encouraged their competence. Similarly, many counselors and social workers would not have predicted that Lynette's pregnancy would pull her family together and become a bedrock of strength, but it did.

These findings suggest that it is important to engage parents and other caretakers in making decisions about how they can reinforce children's value while encouraging their competence. Expressions of caring, methods of encouraging, and definitions of competence are culturally constructed. Therefore identifying culturally appropriate ways to operationalize these qualities is essential.

Defining High Expectations and Success

Research indicates that one-way to encourage competence is to set high expectations (Jessor et al., 1995; Rolf et al., 1990). However, this assumes agreement about goals for children and adolescents. The assumption underlying prevention research is that there is a normative consensus about society's basic rules, and bonding to individuals or organizations that operate outside of this consensus is destructive. Catalano and Hawkins (1996) suggest that within the consensus there are considerable differences in values and behavior. Consequently, a wide range of standards and activities are acceptable, including the standards of most cultures of diverse ethnic and racial groups. What is outside the consensus and therefore unacceptable is criminal behavior that hurts or destroys people and property.

This study also raises questions about how we define and measure success. By conventional standards, the "thriving" and "sinking" continuum suggests that some people are doing well, some are not, and some are in between. It may not be so simple. It may not be just to use the same criteria of success for all. It may be that some of the "sinking" respondents are succeeding to the best of their abilities. They may not be able to achieve the same outcomes as the thriving respondents.

Lacking the kind of support Peter and Lynette had from their families, it may not be fair to expect Catherine to work, go to school, take care of her children, and pay for the bare necessities of life. The combination of her past behavior and current public policies has taken away whatever safety net once

existed for her. She does not have marketable skills or a successful work history. She knows she needs more education for employment and independent living, but if she goes to school, welfare will not continue to pay for childcare or her children's medical benefits. Housing is so expensive that it is impossible for her to pay the required first and last months' rent deposit on her $7 an hour job. Yet she does not qualify for Section Eight, a federally subsidized housing program, because of her prior convictions for drug sales and welfare fraud. For Catherine, being able to provide basic support for her family is extremely difficult.

Society's expectations also influence how successful children and youth who have health and behavior problems can be in school. There is a continuing effort to translate high expectations into academic standards of achievement for all students (American Federation of Teachers, 1998). These standards define school success, and the measures of success children are required to reach.

The belief that standards will raise the performance levels of all students is based on the assumptions that 1) all children can meet high expectations, 2) teachers know how to teach all students to meet these expectations, and 3) schools have the resources to accomplish this goal. Even as elementary students, Carla, Simon, and Catherine probably would not have met standards, at least not without a great deal of help. Their emotional and possibly neurological difficulties probably would have interfered with their ability to concentrate, follow rules, memorize, and complete homework. This does not mean that individuals who face these difficulties cannot learn. They can. Tomlinson (1999) suggests they

need individualized expectations and instruction, and schools and teachers that understand who they are and what they need, rather than using a scripted plan of action that ignores their readiness, interest, and learning profile.

Another part of what could help individuals like the respondents in this study while they are in school is opportunities that challenge but do not overwhelm and frustrate (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). Like other young people, they get bored when they asked to do tasks that do not take advantage of their skills and strengths, and frustrated when asked to do tasks that they do not have the skills to successfully complete. What they need are opportunities that are within a their zone of competence, as depicted in figure 7. Giving youth opportunities that are within this zone may also promote bonding to teachers and school. As this study indicates, positive bonding relationships are crucial to overcoming adversity and promoting success.

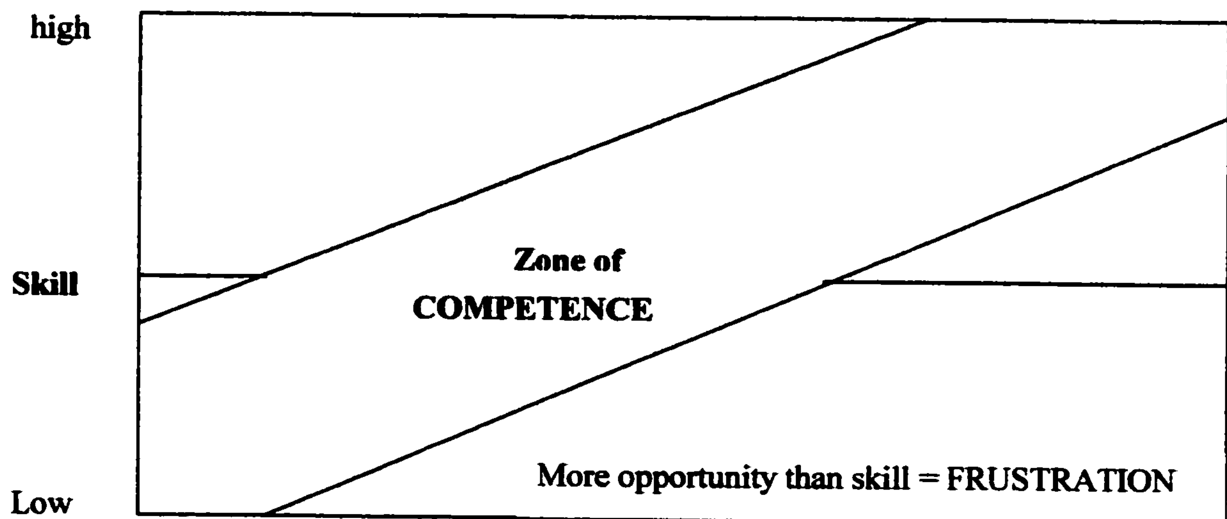

Figure 7: Zone of Competence

Unanswered Questions and Avenues for Further Research

The conclusions of this study are suggestive, and cannot establish causality (Farber & Egeland, 1987; Messerschmidt, 2000). The field of prevention science would benefit from further research to directly capture a complete picture of the unfolding of events and the internal process of individuals that have health and behavior problems during adolescence. More research is needed on the diverse ways and conditions under which protective relationships can influence the developmental trajectories of diverse children and youth. In particular, there is a need to examine if and how inserting protective factors into the lives of individuals like the respondents can alter their developmental trajectories.

A common definition of the role of bonding in prevention research assumes that children and youth internalize the values of the people they bond with and therefore act in ways that are consistent with these values (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). There is a need to continue to refine a theory about the difference between bonding that nurtures the individual and bonding that is destructive. Is bonding a positive quality that contributes to children's social, emotional, and cognitive well-being, an instrument of social control, or both?

Catalano and Hawkins (1996) suggest that bonds are helpful when they are with people that hold healthy beliefs and clear standards. More research is needed to identify the attitudes and skills someone must possess in order for a bonded relationship with him or her to be protective for a child. It may be that, in

order for a bonded relationship to serve a protective function, the adult must have certain characteristics, beyond pro-social values and behavior. For example, the adult may have to have a fundamental belief in the child, the desire to create a positive and respectful relationship, the faith that such a relationship is possible, and a willingness to invest the necessary effort. Certainly more research is needed on how these general principles are operationalized in different ethnic, racial, cultural and gender contexts and relationships.

The nature of the bond itself may promote or stifle growth. Many feminists have described the problems associated with a bond that creates an intense desire to please (Adan, 1991Code, 1991; hooks, 1989). It may be that the bond needs to be strong, but flexible enough to allow individuals to assert their own autonomy. If so, what is difference between this kind of bond and one that suffocates, and under what conditions do these different kinds of bonds develop?

There are also questions about the role of high expectations that would benefit from further examination. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between high expectations and unrealistic demands, between help and enabling. This is particularly true for people who care for children and youth who have serious emotional and behavioral problems. Research could help prevention science, schools, and parents to better understand what are reasonable expectations, under what conditions, and what are the most effective ways to encourage or support individuals to reach for them.

Finally, adolescents who are failing in school and are involved with crime do not necessarily develop into self-destructive, antisocial adults. Some become caring, competent, and contributing individuals. This study suggests that protective relationships may play a major role in shaping these positive outcomes. More research is needed to describe how and under what conditions these relationships provide protection, as well as the limits of the protection they can provide.

Because of their ability to establish causality, longitudinal studies would be particularly useful for exploring the role of protective factors in shaping the developmental trajectories of multiple-problem youth, as well as in examining the degree to which youth internalize the values of the people to whom they bond. Case studies could help to clarify the role of culture and context in shaping and promoting strong bonds, as well as defining healthy beliefs and clear standards that promote positive youth development.

As for the questions about the role of bonding in human development, philosophical inquiry may help here. Philosophy could help to define the concept of bonding —what it is, its meaning and significance, and its relationship to human development and behavior. Not all of the important questions about helping troubled youth are empirical ones, answerable by quantitative evidence. Fundamental questions of meaning and value in people's lives are important parts of the quest for understanding developmental pathways as well. As scholars and practitioners, we ignore these at our peril.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Subject Guide

1. "Imagine that you ran into someone you haven't seen since high school. This person use to be a friend and s/he asks you to join him/her for lunch. After you sit down and order, s/he says, 'Tell me about yourself.' What would you say?" Probe/listen for:

    "What is your life like?" If the respondent hasn't talked about school, work, friends, family or what s/he does for fun, point out that s/he hasn't mentioned that area.

    "What kind of person have you become? What do you see as your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?"

    "What do you think your life will be like when you are 30?"

2. "How did you become the person that you are today?" Probe/listen for:

    "What kinds of things have interfered with or prevented you from creating the kind of life you want?"

    "What kinds of things have helped you to create the kind of life that you want?"

    "Have you felt like you were different from the mainstream, middle-class, regular people? If so, How have you dealt with being different?"

    If the respondent hasn't talked about school, work, friends, or family, point out that s/he hasn't mentioned anything about that area.

3. Looking back over you life, are there any people who have had a big influence on you, made a difference in how your life has turned out so far? If so, tell me about them. Probe/listen for:

If the respondent has a difficult time thinking of any one, ask them to think about specific times in their lives; after high school, during high school, and in middle school.

"What was it that had the most impact on you."

"In what ways did this relationship influence the direction of your life?"

We are finished with the interview. Do you have any questions for me?

Collateral Guide

1. "Tell me a little bit about how you met subject's name, how long you've know him/her

2. "Please describe subjects name." Probe/listen for:

   "What kind of person is subject's name? What are his/her strengths and weaknesses?"

   "What is subject's name life like?" If the respondent hasn't talked about school, work, friends, family or recreation, point out that s/he hasn't mentioned anything about that area."

"Tell me about the ways that subject's name has changed since you've known him/her?" If there has been a significant change ask, "What do think has caused it?"

   "What do you think subject's name life will be like when s/he is 30?"

1. "Why do you think subject's name has become the person s/he is today?" Probe/listen for:

   "What kinds of things have interfered with or prevented subject's name from creating the kind of life s/he wants?"

   "What kinds of things have helped subject's name to create the kind of life that s/he wants?"

   "Some people feel like they are different from the mainstream, middle-class, regular kids. Do you think 'B' has felt that way? If so, how has s/he dealt with being different?"

   If the respondent hasn't talked about school, work, friends, or family, point out that s/he hasn't mentioned anything about that area.

2. "Tell me about your relationship with subject's name." Probe/listen for:

   "In what ways have you tried to help or guide subject's name?"

   In what ways do you think you have influenced subject's name?"

APPENDIX B

CODING SCHEME

OUTER LIFE

Years Action and Choices Over the Last Three Years:	Codes
Crime	
None	Crime/None
Drug Use	Crime/Drug Use
Violent Crime (i.e.: assault, rape, etc.)	Crime/Violent
Non-violent (i.e.: reckless driving, receiving stolen property, etc.)	Crime/Non-violent
Education	
Drop Out	Edu/Drop-out
High School	Edu/High School
GED	Edu/ GED
Vocational	Edu/Vocational
Associates Degree	Edu/AA
University	Edu/University
Employment	
Unemployed	Employ/None
Low Skill	Employ/Low Skill
Career Potential	Employ/Career.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: PROTECTIVE

Protective Psychosocial Qualities	Area/Type[1]/Domain[2]/Time
Dreams/Goals/Purpose/Motivation	
Meaning in life	PPS/Meaning/domain/time
Hope for the Future	PPS/Hope/domain/time
Other	PPS/Other/domain/time
Independence/Autonomy	
Take responsibility	PPS/Responsibility/domain/time
Plan for future	PPS/Plan/domain/time
Disengage from dysfunction	PPS/Disengage/domain/time
Internal Locus of Control	
Can Do	PPS/Can do/domain/time
Determination/Perseverance	
Stick to	PPS/Stick to/domain/time
Overcome Obstacles	PPS/Obstacles/domain/time
Delay Gratification	PPS/Delay/domain/time
Cultural Identity	
Pride	PPS/Pride/domain/time
Belonging	PPS/Belong/domain/time
Primary Reference Group	PPS/Reference/domain/time
Comparing Self	PPS/Comparisons/domain/time
Affirm Difference	PPS/Affirm/domain/time
Identity Confrontation & Resolution	PPS/Confrontation/domain/time
Self Worth	
Sense of identity	PPS/identity/domain/time
Value	PPS/value/domain/time

[1]The way in which a particular concept is manifested.
[2]The domain(s) in which the skill or concept manifests itself (i.e.: community, school, family, peers, work or within oneself).

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: PROTECTIVE

Coping Skills	Area/Type/Domain/Time
Cognitive	
Academic Skills	CS/Academics/domain/time
Moral Reasoning	CS/Moral/domain/time
Goal Setting	CS/Goals/domain/time
Job Skills	CS/Jobs/domain/time
Problem Solving	CS/Problem/domain/time
Interpersonal Skills	
Social Skills	CS/Social/domain/time
Bicultural Skills	CS/Bicultural/domain/time
Social Change	CS/Change/domain/time
Emotional Stability and Management	
Happy	CS/Happy/domain/time
Self-understanding	CS/Understand/domain/time
Emotional Control	CS/Control/domain/time
Restore self-esteem	CS/Restore/domain/time
Humor	CS/Humor/domain/time
Prevail over cultural oppression	
Rules of Power	CS/rules/domain/time
Understand oppression	CS/Oppression/domain/time
Identity confrontations & resolution	CS/identity conf/domain/time
When & how to confront, deflect, or accommodate	CS/respond/domain/time

ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES: PROTECTIVE

Protective Environments	Area/Type/Domain/Time
Social Support	
Support of overall development	PE/overall/domain/time
Encourage Autonomy/self definition	PE/Autonomy/domain/time
Recognition for effort/success	PE/Recognize/domain/time
Recognize and value personal uniqueness	PE/RecogUniq/domain/time
Empathic	PE/Empathic/domain/time
Emotionally responsive	PE/Responsive/domain/time
Effective Supervision & Disciplining	PE/Supervise/domain/time
Role modeling	PE/Modeling/domain/time
Teaching	PE/Teach/domain/time
Advice giving	PE/Advise/domain/time
High Expectations	
Believe in capabilities	PE/Capable/domain/time
Encourage competence	PE/Competent/domain/time
Encourage taking appropriate responsibility	PE/Responsible/domain/time
Encourage disengagement from dysfunction	PE/Disengage/domain/time
Challenge status quo (Stand up for)	PE/StatusQuo/domain/time
Future Orientation	PE/Future/ domain/time
Opportunities and Skills	
Opportunities for meaningful involvement	PE/Opportunities/domain/time
Social Competence	PE/Social comp/domain/time
Academic Competence	PE/Academic/domain/time
Problem Solving	PE/ProbSolve/domain/time
Cultural Competence	PE/CultComp/domain/time
Prevail over oppression	PE/Prevail/ domain/time
Structure and Safety	
Protect from danger	PE/Protect/domain/time
Reduce exposure	PE/Less expose/domain/time
Teach appropriate behavior	PE/Appropriate/domain/time
Structure	PE/Structure /domain/time
Concrete Support	PE/Concrete/domain/time
Affirm cultural identity	
Cultural referents	PE/Cult ref/domain/time
Belong to a group	PE/Belong/domain/time
Stop comparing self to dominant	PE/No Compare/domain/time
Affirm difference	PE/AffirmDiff/domain/time
Model thrive in the face of oppression	PE/ModelThrive/domain/time
Model possibilities	PE/ModelPoss/domain/time
Teach cultural skills	PE/CultSkill/domain /time

RELATIONSHIPS: PROTECTIVE

Protective Relationships	Area/Type/Domain/Time
Social Support	
Support of overall development	PR/overall/domain/time
Encourage Autonomy/self definition	PR/Autonomy/domain/time
Recognition for effort/success	PR/RecogEff/domain/time
Recognize and value personal uniqueness	PR/RecogUniq/domain/time
Empathic	PR/Empathic/domain/time
Listen	PR/Listen /domain/time
Effective Supervision & Disciplining	PR/Supervise/domain/time
Role modeling	PR/Modeling/domain/time
Teaching	PR/Teach/domain/time
Advice giving	PR/Advise/domain/time
High Expectations	
Believe in capabilities	PR/Capable/domain/time
Encourage competence	PR/Competent/domain/time
Encourage taking appropriate responsibility	PR/Responsible/domain/time
Encourage disengagement from dys.	PR/Disengage/domain/time
Challenge status quo (Stand up for)	PR/StatusQuo/domain/time
Future Orientation	PR/Future/domain/time
Opportunities and Skills	
Opportunities for meaningful involvement	PR/Opportunities/domain/time
Social Competence	PR/Social comp/domain/time
Academic Competence	PR/Academic/domain/time
Problem Solving	PR/ProbSolve/domain/time
Cultural Competence	PR/CultComp/domain/time
Prevail over oppression/resist	PR/Prevail/domain/time
Open doors	PR/OpenDoors/domain/time
Structure and Safety	
Protect from danger	PR/Protect/ domain /time
Teach appropriate behavior	PR/Appropriate/ domain /time
Provide structure	PR/Structure /domain /time
Concrete Support	PR/Concrete/domain/time
Affirm cultural identity	
Cultural referents	PR/Cult ref/domain/time
Belong to a group	PR/Belong/domain/time
Stop comparing self to dominant	PR/No Compare/domain/time
Affirm difference	PR/AffirmDiff/domain/time
Model thrive in the face of oppression	PR/ModelThrive/domain/time
Model possibilities	PR/ModelPoss/domain/time
Teach cultural skills	PR/CultSkill/domain/time

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: ADVERSE

Adverse Psychosocial Qualities	Area/Type/Domain/Time
Personal Risks	
Early Antisocial Behavior	APS/Anti/domain/time
Academic Failure	APS/AcaFail/domain /time
Lack of Commitment to School	APS/LackCommit/domain/time
Alienation and Rebelliousness	APS/Alien/domain/time
Favorable attitudes towards use	APS/FavAtt/domain/time
Early First use	APS/FirstUse/domain/time
Oppressive Conditions	
Lack of skill	APS/No skill/domain/time
Act-out- or drop-out	APS/Act-out/domain/time
Internalize negative expectations	APS/Internalize/domain/time
Assimilate	APS/Assimilate/domain/time
Blame	APS/Blame/domain/time

ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES: ADVERSE

Adverse Conditions	**Area/Type/Domain/Time**
Risk Factors	
Economic deprivation	AE/Deprivation/domain/time
Mobility	AE/Mobility/domain/time
Family history of the problem behavior	AE/Hist of behavior/domain/ti
Poor family management practices	AE/Management/domain/time
Family conflict	AE/Conflict/domain/time
Friends who engage in problem behavior	AE/Prob behavior/domain/time
Availability of Drugs and Alcohol	AE/Availability/domain/time
Oppressive Conditions	
Limit opportunities	AE/Low opportunity/domain/ti
Assume Incompetence	AE/Incompetence/domain/time
Dismiss youth's world-view	AE/Dismiss/domain /time
Impose conventional values, standards	AE/Conventional/domain /time
Don't teach resistance skills	AE/No resist/domain /time
Low expectations	AE/Low expect/domain/time

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE OF CODED DATA

KB: You'd skip school and what would happen?

LYNETTE: I would -- nothing really because they
AE/Management
would leave a message for my mom at work. /Family/C &
Y But -- or when she got home.

KB: So it would be --

LYNETTE: Just that I wasn't, yeah, in school
that day. And she'd talk to me about
it. But there wasn't really much she
could do. She put me on restriction a
lot, but that didn't do very much.

KB: And what would happen while you were on
restriction?

LYNETTE: No phone, no TV and can't go nowhere.
PE/Appropriate/
No friends over. So I'd have to sit at family/C&Y
home for about two weeks doing absolutely
nothing.

KB: And how did you respond to that?

LYNETTE: I don't know. I don't know if it --
I
know I had cousins who got in -- when
they did something wrong at school, I
know they got whoopings. And I remember
saying to my mom how come she doesn't
whoop me? Because I guess I felt like I
wasn't -- because they really got in
trouble. You know? If they didn't get
good grades, they were in trouble.

And I just kind of felt like my mom -- it AE/Low
expect/ wasn't such a huge priority as far as me
family/C&Y
getting in trouble and the things I did.
That was probably because she was so
wrapped up in paying bills and working
all the time that she really didn't just
have time to really put into me.

But I don't know if it really -- I knew
AE/Management/
when I did something wrong and she found out family/C&Y
about it what would happen to me. But
it was nothing more than having to stay
at home. So I don't know.

KB: That didn't seem like that big of a deal to
you?

LYNETTE: It didn't. It really didn't. Yeah.
I'd say stay home for a couple of weeks, no big deal.

Yeah. I was kind of a hard-head growing up.
I know I was. I apologize to my mom a lot now for the things I put her through growing up.

KB: Because you know what it's like to be on the
other side?

LYNETTE: I do. I really do. And I stay on my
kids now a lot more than my mom did.
Because I think I'm a much stronger person
PPS/identity/
than she is simply because of the way I --
family/adult
she had a lot more things that happened in her life growing up than I did.

And my sister was there for me a lot growing up. And I think that was the stronger part -- you know, that was the main part that helped me be the person I am today.
Because she took care of me a lot growing up. PR/overall/family/C&Y

KB: Tell me about that.

LYNETTE: Well she's always been there for me.

KB: She's how much older?

LYNETTE: Six years, about six-and-a-half years.
She's always been there for me. She got me off to school, she made sure, sat me down, taught me about sex and things you should do.
PR/Teach/Listen
She was always open for me to talk to and willing to listen. So that made a big difference in my life. Structure/Family/C&Y

She probably sees it a lot. She reminds me, I should say, that she was it for me growing up. Because my mom had other issues that she was dealing with and dealing with my dad, yeah.

KB: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

LYNETTE: Well, all I know is that my father wasn't the nicest person to her when we were younger.

KB: Did he beat her up?

LYNETTE: Yeah. My sister seen a lot as far as
what he did to her where I didn't, because she always made sure I didn't see it. PR/Reduce Exposure/ Family/C&Y

She drank a lot. She'd come home --

she'd be gone for three or four days, and AE/Management/
my sister was left to take care of me. So, family/C&Y
I mean, she just had a lot of issues that she wasn't -- that's the only way she knew how to deal with him was to drink alcohol so she'd feel better. And I can't really blame her for that because, you know, everybody has faults.

But yeah, that's pretty much -- that's what I got from my sister. Because, like I said, I don't remember a lot of my childhood. I mean, I remember my sister getting me out on
the porch and beating the crap out of me AE/Management
because she was so sick and tired of me. family/C&Y
But I don't remember a lot of the stuff that went on. And I think that's because my
sister didn't let me see a lot of stuff that PR/Reduce/
went on in the house with my mom and my dad. Exposure/fam./
C&Y

KB: So they'd be fighting and she'd take you out
of the house or -

LYNETTE: Or either I was asleep. And, when stuff
went on, she made sure that, you know, I wasn't -- I don't know. I know I -- she can tell me stories about stuff that happened and stuff that I have no -- I don't remember ever remember seeing as far as I know.......................

KB: Can you talk to me about what that means? What kinds of things has he (her father) done? What does being there for you mean?

LYNETTE: When my son was born -- first he was mad at me. First, he was very mad at me.
And I feel like he didn't really have much of an opinion about my life because he wasn't there for me half the time. CS/Moral/family/adol.

But, when my son was born, I went back to get my G.E.D. He worked grave shift, and he
keep my son for me while I went to school during the day so I could get my G.E.D. PE/Concrete/family/adol.
He basically babysat my son until I could get on my feet and get -- I went to BCTI, and he kept my son for years between him and my grandmother. She would keep my son while I went to school. Anything I wanted
to do, he was there for me as far as a babysitter goes and taking care of my son so I wouldn't have to worry about him. PE/Competence Family/Adol
And to me that was a huge help.

KB: Oh, yeah.

LYNETTE: Yeah. And he was -- he really helped me. Him and my mom both they've been for me all the way. And I have no -- they're the only people I can give credit for what I have today. Because, if they weren't there, I wouldn't have had PE/Opportunities Family/Adol.&Adult

a babysitter to go back to school and do the things that I've done so I can actually have a job today making decent money. Not a lot of money but enough money to survive off of.

KB: And is your mother still drinking?

LYNETTE: Yeah. But not like she used to. She'll come over and have a beer. I haven't seen my mom drunk in probably, I don't know, three to four years. And that's an accomplishment for her.

KB: Oh, yeah.

LYNETTE: Yeah. She does drink every now and then, but it's not like she drinks to get drunk.

KB: What happened to make that change for her? Do you know?

LYNETTE: I think us, me and my sister. We're really close -- my sister, my mom, and me. And she knew how I felt about it. And I think that now that --

KB: Because you told her?

LYNETTE: Yeah. And my son was born, too, really kind of -- I don't know. I guess you kind of learn from your mistakes with your kids and you try to do better for your grandkids.

KB: Mm-hmm.

LYNETTE: And I think that that -- I don't know for sure, but that's what I think.

KB: Because she was so involved in sort of helping to raise him that she had to sort of straighten herself out in order to do that.

LYNETTE: Right. She was the first person I told when I found out I was pregnant. She took
PR/Structure
me to the doctor's. She made sure I made
Mother/adol.
it to all doctor's -- because I was so young, I couldn't drive there or anything. She took me to all my doctor's appointments.
She was there when my son was born.

I mean, she was there. Yeah. She's seen it all and she went through just about all of it with me. So I think that made a difference in why she's not drinking.

PR/Overall/ mother/adol.

KB: And how did she respond to your being pregnant?

LYNETTE: She didn't get mad. She just accepted it. She didn't -- she didn't judge me for it or nothing. She just kind of accepted it and said it's -- you know, the problem is it's kind of done, so let's just deal with it.

PR/empathetic mother/adol.

She's been wonderful. She -- I talked to her because my son is going through a phase where it's like well, I like this boy but I don't know how I like him.

She said, "Well, Lynette, you just got to let him live. And if he grows up and he's gay, you kind of have to, you know, deal with it." She said, "You still love him and you still be there for him but you just kind of have to deal with it." And that's the kind of person she is.

PR/advise mother/adult

KB: Any thoughts about handling your pregnancy differently?

LYNETTE: With my son?

KB: Mm-hmm.

LYNETTE: You mean as far as getting abortion?

KB: Or adoption or -

LYNETTE: Adoption wasn't an issue. Abortion was, until my mom sat me down and talked me out of it. She said this is her first grandbaby and I was going to have the baby.

PR/advise & competence/ Mother/adol.

KB: She wanted you to have the baby?

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLE OF COMBINED SUMMARY SHEETS

Resilience Factor	Subjects							
	P	M	L	D	C	R	S	C
Protective Personal Attributes								
Biology								
Temperament	X							
Intellectual capacity	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	-
Gender		X	X		X			X
Psychosocial Qualities								
Dreams/Goals/Purpose/Motivation (Uniqueness… life purpose, Belief system, direction)	X	X	X	½	½	½	½	½
Independence (Autonomous, self-reliance)	X	½	X	X	½	No	No	No
Internal Locus of Control/ Optimism/ Hopefulness vs Blame (Belief that they can create positive outcomes	X	X	X	X	X	½	No	No
Determination/Perseverance	X	X	X	½	½	No	No	No
Cultural Identity (Affirm status)	X	X	X	X	X	½	½	½

	P	M	L	D	C	R	S	C
Protective Personal Attributes								
Interpersonal Skills								
Insight (Self-understanding)	X	X	X	No	X	No	½	X
Interpersonal awareness (Choice of intimates)	X	X	X	X	No	No	No	No
Help seeking	X	½	X	X	No	X	X	X
Bicultural	X	X	X	No	½	No	No	X
Rules of Power	½	X	X	X	½	No	½	No
Prevail over racism/oppression (Understanding, when& how to confront, deflect or accommodate.	X	X	X	-	No	½	-	No
Emotional stability & management								
Happy	X	X	X	X	X	No	No	No
Recognize feelings	X	X	½	X	X	½	½	X
Emotional control (Anger/depression)	X	X	X	X	No	No	No	No
Restore self-esteem	X	X	X	-	-	½	No	No
Humor	X	X	-	-	X	No	No	-
Identity Confrontation and resolution	X	X	X	½	No	No	No	No

	P Fam	M Fam	L Fam	D Fam	C Fam	R Fam	S Fam	C Fam
Protective Environmental Attributes								
Social Support								
o Support of overall development	¾	X	X	X	No	½	X	No
o Acceptance	X	X	X	X	No	X	X	X
o Encourage Autonomy/self definition	¾	X	X	X	No	X	½	No
o Recognition for effort/success	X	X	X	-	No	½	X	No
o Empathic	X	½	X	-	No	½	X	No
o Emotionally responsive	X	No	X	X	No	X	X	No
o Effective Supervision & Disciplining	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
o Role modeling	½	½	No	X	No	No	X	No
o Teaching	½	No	No	-	No	No	X	½
o Advice giving	X	No	X	-	No	X	X	½
High Expectations								
o Believe in capabilities	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	No
o Encourage competence	X	½	X	X	N	No	½	½
o Encourage taking appropriate responsibility	X	N	X	½	N	½	No	½
o Encourage disengagement from dysfunction	X	X	X	N	N	No	½	No
o Challenge status quo (Stand up for)	No	X	X	N	N	No	No	No

	P Sc	M Sc	L Jo	D Jo	C Jo	R	S	C
Protective Environmental Attributes								
Social Support								
o Support of overall development	¾	½	No	-	-			
o Acceptance	X	½	½	-	-			
o Encourage Autonomy/self definition	¾	½	½	-	X			
o Recognition for effort/success	X	X	X	X	X			
o Empathic	X	½	No	-	-			
o Emotionally responsive	X	?	No	-	-			
o Effective Supervision & Disciplining	No	No	X	-	-			
o Role modeling	No	X	No	X	-			
o Teaching	X	X	X	X	X			
o Advice giving	No	X	No	-	-			
High Expectations								
o Believe in capabilities	No	½	X	X	X			
o Encourage competence	X	½	X	X	X			
o Encourage taking appropriate responsibility	X	½	X	-	-			
o Encourage disengagement from dysfunction	?	½	No	No	No			
o **Challenge status quo (Stand up for)**	?	½	No	No	No			
o Other								

Protective relationships	P Aa	M Te	L Si	D Ma	C Hu	R -	S Da	C -
Social Support								
o Support of overall development	X	X	X	X	X		X	
o Acceptance								
o Encourage Autonomy/self	X	X	X	X	X		X	
definition	½	X	X	-	-		½	
o Recognition for effort/success								
o Recognize and value personal	X	X	X	-	X		½	
uniqueness	X	X	X	X	X		X	
o Empathic								
o Emotionally responsive	½	X	X	-	-		X	
o Effective Supervision &	½	X	½	X	X		X	
Disciplining	n/a	X	½	No	n/a		½	
o Role modeling								
o Teaching	X	X	X	X	-		X	
o Advice giving	X	X	X	-	-		X	
o Other	X	X	X	-	-		X	
Extra Effort								
Stand Up For	X	X						
Respected Boundaries		X	X					
"Stake In the Ground"		X						
	X		X				X	
High Expectations								
o Believe in capabilities	X	X	X	X	-		X	
o Encourage competence	X	X	X	-	-		X	
o Encourage taking appropriate	X	X	X	-	½		No	
responsibility								
o Encourage disengagement	?			No	No		?	
from dysfunction								
o Challenge status quo (Stand	No	X		No	No		No	
up for)								
o Future Orientation	X	X	X	-	-		?	
o Other								

Protective Relationships	P Aa	M Te	L Si	D Ma	C Hu	R -	S Da	C -
Opportunities and Skills								
o Opportunities for meaningful involvement	X	X	?	-	X		No	
o Social Competence	½	X	?	-	-		No	
o Problem Solving	X	X	X	-	-		No	
o Cultural Competence	No	X	?	-	-		No	
o Prevail over oppression/resist	No	X	?	-	-		No	
o Open doors	X	X	No	No	No		No	
Structure and Safety								
o Protect from danger	X	?	X	½	X		X	
o Reduce exposure	X	X	X	½	X		X	
o Teach appropriate behavior	X	X	X	No	X		-	
o Other								
Affirm cultural identity								
o Cultural referents	No	X	X	X	X		-	
o Belong to a group	No	X	X	-	X		-	
o Stop comparing self to dominant	No	X	-	-	-		-	
o Affirm difference	No	X	X	X	X		-	
o Other								
Challenge social inequalities								
o Change society, not fit in	No	X	X	No	No		No	
o Other								

Adverse Environmental	P Pe	M Pe	L Pe	D Pe	C Pe	R Pe	S Pe	C Pe
Risk Factors								
o Friends who engage in problem behavior	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
o Availability of D&A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oppressive Conditions								
o Limit opportunities	No	½	No	No	X	No	No	X
o Assume Incompetence	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
o Dismiss youth's world-view	No	½	No	No	No	No	No	No
o Impose conventional values, standards	No	X	No	No	No	No	No	No
o Don't teach resistance skills	No	X	X	X	X	No	X	X
o Low expectations	No	X	X	No	X	No	X	X
o Other								
Excluded	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Hated	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Oppressive Conditions								
o Limit opportunities	X	No	No	No	½	X	No	X
o Assume Incompetence		No	X	No	No	-	No	-
o Dismiss youth's world-view		No	X	-	-	-	-	-
o Impose conventional values, standards		X	X	X	X	-	X	-
o Don't teach resistance skills		X	X	-	-	-	-	-
o Low expectations		No	X	No	½	-	No	-
o Other								
Excluded		No	X	No	No	-	No	-
Hated		No	No	No	No	-	No	-

APPENDIX E

CONFIDENT, COMPETENT AND CARING AT 25

At age 25, Peter, Lynette and Madeline are pursuing careers, have supportive families and friends, feel good about the direction of their lives, and have high hopes for their future. For at least the past three years, they have not committed crimes[40] or had problems with alcohol or other drugs. Nor have they suffered from psychiatric disorders.

In this appendix, I explore the similarities and differences in these respondents' developmental paths. First, I look at the situations and circumstances that shaped their childhoods and early adolescences. Then, I examine their lives from late adolescence through young adulthood, paying particular attention to those situations and circumstances that appear to have altered their developmental trajectories away from the trouble that had permeated their earlier lives.

Getting In Trouble: Childhood and Early Adolescence

Peter, Lynette, and Madeline[41] had difficult childhoods. Each had at least one parent who had a serious problem with alcohol and other drugs. For the most part, they grew up with little adult supervision. Their parents rarely monitored where they were, what they were doing, or whom they were spending time with. There was intense conflict within their families, and for Peter and Lynette violent outbursts were not unusual. In addition, all three had significant problems in school. Lynette and Madeline were in trouble throughout elementary school, primarily for fighting. Although Peter did well in an elementary, by the time he was in fifth grade he cared more about emulating his friends than achieving in school. By age 13, they all were skipping school, spending their time with a "wild" crowd and committing crimes.

Peter

Peter grew up in a large, metropolitan city in neighborhoods predominantly populated by African Americans, recent immigrants, and poor Whites. The areas he lived in had a high concentration of government-subsidized housing projects and large apartment complexes that were often in a state of deterioration and disrepair. Landlords were not quick to fix leaky roofs or broken faucets. Crime rates were high and violence an everyday reality. Peter remembers, "It was so bad when we were little that my mom would send me out to play and I would come home naked because somebody actually stole the clothes right off my back."

Peter never stayed in one place for much more than a year. His mother would get an apartment and then move when she either got evicted for failing to pay her rent or had to go to jail.

---

[40] Except for marijuana use.

[41] Peter is biracial (African American and European American), Lynette is African American, and Madeline is European American.

At the center of Peter's childhood and adolescence was his mother's heroin addiction and prostitution. When he was one-and-a-half she was arrested and put in jail for possession of a controlled substance. Peter went to live with his father and his father's girlfriend while his mother was in jail and later in a half-way-house. Peter describes his father as someone who "always thought of himself first," a lazy man who "didn't have any standards or ambition." He deeply resents the fact that his father left him to be raised by his girlfriend and Peter's mother, Shelia.

His father's girlfriend, Jessie, became Peter's second mother. Over the years she took him in and raised him alongside her own children, even though Peter's father would leave for months on end to be with other women. Although she welcomed Peter into her home, she took her frustrations out on him, routinely yelling and hitting him. It was difficult enough to raise her two children by herself, much less to take on a third. Besides, looking at Peter reminded her of what a "dog" his father was.

Yet no matter how much conflict he experienced at Jessie's, it was better than the violence he faced at his mothers. Peter remembers that his mother:

> Would always have different boyfriends in and out of the house. There were times when her boyfriends would flip out and we'd have to leave the house in the middle of the night. We'd go stay with friends or family so we would be safe. They'd beat her up out of the blue.

Although Jessie was harsh, she was predictable in contrast to the random, illogical behavior of his mother. Shelia's addiction and prostitution undercut her ability to parent. Peter's older brother recalls, "She knew that she wasn't doing right. How could she discipline Peter and command respect from Peter when she wasn't showing a good example herself?" To make up for her transgressions, she would "baby" Peter and buy him extravagant gifts. Peter "could get away with anything with her."

Shelia often left Peter home alone. When he was in elementary school he would "get dressed, go to school, come home, make dinner, and wait for [his] mom to get home." Dinner usually consisted of a can of soup and a piece of toast, or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Many nights his mother didn't return until early morning.

This is not to say that Shelia didn't provide any guidance. She did. Even when she was in the depth of her addiction, every Saturday she took Peter to the Seventh Day Adventist church. Peter remembers:

> I went to church from the time I was six years old until I was about 18. Not every week but close to it. I had to go. I didn't want to. I wanted to watch Saturday morning cartoons. But she made me. I didn't have a choice. She said, 'I'm showing this to you now so that you can always have this to go back to."

Shelia also valued education. She encouraged all of her children to do well in school. During one of her sober periods, she used the money she gained from an insurance settlement to put her two eldest children in a private school. At one point, she told Peter that she would be content to die because he had gone back to school and was doing well.

Finally, when Shelia was clean and sober, she was a hard worker. For years she worked as a beautician. Then she went back to school and earned her associate of arts degree. At the time of her death she was working in the county jail.

Surrogate parent. Shelia's erratic parenting left a vacuum in Peter's life, and into that vacuum stepped Peter's older brother Rich. From the time Peter was one and a half until he was seven, Rich, who was 10 years older, lived with either his aunt or his grandmother. During that time he would visit Peter, sometimes taking him to an arcade and buying him a hamburger. Other times he just came over to the house so Peter had "someone to talk to, someone to say, 'Hey, I need some money'."

In addition, Rich tried to protect Peter from the violence that was a part of his mother's life. To him it seemed like every time he went to his mother's he "had to call the police on somebody." For Peter, Rich's presence brought a huge sigh of relief. His big brother was there to take care of everything, and he could get "some sleep." In fact, Peter slept with his brother whenever he could, until he was in middle school.

When Rich was a senior in high school, he dropped out of school so he could "put food on the table." This wasn't the first time he had quit school to get a job and help run the house, but it was the first time he moved back in with his mother and Peter.

For the following four years, Peter became Rich's shadow. Rich would frequently load up his little car and shuttle Peter and his friends out to the water park. Occasionally, he took Peter for motorcycle rides, and even allowed him to tag along on a couple of dates. It was Rich who taught Peter to drive.

Rich also tried to guide Peter. When Peter started to lose interest in school Rich encouraged him to take advantage of the educational opportunities he was being given. When Peter began stealing cars, Rich told him he was being stupid. When Peter brought home a gun, it was Rich who "took it apart and said, you can't have this gun," and when Peter became involved with a gang, it was Rich who tried to talk him out of it. In short, Rich parented Peter.

Extended family. Peter's mother's family also played a significant role in his early life. Shelia has four children by three men. One child is dark skinned, two could be mistaken for being white, and Peter's skin tone is in the middle. Peter believes his mother's family discriminated against her two darker- skinned children. As an example, he describes the time Child Protective Services (CPS) threatened to take away Shelia's children. Each of her sisters took one of the two

eldest children, the third was put up for adoption, and Peter went to live with his father's girlfriend. Peter believes his aunts took the two eldest because of their light skin color.

Peter also cites differences in his grandparents' relationship with his mother's children as more evidence of his family's racism. As teenagers, the two light-skinned children who had gone to live with their aunts, moved back to Seattle and lived with his mother's parents. Both of them had a good relationship with their grandparents and clearly saw themselves as welcome members of the family. Peter, on the other hand, did not feel welcomed by his grandparents or, for that matter, by any of his aunts or uncles. They never even asked him to spend the night.

Whether race played a role in deciding which children the two aunts took custody of and which children were invited into the grandparents' homes is open to interpretation. Peter says yes; Rich says no. However, what is important to this study is Peter's perception. From the time he was very small he believed his mother's family didn't like him because he was, "more black." By being physically and emotionally more supportive of Shelia's lightest-skinned children, their actions implied that White was better than Black, and this has gnawed at Peter throughout his life. From his perspective, Shelia was the "black sheep" of her family, and he was her black lamb.

School. Regardless of what was happening at home, Peter did well in elementary school. He remembers being in third grade and working in a sixth-grade math book. In fourth grade he was placed in a program for highly capable students, an experience he fondly remembers. One teacher sticks out in his mind because she repeatedly told him he was capable of doing great work. One day she pulled him aside to tell him she was recommending him for admission into a middle school for students with exceptional talent in mathematics and science. It was the fast track into the local university.

However, Peter was not interested in attending a middle school that would separate him from his neighborhood friends and demand that he spend his time on rigorous academics. By the time he was in junior high, his primary reason for going to school was to connect with his friends. Most mornings he would meet his friends at school and leave to hang out with the older kids, smoke marijuana, steal a car, or burglarize a house. By the time he was in eighth grade he was involved with a gang, failing most of his courses, and regularly being suspended for skipping school. In ninth grade he dropped out completely and became closely connected to a gang.

Peers and establishing an ethnic identity. Peter sees his gang involvement as an attempt to disengage from the dysfunction of his family. His hatred of his father and disrespect for his mother ignited his desire to distance himself from his parents. He simply wanted a place to belong, feel loved, and be powerful.

The gang helped Peter, a biracial adolescent, to develop his sense of himself as a Black man. His mother, her family, and school had downplayed the importance of race and socialized him into White mainstream culture. No one had really acknowledged his Blackness, much less helped him explore ways to incorporate it into his identity. By the end of elementary school he appeared to be raceless. He explains, "They use to call me 'White Boy' because I'm so light and the way my hair is and how I talk."

In middle school, Peter "discovered" he was black. Rich remembers:

> I just remember him coming home (from school) and going, 'Hey, I'm Black. I just found out I'm Black.' And I go, 'Well, you've always been Black. What's your problem?' And Peter would go, 'No, but I'm Black now.'

With Peter's newfound awareness came a desire to prove his Blackness. Peter would make decisions about what he could or could not do based on his image of what was appropriate for a Black man. Rich didn't understand what all the fuss was about. He didn't define himself as a Black man; instead he didn't "see color." This difference in the way that the two brothers, both biracial, established an ethnic identity marked the end of Peter's idolization of Rich.

As Peter's alliance with Rich was torn apart, his allegiance to the gang increased. The gang members became his role models, making him feel like he belonged and was valuable. For the first time he could imagine himself as a powerful man, rather than a poor boy who was ashamed to bring friends home to his shabby surroundings.

Peter had always hated being poor, and dealing drugs was an easy way to make money and gain status. He vividly remembers the first time he sold drugs:

> This group of people just swarmed around me and started putting money out. It was all gone just like that. I had $80 in my hand—I had never made money before. So I told my friends what happened, and we said well we'll take this little bit of money and reinvest it...and that's how it all started for us... I was just so enamored with making money. I never made money like that before. I remember going to sleep at night and being so excited about making money the next day, I couldn't go to sleep. I was excited like a little kid.

Internal model. Peter drank and smoked pot on occasion, but he stayed away from other drugs. It was the money and power he got from selling them that excited him. He had seen what an addiction had done to his mother and didn't want any part of it for himself. Family members had told him for years that if he "ever tried anything" he would become an addict too, and he believed them.

Even when his gang activity was at its peak, when he was selling drugs, breaking into houses, fighting, and stealing cars, he was ambivalent about his behavior. He wanted the prestige, money, and power that crime brought him, but he felt bad about actually committing the crimes.

In addition, he recognized that being with the gang took its toll on his "spirit." He recalls:

> That's where I felt like I lost something for myself. I felt like I always had this light about me... I had to change my whole mentality to be in that environment.... and when I did, I lost a sense of who I was as a person. I had to change because you can't be soft. You have to be someone who only cares about themselves... I lost something inside of me, that goodness that I had, that light that shined.

Lynette

Like Peter, the most significant difficulties Lynette faced as a child were in her family. She grew up with her mother and her sister in a government-subsidized housing project not far from where Peter spent several of his childhood years. Her mother frequently worked two minimum-wage jobs to make ends meet, and when she wasn't working she was drinking to make herself "feel better." Frequently she would disappear for three or four days at a time. Her father was married to another woman and had children with her. Occasionally, he would visit Lynette's mother, but he didn't pay child support.

Consequently, the job of raising Lynette was routinely left to her sister, Sherril, who was six years older than Lynette. Each day, Sherril would decide whether or not to go to school depending on whether her mother was home when she woke up. If her mother was still out Sherril, stayed and took care of Lynette. At times, she would be so "sick and tired" of being Lynette's parent that she would "just beat the crap" out of her. However, even when she desperately wanted to leave her behind, Sherril never abandoned Lynette.

Sherril felt responsible for raising and protecting Lynette. When her father would stop by and start arguing with her mother, she would quickly whisk Lynette out of the house. When Lynette would get into fights with her friends, Sherril played the role of arbitrator. She even asked her friends' parents and her aunts for parenting advice. Perhaps most importantly, she always listened to Lynette and encouraged her not to be like her and her mother, "a doormat for people to walk over." Instead she told Lynette to "take care of herself," "go for what you want," "go around obstacles," and "trust your feelings."

Extended family. In the midst of her mother's struggles, Lynette spent time with her mother's three sisters. She remembers that her aunts thought she was a "bad kid" and assumed she would never amount to anything, just like her mother. One of her aunts even forbade her children spend time at Lynette's, fearing Lynette was a bad influence.

Yet, in their own way, all but one of the aunts provided some support for Lynette. They gave her a safe place to go when her parents were fighting, hand-me-downs, and food when the cupboards were bare. Lynette says she always knew that two of her aunts loved her, and she could go to them if she needed anything.

Lynette's other aunt, the one who wouldn't let her children play with Lynette, also played a significant role. She provided Lynette with a picture of a different kind of lifestyle. This aunt and uncle had a "calm mommy and daddy home with the family thing going on." They had parents who stayed together, "Sony video games…the VCR…all the stuff that was cool." This was the kind of life Lynette wanted, a life that was different from what she saw in her family and in the housing project where she lived.

School and peers. From the very beginning, school was problem for Lynette. From elementary school on she had a poor attendance record, bad grades, and was frequently in trouble for fighting. She was suspended, for the first time, in fourth grade for calling a teacher a name. When she was expelled in eighth grade for fighting, she simply didn't go back. She just never liked school.

When Lynette was 14, her father divorced his wife and moved in with Lynette and her mother. That was the last straw for Sherril. She was tired of being Lynette's parent. She was tired of being the adult in the family. She was confused and didn't want to deal with her father, so she left home.

Lynette says she missed Sherril and didn't like living with her father. He wanted to have a role in running the family and parenting Lynette. She didn't want any part of him, so she turned to her peer group, a rough crowd composed of her cousins and their friends. She began to stay out all night and drink a bit and experiment with drugs. Lynette hated the smell of alcohol and how she felt when she was under its influence. She didn't like the effects of marijuana either.

What she did like was her boyfriend and stealing. She liked her boyfriend because he made her feel like she belonged. She liked stealing because it was exciting to see what she "could get away with." At 15 she found herself pregnant and in juvenile detention for shoplifting.

Internal model. Although Lynette didn't do well in school, she did not get into serious trouble while she was under Sherril's care and protection. It was only when her sister moved out that she turned to the streets. Even then she did not use alcohol and drugs. She wanted to stay in control.

This need for control is central to Lynette's story. She saw her mother and sister as being "too nice" and getting used for their generosity. This was not going to be her. Sherril had warned her not to be a victim, and Lynette incorporated this lesson into her self-definition. Even as an adolescent she was "really strong." For example, at age 15, when she was pregnant, she told her boyfriend to get lost because he was seeing another woman. She simply would "not put up with it."

Madeline

Madeline's parents' married shortly after they got out of high school. Their violent three-year marriage was difficult at best, and they divorced when Madeline was six months old. As her parents' marriage disintegrated, her mother

became involved with and eventually married Derrick, a high school friend. Madeline lived with her mother and stepfather from the time she was six months old.

Like her biological father, Derrick was an alcoholic. He spent most of his leisure time on the couch drinking and watching television, uninvolved with and unconscious of what the rest of the family was doing. He "didn't want to overstep his bounds" with his stepchildren so he let his wife, "take care of most of the discipline." However Madeline's mother, Greta, struggled with depression and never felt like she was an adequate parent. Her insecurity lead her to try on a wide variety of parenting approaches, frequently changing her mind about family rules and consequences. As a result Madeline says she and her siblings "never really knew where they stood with her."

Within this context, Madeline was not an easy child. From the beginning she was strong-willed. For example, before she was three years old, she was kicked out of a childcare for being too aggressive. Her stepfather's alcoholism and her mother's depression appear to have significantly impaired their ability to respond to such a forceful little girl. They seemed unable to set limits on her behavior, so she learned that, in most instances, her temper would prevail.

This is not to say that Madeline's family was totally chaotic. During most of her formative years her father was in the Navy, which provided the family with some stability and structure. Although they struggled to pay the bills, they never went without food, clothing, or shelter. In addition, the Navy provided a code of conduct, a set of norms, and a structure that Madeline and her siblings were at home with.

School. Like Lynette, Madeline had difficulties at school. From the time she was little she had "a chip on her shoulder." In elementary school she was constantly in trouble for fighting. She remembers how tension would build up in her body and fighting seemed to be her only release. Sometimes after a fight, she could barely remember what had happened and whom she had beaten up.

In middle school, she started skipping classes and, "blanking-out" the teachers she didn't like. When she went to class she was outspoken and argumentative. Her defiance flew in the face of expectations. Research indicates that beginning in late elementary school, female students tend to question themselves and relinquish their opinions. They lose confidence, and 'I don't know' becomes their primary response to questions (Brown & Gillian, 1992). Not so for Madeline, she simply refused to follow these unspoken rules. When a teacher would say she was "totally wrong," she would stick up for herself and explain her logic. She never gave in. This seemed to infuriate many of her teachers and they responded by getting into arguments with her, sending her to the office, suspending her from school, or ignoring her frequent absences from class.

In seventh grade, Madeline was nearly expelled for skipping school and smoking on school grounds. In high school, she continued to "have problems

with authority," defying all orders. Eventually her high school counselor suggested she drop out and get her GED.

Peers, alcohol and sex. One reason Madeline didn't do well in middle and high school was because she was more interested in her friends than in school. Like many early adolescents, she became deeply attached to her peer group. By the time she was 12, she and her friends were experimenting with alcohol, drugs, and sex.

Madeline drank and used drugs for a number of reasons: curiosity, to be like her friends, to express her defiance, to feel good, and to cover up her problems (Maxwell, 1991). However her alcohol use got out of control. By the time she was 14 she was drinking every day, frequently skipping school to drink and hang out with friends. By the time she was 15 her drinking was the center of her existence, the one thing she longed for. She remembers, "I liked being drunk... I could have been drunk from morning till night every single day." As she says, everything else just "impeded [her] from being drunk."

Adding to Madeline's difficulty with drinking was her beauty. She was tall, thin, with long blonde hair and blue eyes. She could have been on the cover of Seventeen magazine. She attracted older boys, many of who were more than willing to get her all the alcohol she wanted. She went from boyfriend to boyfriend, and she was sexually active from early high school on.

Although Madeline was frequently in trouble for fighting, being defiant, drinking and smoking, her parents found it difficult to admit that she was in trouble, and denied all evidence to the contrary. For example, when Madeline was 15, Greta went to retrieve her from her boyfriend's house, at 2 o'clock in the morning. Madeline couldn't walk, and was "throwing up Black Velvet," but Greta dismissed the incident, saying that Madeline "had the flu."

Internal model. Madeline was not completely alienated from school and mainstream society. In spite of her daily drinking, she didn't go to school drunk. Although her friends were using large amounts of cocaine and other illicit drugs, she was not. She was afraid "of getting into real trouble... of getting picked up by the police." She told herself that drinking and smoking pot were okay, but using other drugs made her feel like she had "crossed over to the other side" Her self-definition was at odds with being "really bad," and drinking kept her high enough that she didn't need anything else.

Responding to oppression: A problem with authority. Lodged within Madeline's story, is her struggle to establish her gender identity. One of the central developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence is to develop a clear sense of who one is as a man or woman (Erickson, 1963; Sagan, 1988; Benjamin, 1988). Generally, a daughter identifies with her mother and incorporates her image into her own self-definition. If she doesn't develop a positive identification with her mother she may identify with her father or define herself in opposition to

her mother. Madeline tended to define herself in opposition to her mother, and the desire not to be like her was a driving force.

Madeline developed her gender identity within a family marked by her mother's passivity and her father's domination[42]. She describes her mother in ways that are almost a caricature of the stereotypical female: a weak person who doubted herself and had trouble believing she was good at anything. Her mother seemed to exist to help or please others, and did not seem to think she had the right to please herself. She would do almost anything to avoid conflict. Madeline knew she didn't want to be like this.

However, identifying with her father was a problem. He physically and verbally abused women, using humiliation as a tool of dominance. Madeline would listen to her mother's stories about the myriad of ways her father exploited women. Madeline remembers her mother telling her:

> He had a girlfriend he was dating. He took her to an amusement park and went up on one of those rides that goes way up high in the air. She wouldn't go. So he got on the thing and spit on her.

After listening to these stories Madeline would feel like her father "didn't like [her] either." She knew she couldn't trust him or turn to him for support.

Her father reinforced this belief. He "made it very clear he never wanted a daughter." After she moved to another state, her father would frequently write letters to her brother, but never to her. She got the message that her existence was more of an aggravation than a blessing to him. She felt "ignored," like somehow she "was being deprived." She knew "there had to be something wrong" with her or else her father would want her. So she set out to prove that she was "just as great as everybody else."

The way Madeline tried to prove herself was to adopt a tough identity, one similar to her fathers. Unlike her mother, she defined herself as "very independent," a tomboy who would rather play with boys than girls. She "didn't want to be stuck in that stereotype of you can't climb this tree or you can't fight." She was not going to let anyone take advantage of her. Other people often said she had "a problem with authority."

Madeline knew she did not want to be a victim, but she did not have the skills to stand up for herself in a way that would not get her in trouble. When a ball of tension built up in her body, she didn't know how to reduce her stress or talk it out. Instead she would hit someone. She didn't know when or how to confront, deflect, or accommodate her teachers' attempts to make her conform. Instead she would lash out or get drunk.

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[42] Although Madeline's parents divorced when she was six months old, Madeline continued to live in the same town and associate with her father and his family until she moved at age 10. Even though father and daughter did not have frequent contact, Madeline's father left an indelible mark on her.

Driving Forces in Childhood and Early Adolescence: Variations on a Theme

Chief among the similarities in Peter, Lynette and Madeline's childhoods are their parents' neglect. In each case, the respondents turned to peers to escape the dysfunction of their homes, choosing peer groups that were uninterested in school, criminally involved, and using alcohol and other drugs. However, their commitment to the norms of their peer groups was not complete. Each maintained personal limits on their behavior.

Parental neglect.

In all three cases the respondents' families were a source of significant difficulties. All had addicts or alcoholics as parents. All witnessed significant family conflicts, with Lynette and Peter's families frequently erupting in violence. None of their parents monitored or supervised their behavior. In Lynette and Peter's families, their parents were absent for long periods of time, leaving them to fend for themselves or be cared for by older siblings. Although Madeline's parents were physically present, they shut their eyes to blatant evidence that she had an alcohol and drug problem.

In Peter and Lynette's cases, their older siblings took on the role of caretaker. Peter's brother protected him, gave him advice, included him in fun activities, and "put food on the table." Lynette's sister essentially took on the day-to-day job of parenting, and it was only after she left home that Lynette got into serious trouble.

In addition, both Peter and Lynette had extended families that filled some of the gaps left by their parents' neglect. In doing so, these family members provided a measure of care and stability. Peter's father's girlfriend gave Peter a home to go to when his mother was unable to care for him, and Lynette aunts' welcomed her into their homes when violence was exploding in her own. Only Madeline did not receive significant help from her extended family.

Discrimination and Low Expectations.

All three respondents felt discriminated against within their extended families. Lynette's aunt and uncle were sure she would turn out just like her mother. Peter's mother's family discriminated against her darker children. Madeline's father barely acknowledged her existence. All three were labeled failures, looked down upon, and expected to fail.

In addition, Peter and Lynette's development was significantly influenced by racism. Chronic poverty, living in publicly supported housing projects, and school failure are all found disproportionately among racial minorities. For most of their lives, Peter and Lynette lived in housing projects and in poor, high crime neighborhoods. At the time, poverty was declining among whites but increasing among racial minorities (Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990). Furthermore, the school district they attended was besieged by complaints about its seeming

inability to educate African American youth, especially African American males (Disproportionality Task Force, 1990).

Turning to peers

The respondents turned to their peer groups to escape the dysfunction of their families and the boredom of school. By middle school, they were deeply connected to friends who used alcohol and other drugs, committed burglaries, shoplifted, stole cars, got into fights, and had sex.

For Peter and Madeline their peer groups were particularly important. Peter's involvement in a gang was a vehicle for him to explore his ethnic identity and see himself as a powerful. For Madeline, her friends were her means for getting drunk.

Internal Models

Despite their involvement with antisocial peers and lifestyles, they were not unswerving in their commitment to the norms of their peer groups. Peter and Lynette didn't use the drugs they sold, and Madeline stuck to alcohol because using drugs would make her feel like she was "bad."

In addition, all three vehemently stressed that they did not want to be like their parents. Peter knew he didn't want to be an addict like his mother, a playboy like his father, or poor like both of them. Madeline responded to her father's dislike of women and her mother's passivity by being tougher and trying to prove she was "as good as anyone." Lynette reacted to her mother's victimization and alcoholism by developing a steely determination not to be victimized.

It is not unusual for teenagers to pull away from their parents. Some psychologists see it as a normal rite of passage (Erikson, 1963). Yet for these respondents it seems to be a more powerful driving force than it is for most. It signifies their strong desire to be in control, to have power and to direct their own lives.

Included in their desire to pull away was their strong sense that they had a future. All three said that they always thought they would grow up to be "somebody," not necessarily someone rich and famous, but definitely someone who was different than they were as adolescence. They saw getting in trouble as a stage, not a lifestyle.

Getting out of Trouble:
Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Although the respondents stopped getting into trouble at different developmental stages, the progression of their change was the same. First, a crisis or series of crises triggered a decision to change. Then, the respondents' families and friends rallied around them, and their initial efforts to change were reinforced by success.

Peter

In Peter's late teens he began to feel dissatisfied with his life. Being in a gang didn't completely fill his need to belong and be loved as he once hoped it would. So, in what he describes as another attempt to find "something to love," he decided to have a "Black baby." From his perspective having a Black son would solidify his racial identity and give him "an excuse" to leave the gang. So he actively searched for a Black woman to "have a child with." He found her and became a parent at 19.

He swore he would be the kind of father he had always wanted but never had. He was going to be there for his son, get out of the gang, and straighten up. But it was not until a year later, when he was slapped by a series of crises that he began to translate his words into practice.

Crisis. When Peter was nearly 20 he came home to find his mother on the floor, dead from a heroin overdose. He fell into despair, quit going to church, and began drinking heavily. He simply didn't care about anything. Shortly thereafter he was arrested for possession of a controlled substance. Although he was in jail for only four days, he hated it and swore he would never go back.

When he was released he tried to limit his criminal activity. However, one night, when he was driving around, one of his friends decided to shoot at someone and the person returned the fire. For the first time Peter realized he couldn't be around his gang friends and stay out of trouble. He understood that they didn't "really care" about his welfare. If they had they would have listened when he said he didn't want to be involved in a drive-by shooting. Furthermore, he knew that his friends' "stupidity" could have killed him, and this recognition began to loosen his internal ties to the gang.

The next crisis occurred not long after he was released from jail. The parents of his son's mother took him to court to terminate his parental rights. They didn't want him to be able to see their daughter or grandson ever again. The hearing was ugly, but for the first time in years Peter was able to control his temper. Rich explains:

> In the courtroom Peter and Sadie [his sister] were sitting there... the grandmother was sitting behind them with her Bible praying out loud calling Peter a devil, calling their mother a devil. Talking about basically she deserved to die.... talking about the needle in her veins... And Peter sat there and he didn't turn around... He didn't acknowledge it and kept focus on visitation for Jason [his son].

Rich sees this as the first indication of Peter's changing attitude. Instead of "just knocking her out" Peter did what he needed to do for his son. His self-control served him well, the judge granted him visitation rights. Yet he knew he would be hauled back to court if he didn't straighten out.

Peter understood that there was a connection between his behavior and his ability to be a father. If he stayed with his friends, he would end up in jail. If he was in jail he could lose his son. As he said:

> I cannot sell drugs anymore… knowing that if I ever do anything like that again, then I am going to be gone for a long time. I'll never be able to be there for my son … You know I love him. He deserves everything. I can't give him everything if I'm not here.

Family support. After Peter's mother died, Rich and his sister joined together to support him. Once their mother's estate was settled, they pooled their portion of the inheritance and used it to sustain Peter until he could get on his feet. They had just enough money to pay his rent for a year, buy a beat-up ca,r and help pay for his tuition if he would go back to school. At first Peter took advantage of their generosity. He continued to kick it with his buddies and didn't take the idea of going back to school very seriously.

Still, Rich and Sadie stuck with him. They invited him and his son to spend weekends at their homes. Almost every day one or the other would call just to check in. Occasionally, Sadie would stop by and bring him food.

However, there were limits to Rich and Sadie's generosity. Rich would not let Peter move in with him and his fiancé. He told Peter that he did not want to wake up in the middle of the night with his apartment being raided by the police. In addition, there was a time limit on how long they could support Peter. After a year, when their mother's money ran out, Peter would be on his own.

Rich and Sadie's consistent support at a time of extreme vulnerability strengthened the bond between Peter and his siblings, and this bond provided Peter with some of the motivation he needed to change. As he says, "These are two people that have always been supportive of me regardless of whatever I've done and I don't want to let them down."

Not only did Peter care about and want to please Rich and Sadie, he admired them. Spending time with their families gave him a picture of what he wanted for himself. He explains:

> They have ultimately what I want. I want to have a child and be married. I want to be able to provide a home for my family and have just one special person in my life. They have that. They're somebody I can look at and say I would aspire to what they have.

In summary, the bond between Peter and his siblings includes social and emotional ties that encourage him to care about what they think about him and expect from him. In this respect he has incorporated their standards for acceptable behavior into his self-definition. He wants to be like them. He wants what they have: stability, a good job, a nice home and car, and an ability to provide for his family.

A girlfriend. While Rich and Sadie were trying to prop Peter up after the death of their mother, Peter's old girlfriend, Tiko, came back into his life. After dating briefly, they moved in together, and over the next three years Tiko exposed Peter to a different kind of life. She was in college and had a job. Her friends were involved in everything from martial arts to political activism. She "opened a lot of doors" for him. For example, when he needed a job, a friend of hers helped him get one with the city.

Perhaps more importantly, Tiko nurtured Peter's belief in himself. When he had doubts about his ability to accomplish something, be it going to school, getting a job, or joining a martial arts class, Tiko encouraged him. To Peter, this was particularly important because she had known him when he was involved with the gang. She knew how he "really was" and still believed in him. Peter attributes much of his success to her. "If it wasn't for her I wouldn't be in school. If it wasn't for her I wouldn't be working for the city," he says

Being a parent. It wasn't just because of Tiko, Rich, and Sadie that Peter changed his life. In explaining why he decided to go back to school and get a job, Peter consistently refers to his son, Jason. Peter believes the most important thing he can do with his life is to "set a standard" for his son. So, although Jason lives with his mother, Peter takes a very active role in his life. He spends every weekend and several weeks in the summer with Jason, pays child support, and regularly talks to Jason's mother about childrearing issues.

He doesn't want to be like the men on his father's side of the family who are "content with just surviving." He wants more for his son. He wants Jason to have what he didn't: a nice home with "furniture that matches," a father with a decent job, and parents who are married. He wants his son to be proud to bring his friends home.

In summary, Peter's relationship with his family provided him with the motivation he needed to go to school, work and quit selling drugs. Peter explains:

> It's like if you don't have anybody that loves you... it's easy not to care about anybody else... I had a brother and sister who loved me unconditionally, and I had a son that loved me unconditionally. I had things to live for... I had more to love, to think about, than being behind bars.

Being successful. Love may have ignited Peter's desire to change, but he still found it difficult to take advantage of the opportunity that Rich and Sadie gave him. He simply didn't know what to do with their offer to send him to school. He had gotten his GED during an earlier attempt to change, but he had no job experience. He wasn't interested in pursuing any particular career, he didn't think he had any special talent, and he had no idea what he would study if he went to school.

That was before Rich introduced him to computers. Initially they played games together on-line, but soon it became clear that Peter had a natural ability in

this arena. So with Rich and Sadie's encouragement Peter enrolled in a technical institute.

Peter is currently studying to be a computer programmer, with a particular emphasis on computer networking. He plans to complete his coursework this year and go on to become a Microsoft-Certified-Technician. Although he has found his coursework challenging, his hard work has paid off. He is on the honor roll, and his success encourages him to sustain his efforts. As he says:

> Now I have expectations of myself and I expect more of me. So I take the time to learn the stuff and study. You know I want to get good grades because I can... I feel good when I get good grades. I want to do good... I am proud of it.

Who he is now. Peter's success is somewhat precarious. He struggles with self-doubts. At times is overcome with the realization that other people his age had opportunities he didn't, and these opportunities have paved the road for their success. In addition, Peter is struggling to come to terms with what it means to be a Black man working in profession that is dominated by Whites.

It is hard for him to reconcile his current lifestyle with his past. At times, he asks himself:

> Am I pretending to myself to be something I am not? It is so far-fetched in my mind for me to be doing what I am doing right now. I'm in school, working in a professional atmosphere, and troubleshooting networks. It's just never something I could imagine for myself.

Peter's self-doubts are compounded by his belief that his "real" self is "not really nice," that his real self is a gang member.

The difference between Peter and his classmates reinforces this belief. For the most part, they were raised in a world that is foreign to Peter. He cites differences between himself and a White male that he goes to college to represent this disparity:

> He wakes up in the morning and turns on CNBC and invests until it is time to go to school... He's telling me about these investments he's made and stocks he's buying, stock tips and stuff like that. And I'm telling him I can't even comprehend what (he's) talking about because nobody has ever shown me anything like that... He has people around him. He's surrounded with people that only know success. He can't help but follow in their footsteps ...

The fact that no one has ever shown Peter "what the right thing is" leaves him feeling uncomfortable and resentful.

Edwards and Polite (1992) acknowledge that "making the crossing from a Black environment to a White one has always been a tricky maneuver in America, for it usually means wading through the troubled waters of racism, climbing the slimy banks of discrimination, and getting past the border patrols who still demand proof of worth" (p.116). Like other Blacks who navigate these waters,

Peter doesn't dwell on race, but he does acknowledge that race colors nearly all of his interactions with others, particularly with Whites.

In school and on the Internet Peter has seen White people's fear, distrust, discomfort, and disdain for blacks. In school his teachers don't give him the time and energy they give his White counterparts, and they don't appear to believe that he is serious about his studies. Sometimes this infuriates Peter, and he wants to quit, but most of the time he uses his anger as motivation to work harder. For him, performing well and getting on the honor roll is his revenge.

Success doesn't erase the resentment he feels. He says he doesn't think that all Whites are bad, but he often doesn't like the way Whites treat him. He believes his presence frequently makes them uncomfortable, and they think racist thoughts even though they would never say so to his face.

His experience with racism has reinforced his identification with and pride in being Black. As he says, "If you ask me what I am, I don't say I'm Black and White, I say I'm Black." However, he has not found a successful Black man to serve as a model or mentor to him. In this way, leaving the gang has left a hole in his life.

Lynette

One Saturday morning, when Lynette was 15 and pregnant, she and two friends set off for a daring, although routine, adventure. They went to a department store to shoplift clothes. But this time something went wrong. When they walked out of the store, the police were waiting to take them to juvenile detention.

At first, Lynette thought it wouldn't be so bad. Many of her friends and several of her cousins had been in detention and had told her it was "great." So she thought, "it would be fun," a place where she could hang out with her friends. Instead, it was "the worst five days" of her life. It was the feeling of being controlled that bothered her the most and caused her to decide, "This isn't anything I want to be a part of." So when her mother came to court and agreed to have Lynette released into her custody, Lynette was consumed with relief. Just knowing that her mother was "still there" for her regardless of what she had done filled her with gratitude.

Lynette's family rallies. After Lynette was released from detention, she and her mother tackled the issue of her pregnancy. Alice, Lynette's mother, didn't get mad or judge Lynette. Instead she said, "The problem is kinda done, so let's just deal with it."

Lynette wanted to have an abortion, but Alice discouraged it. She told Lynette this was "her first grandbaby" and that she wanted it. Somehow, the combination of Lynette's father moving in with the family and having a grandchild stimulated Alice to cut back on her drinking and take more responsibility for parenting. For example, she took Lynette to all of her prenatal visits and was there when the baby was delivered.

After Lavon was born, Lynette's family pulled together and supported her. The expectation was that the entire family would help her to go back to school, get a job, and raise her son. First, her mother and sister taught her how to take care of a baby. Then, after she was back on her feet, Lynette went to school to get her GED while her father, who was working the graveyard shift, took care of Lavon.

After Lynette got her GED, her father got her a job cleaning airplanes. She was making $8.00 an hour, hated the job, and knew she was going nowhere. So she decided to go to a technical college where she could learn how to be a secretary. She went to school in the evening from 5 to 11 and worked from 11:30 at night to 7 in the morning. Her father and grandmother took turns babysitting.

In addition to providing Lynette with concrete support, her family gave her emotional sustenance. When Lynette became discouraged, her grandmother would console and advise her. Her mother was always there to listen and offer encouragement. Lynette remembers, "She was never negative about anything I wanted to do. She always told me I could do it.... She probably thought to herself there's no way, but she always told me I could do it. My sister was the same way. When what I wanted to do seemed impossible, she was willing to help me try to do it."

Without the support of her family it would have been exceptionally difficult for Lynette to raise her son, complete her GED, graduate from a technical college, and work. As she says, my family has "been there for me all the way. They are the only people I can give credit for what I have today."

Having a baby. It was not just the support she received from her family that encouraged Lynette her to "straighten her life out." It was also having a baby. She recalls, "The day he was born I just kinda looked at this baby, thinking this is my child. I have to, you know, I have to feed this baby and cloth this baby... It was time to be responsible because I had somebody... I had a purpose."

It would have been easy for Lynette to turn the job of parenting over to her family, but both she and her parents were clear that this was her son. When she wasn't at work or at school she was expected to be with Lavon. He became "number one" in her life, and she made her decisions based on what she thought would be good for him. She stopped hanging out with her old friends because they, "just slowed [her] down" instead of pushing her forward. She knew she had to do whatever it took to take care of her son because it was her responsibility to "give him a little bit more" than what she had been given.

She finds a partner. For four years after Lavon's birth, Lynette rarely dated. She didn't trust men. She believed men "just kind of use you for a little while and then they are done with you and just move on to the next person." She thought she would never get married.

Then, when she was 19, she met her future husband, Henry, at her cousin's wedding. Neither Lynette nor her extended family members could

believe he would be interested in her. After all he had money, a nice car, and a good job. She said she knew she wasn't on his level because she was "kind of ghetto" while he was not. She knew she was going to eventually get to his level, but she wasn't there yet.

Interested in her he was, and for nearly three years, while Lynette lived with her parents, they dated. Then, when Lynette was 21, she, Lavon and Henry moved in to a two-bedroom apartment. Everything was fine until Lynette got pregnant. Henry wanted to stay in the apartment and be boyfriend and girlfriend, while Lynette wanted to buy a house, settle down, and become a family. They were at an impasse. Lynette moved out, had an abortion, and began saving to buy her own house. She knew she needed more than Henry was offering. As she says, "It really takes having a settled life for (me) to be really happy."

Eventually, Henry relented. They bought a house and moved in together. Ever since Henry has treated Lynette "like a queen." They have become a team that share a deep determination to succeed. Every New Years Eve they set goals, and develop a plan for how to achieve them. Then they post the goals on their refrigerator. For the most part, the goals center on their family and doing wha it takes to assure its well-being. They recently finished construction on a four-bedroom house, and she explains, "I finally have my house and my kids have their own rooms and they have a big backyard. I'm happy. I have the kitchen I want. I'm truly happy." It isn't just that she has the material possessions that she has longed for. She also has the "settled life" that she has always wanted.

Ambition and success. A theme of ambition runs through Lynette's story. Even when she was a child living in a housing project she knew she would eventually have a house. As she says, "there was no doubt that eventually I would get it... eventually I would be owning something that was mine."

Once Lynette decided she was going to do whatever it took to take care of her son, she met with immediate success. She completed her GED quickly and without a lot of effort. Shortly thereafter she went to a technical college. Although it was hard to work, go to school and parent, Lynette did not find her coursework to be overly demanding.

After she graduated she found a job with a temp agency. They placed her in a business that needed someone to stuff envelopes. After a few days, the business offered her a full-time position as a receptionist, and she has stayed with this company for five years. She has been promoted through the ranks fairly quickly, first to inside sales and more recently to purchasing. She says she has learned that "there is nothing I can't do if I try hard enough."

Racism. This is not to say that Lynette's success has been straightforward. Not only has she had to push through the exhaustion of going to school, working, and raising a small child, she has had to contend with racism. She is the only Black person in the company that she works for, and for a long time she felt like she wasn't accepted, like she didn't belong. She didn't have

much in common with the other employees. In the lunchroom, they talked about their houses, gardening, and things that had never been a part of Lynette's life. Because she didn't know what to talk to them about, she kept to herself.

On the job, she felt like everybody was watching to see what she was going to do. She knew she "had to be better than everybody else" just to prove she belonged. For example, one day she told a co-worker that she was tired and really just didn't feel like being there that day. He responded by saying, "You know what? If you weren't here, you'd probably be flipping burgers somewhere." Lynette was furious.

When she got home she called her grandmother for advice. Her grandmother said, "Lynette, don't act the way they expect you to act... Just hang in there, Lynette, and do what you have to do. Get the experience and if you want to move on, you do that." So that's what she did. She worked hard to prove to him that she was "not the person he thought (she) was." Now, years later, he knows she is capable and has recommended her for a promotion.

Nevertheless, the feeling that she has to prove herself in ways that White people do not takes its toll. Edwards and Polite (1992) explain:

> Unlike Whites, for whom success is frequently a matter of contacts, connections, family combinations, and in the end simply the circumstance of being born White, Black success seems always to carry certain prerequisites, chief among them the requirement that a black first prove he or she is "qualified" for achievement. The very notion of becoming qualified, of course, assumes an element of deficiency, a lacking of skills, training, values, talent, or intellect that ordinarily renders one fit for accomplishment. But this idea of becoming qualified, of being made "fit for success," as it were, is yet another psychological assault to black aspirations, and one that has been frequently used to undermine much of the integrationist thrust for equal opportunity. It is the old notion of black inferiority updated for an era of liberal sentiment" (p.77).

Lynette is trying to help her son to deal with the discrimination he will face throughout his life by sending him to school at the African American Academy. She hopes the academy will pass on her grandmother's lesson about perseverance while bolstering his sense of racial pride. At the academy he sees "that what he hears on the news" isn't all there is to know, not all Black people "smoke dope and do drugs, and kill all the time." The principal and teachers at the academy are Black, and provide Lavon with role models that "show him that he can do it." In addition Lynette believes the academy gives him a place, a sense of belonging, and the recognition he deserves for the hard work he does. She does not believer these qualities are accessible to young Blacks in mainstream schools.

<u>**Who she is now**</u>. Lynette is a confident and determined woman. She lives the lessons Sherril taught her long ago: "take care of yourself," and "go for

what you want." Her "bottom line in life is to be happy." She has learned that "you can't let what other people do stop you from what you want to do or you'll get nowhere."

However, Lynette's determination and success have come with a personal cost. She does not have friends outside of her family, and others often feel like she is "stuck-up." In part this is because she is so busy; in part it is because she needs to be in control. There is a self-admitted hardness to her. She "doesn't accept excuses" and doesn't "trust anybody until they prove to her that she has reason to trust them."

Still, within the confines of her family she is very happy. Her husband, her children, her parents, her grandmother, and her sister create a nurturing community where she is loved and supported. She has the life she has worked so hard to build.

Madeline

The summer after Madeline's sophomore year in high school, she was at a party and got "totally drunk." She hooked up with "a regular guy" who said he would walk her home. On the way he raped her.

During the trial, the defense attorney portrayed her as a drunken tramp, an image that was reinforced by the court's verdict. The jury failed to convict on the rape charge because of "the circumstances leading up to it." In spite of the fact that she had been penetrated and he had used force, he was not guilty because she was drunk. No one, except her mother, would come to Madeline's defense, not even her closest friends.

The rape and the trial planted seeds of doubt in Madeline's mind. As she listened to the defense attorney rail about her drinking she began to doubt herself. As she heard her antiauthority, hard partying persona described in the courtroom, she started thinking, "maybe being drunk wasn't all that it's cut out to be."

She recognized that she could not stay sober and change her life in a town where she had such a public and entrenched reputation. She wanted to wipe the slate clean and get a fresh start. So she asked her mother if she could move to a nearby town and live with a family who was willing to let her stay with them while she finished high school. With fear and trepidation, her mother let her go.

Negative example. Madeline moved in with a single mother and her five children. The house was filthy and squalid. "There were six weeks of dishes piled up all the time. It was disgusting." In this environment Madeline crystallized her vision of what she did not want to become. She had already recognized that she didn't want to be like her father because the "lifestyle that he had lived… never took him anywhere." Now she humbly acknowledged that one of the daughters in the house where she was living, the one who was "into cocaine" and "smoked crack throughout her whole pregnancy," epitomized what she would become if she continued in the direction she was going. These images fueled her desire to change.

However, Madeline recognized that she needed more than desire. She needed help. She turned to self-help books, voraciously reading about alcoholism and depression. In them she found a sense of belonging and hope; she was not the only one with these problems and there were solutions.

Madeline gains an advocate, a role model and stability. While Madeline struggled to understand her problems, she found an ally in a high school English teacher. Mr. Bolton was one of the first teachers Madeline had in her new high school. They connected through a shared passion for literature and writing. In class he used literature to teach his students "about life," about "keeping strong and going places." Madeline vividly remembers realizing she had finally met a teacher she could identify with. There was someone who shared her perspective, someone who could understand what she was trying to say, someone she could relate to. The sense of alienation and loneliness that had formed Madeline's hard shell began to soften.

It seemed to Madeline that Mr. Bolton made a special effort to seek her out. He spent extra time with her before school, after school, and during lunch. He was available. He would pull her aside to talk about English or how her day was going. She knew he liked her, and sensed that he was aware of her problems even though they never explicitly talked about them.

Mr. Bolton became a forceful character in Madeline's life, in part, because he never made her look back, never asked her to talk about her problems. His focus was on her future. He treated Madeline the way she "wanted to be viewed… as an intelligent, beautiful young woman with lots ahead of (her)." He stressed that she was getting ready to graduate, and he talk to her seriously about college, about "bachelor's degrees and master's degrees and doctorate degrees." No one had ever suggested that she could go to college, that she could be successful.

Mr. Bolton was not only Madeline's champion, but her protector as well. For example, during the second semester of Madeline's senior year, she clashed with a rigid authority figure whose attitude was "if you don't see it my way, you're wrong." The collision was inevitable; he threw her out of his class. If he didn't take her back she wouldn't pass senior English and wouldn't graduate. She turned to Mr. Bolton. He listened to her and gave her the benefit of the doubt, placing her in his junior English class and calling it senior English. What Madeline remembers about this incident and about Mr. Bolton in general was that he was willing to "look at you as an individual. He looked at what you really needed and where it really fit," rather than focusing on "the hoops you have to jump through."

Success. While Madeline was going to school she was also working for a manufacturing company. She was a "little runabout secretary," responsible for Xeroxing, running errands and getting coffee. In this job she found the fresh start she had been looking for. No one had a preconceived notion that she was going

to have problems. They treated her "like an adult," and "never talked down to (her)." She remembers:

> I fed off of that. I loved it... I felt like I was -- I was worthwhile. You know, I felt that I really had a worth to them. They totally appreciated me. And they fought over who got what time in what division or department. They're like, 'no, no. We get her here.' And it made me want to work even harder and made me want to do even better. And that's what I would do. I wanted to make everybody happy. I wanted to make sure I did everything exactly right. And I loved that. I loved going to work. It was just great.

Before Madeline graduated, the president of the company called her in and offered her a full-time position.

Madeline's other success was more difficult to achieve. It was a hard-fought victory. At her high school graduation she received the award for "the most improved" student. She defines this as her "first real success." She remembers that, for the first time, she was able to imagine that she could be successful. Her problems hadn't followed her. She had "made such a great improvement from point A to point B" that she could imagine doing great things in the future.

In several respects this was a turning point for Madeline. She had set a goal, worked hard, and achieved it. She had lived the kind of story that Mr. Bolton had read in class, a story of persistence and overcoming obstacles. Although she still felt an intense need to prove that she was "just as great as everybody else," she had found a different way to do it. She no longer had to be the tough girl, the outlaw. Instead she could prove herself by accomplishing something.

The Navy. After graduating from high school, Madeline enlisted in the Navy. In boot camp her commanding officer, Officer Herbanak, became Madeline's mentor and model. In her, Madeline found a woman who could show her how to be powerful. She was "a wonderful woman" who "was making it in a man's world." She was everything Madeline wanted to be.

Officer Herbanak warned Madeline about the opposition she would face in the Navy. The way she framed her warning included a redefinition of Madeline's "problem with authority." The problem was not just Madeline, but also the way people responded to powerful women. Madeline didn't need to change who she was. Instead, she needed to learn how to deal with people who didn't like strong women. By reframing the problem, Officer Herbanak allowed Madeline to keep her sense of self-worth, while still acknowledging her need to change.

In addition, Officer Herbanak used herself as an example. She would tell Madeline, "When I was first in the military and I was having a hard time, this is how I dealt with it," implying that this is a how strong woman handles these kinds of situations. She used herself to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes that

empowered Madeline intellectually, socially and emotionally (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Finally, Officer Herbanak knew that the chip on Madeline's shoulder made her an easy target for harassment. So she put her in a position where she would be somewhat shielded from her fellow enlistees and other officers, and could use her love of reading. Madeline's job was to help other recruits prepare for their exams. As a result she did exceptionally well on her tests, graduating from boot camp "with the second highest score out of all the company."

Becoming clean and sober. Madeline found her future husband in the Navy. Although she was already engaged to another man when she met him, he became her rock. She broke her engagement and married him. After they were discharged they moved to the town where he was raised in order to be close to his strong, traditional Catholic family. He got a job as a police officer. He knew that she was impulsive and set limits on her behavior. If she wanted something that was "reasonable" he would "let her" have it or do it. He was the head of the family, and she was his willing wife.

By the time Madeline was 21 her life appeared idyllic. She had a good job, was married to a stable man who loved her, and had a beautiful daughter. No longer was she going from man to man in rapid succession.

Yet there was still one problem, she was drinking heavily. It had gotten to the point where she "wanted to start drinking the first thing in the morning," and she would drink an entire box of wine by herself on any given weekend. Then one morning she woke up and, "could not remember putting her (daughter) to bed." Although she had tried to cutback on her drinking many times in the past, this was the first time she admitted that she was an alcoholic and needed help. She didn't want her daughter to remember her as a drunk, so she turned to her husband and told him "I know I have a problem. I need to stop drinking, and I need you to help me."

The first year of sobriety was the hardest. Madeline experienced an unrelenting internal battle, "I want a drink. No. I want a drink. No. I want a drink. No." When she tried to convince herself that she "could just have one drink," her husband would say, "I don't think you can" and remind her of the "ugly person" she became when she drank.

One of the hardest challenges of her sobriety was figuring out what to tell people. She didn't want other people to label her as a drunk. She didn't become comfortable with her sobriety until she "realized that it was okay to tell people that [she] didn't drink," without telling them why.

Who she is now. Madeline's story seems to revolve around her relationship with authority. Today, she seems comfortable with being strong woman. No longer does she feel she has to choose between being passive or aggressive. Her work as a dispatcher in a large police department provides an outlet for her need to be powerful, and to exert leadership. At the same time she

is comfortable in a traditional marriage where her husband is head of the household.

Madeline has redirected her need to prove that she is "as good as anyone." It no longer means being tougher than others. Now it means graduating from college. No one thought she would even graduate from high school, much less college, and she wants to prove to herself and to the world that she can. At times she even dreams of getting her Ph.D. Then people would have to call her doctor, convincing everyone, including herself, that she had "really accomplished something." Consequently, she unrelentingly pushes herself to manage a high-wire act of juggling work, school, and family.

However, like Peter, Madeline's future may be somewhat precarious. She has surrounded herself with external authorities: her police officer husband, his strong Catholic family, and her job in the police department. They provide her with the structure she acknowledges she needs. However, she is not sure she could impose this structure on herself if they were not around. For example, it is her husband who tells her what she can spend when they go gambling. If it were not for him she says she would be out of control. Until she incorporates an inner sense of authority and structure into her own definition of herself, she may remain vulnerable to acting out in self-destructive ways.

Driving Forces in Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood: Variations on a Theme

These three respondents reference a series of events they suggest were catalysts for change. In each case the events were life altering, as if the respondents needed to have the rug pulled out from under them before they could redefine their lives. A crisis awoke in them the knowledge that they were sick of their lives. For Peter and Lynette it was the reality of jail. For Peter it was also the profound loss that came with the death of his mother. And for Madeline, it was the painful circumstances and the aftermath of her rape. For all three it was the understanding that the friends they thought would provide a sense of belonging and caring were not really friends at all.

Protective Relationships Support Change

Nearly all of the other individuals in this study have had crises similar to those experienced by Peter, Lynette and Madeline. Six of the eight have been in juvenile detention or jail, five had children when they were in their teens, and three of the four women have been raped. Although a crisis may be necessary to motivate change, it is not sufficient to cause change.

For these three individuals it was, at least in part, the support they received after the crisis that facilitated change. Both Peter and Lynette found significant on-going support in their families. It was Peter's brother and sister who came to his rescue after his mother death, providing him with emotional support, rent, food, a car and tuition. Lynette's family provided her with room and board, and

childcare after the birth of her son. In addition, both found romantic partners who believed in and supported them. In short, they received an all-encompassing, on-going, profound level of support from a few people with whom they had intimate relationships. In some cases this support was a continuation of support that had been established a long time ago. Their siblings' early assistance during Peter and Lynette's childhoods was called on and built upon during their time of crisis.

This was not true for Madeline. Her support was more varied and came from more people: her mother, teacher, commanding officer, and husband. With the exception of her husband, the support was time limited and specific. Her mother supported her through the rape. Her teacher helped her get through high school, and her commanding officer showed her how to be a powerful woman in a man's world.

It is interesting to note the differences in the arenas where support was provided. Neither of the African American respondents, Peter and Lynette, perceived support from people who worked in mainstream institutions, from teachers and employers. This is in spite of the fact that Peter has been successful at school, and Lynette has been fairly rapidly promoted at work.

On the other hand Madeline, a European American, got most of her support from authority figures that worked in mainstream institutions (i.e., school, a job, and the Navy). It is not until she got married that she experienced the encompassing support of a family. It may be that her race and socialization in the norms of Navy life made it easier for authority figures to relate to her. There may have been a "goodness of fit," a match between Madeline and the demands of the social context, that was absent for Peter and Lynette (Thomas & Chess, 1984).

Multicultural scholars have long suggested that individuals who come from cultural backgrounds that are different from the mainstream, those who posses different qualities, languages or dialects, behaviors and knowledge, are often viewed as 'culturally deprived' or 'disadvantaged' tend to do less well in mainstream institutions (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Knapp & Woolverton, 1995; Polakow, 1993; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). Some suggest that this cultural difference leads to a divide where the representatives of mainstream institutions find these individuals inadequate, and the individuals find the institutions oppressive. Both establish negative expectations for each other and, having established such expectations, act them out (Comer, 1980; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; McDermott, 1977). This may be why Peter and Lynette failed to find strong sources of support at school or work.

Common qualities. Despite the differences in the depth, breadth, and arenas of support, common themes run through the respondents' protective relationships. All of the supporters provided the respondents with emotional support, as well as opportunities and high expectations. In addition, each of the supporters had certain qualities or characteristics that the respondents admired and wanted to emulate.

Each supporter encouraged, nurtured, listened to, and advised the respondents. Rich encouraged Peter to stay in school even when he wanted to quit. Lynette's grandmother consoled and advised her when she faced racism at her job. Madeline's mother "puffed up like mother hen," protecting her daughter after she was raped.

In addition, each supporter provided opportunities that made success attainable. Peter and Lynette's families freed them from the burden of paying for basic necessities, which allowed them to go to school. Peter's girlfriend helped him find a job, and Lynette's husband showed her what it takes to be a successful businessperson. Madeline's high school English teacher fashioned a class for her so she could graduate from high school, and her commanding officer assigned her to a job where she knew Madeline could succeed.

Although the support and opportunities were given freely, each of the supporters had the expectation that the respondent would take advantage of what they were given. Peter and Lynette had to go to school and work in order to get financial support from their families. Madeline had to complete her senior paper before she could graduate.

Finally, each of the supporters provided the respondent with a desirable picture of a different way to live. Peter's sibling's marriages epitomized the kind of life Peter wanted to create for his son. Derrick's financial success and strong ethnic identity mirrored what Lynette wanted for herself and her son. Madeline's commanding officer was the powerful woman who was making it in a man's world that she wanted to become.

Success Supports Change.

The support of others was a crucial aspect of the respondents' willingness and ability to change, but it was not the only factor. When Peter, Lynette and Madeline took their first steps down their new path they were reinforced by the experience of being successful. Peter became a skilled martial artist, got his GED, and was on the honor roll in a technical college. Lynette got her GED, graduated from a technical college, and earned regular promotions in her job. Madeline did well at her after-school job, graduated from high school, and graduated from boot camp with honors. None of them failed at their initial attempts to change.

It is possible that their stories would not have been as bright or their resolve not as strong had their first experiences been met with failure. Early success at a task that did not require a monumental effort (i.e., being a "roundabout secretary" or completing a GED) may well have been necessary to encourage them to take on a more difficult challenge.

Skills Support Change.

Over the past 10 years, Peter, Lynette and Madeline have developed a wide array of interpersonal and coping skills that have helped them succeed in mainstream endeavors. They are articulate, socially skilled individuals who

appear to have learned what Delpit (1988) calls "the rules of power," ways of talking, dressing, writing and interacting that are used by people who are in power. For example, each has been able to get and hold a job, and succeed in post-secondary education.

In addition, they have devised strategies for dealing with the personal and cultural insults that they face. For example, in their jobs and at school, Peter and Lynette accept the old adage "living well is the best revenge." However, in their personal lives, they scrupulously avoid individuals who do not share their cultural and ethnic background.

In addition, all three have spent considerable time thinking about their lives, why they are who they are and who they want to become. They have "learned from their parents' mistakes," set goals for themselves, and made conscious decisions to move away from the friends and family they define as dysfunctional. Once they set their goals, they persist in their pursuit, using obstacles to solidify their resolve. The "fuck-you" attitude of adolescence has been transformed into "I'll show them." Now, as they experience success, they express a childlike glee in laughing at those who thought they would fail.

Internal Models Support Change

The crises faced by these respondents and the assistance they were given appear to have shaped their internal models in ways that support their efforts to change. These internal models include vivid pictures of what the respondents' do and don't want and why.

Negative example. As adults, Peter, Lynette and Madeline know, with absolute certainty, what they do not want to be. They do not want to be like their parents. Lynette and Madeline do not want to be passive women who are easily victimized. Peter doesn't want to be an addict or someone who is content with mere survival. For each, the negative examples presented by their parents have left bad tastes in their mouths, tastes they want to avoid at all costs. Furthermore, the crises they experienced reinforced their distaste. Peter and Lynette do not want to be in jail, and Madeline doesn't want to be a "drunken tramp."

Desire. Yet for Peter and Lynette, their primary motivation is not to avoid something but to achieve something. They know what they want: they want to create a good life for their children. Their children give them a reason for living, a purpose beyond themselves. They both have a compelling desire to be good role models and to provide their children with a life of economic ease. They can imagine a future for themselves that is different from the life they led growing up. They want the house and white picket fence, and they are willing to work hard to get it.

Madeline, on the other hand, does not talk about her children as her primary reason for living. This is not to say that she doesn't love them or want what is best for them, she does. However, she is not driven to achieve the level of success that Lynette and Peter hope to attain. She is content with her present

lifestyle, although she is determined to finish her bachelor's degree one course at a time.

Having a purpose. Finally, Peter and Lynette seem to have come to believe that their lives have a greater purpose. In both cases, that purpose lies in their relationships with their families. First and foremost it is about their obligation to their children. As Lynette says, "When (I) got pregnant my life changed. I don't know. Maybe it was because I thought there was going to be someone else that I had to care about, to depend on me."

However, this sense of purpose is about more than parenting, it is about being a member of a family. Peter sums it up:

> It's like if you don't have anybody that loves you... It is easy not to care about anyone else because they probably don't even care about themselves. Any why should they want anything more for themselves? Because they don't have anybody around that loves them... I had people. That is something that a lot of people don't have is family.

Because they are deeply connected to their families and their families have supported them, both feel an obligation to succeed and to give back. Now it is Lynette who takes care of her older sister Sherril, giving her and her four children a place to stay when they were homeless.

The price.

Each of the respondents has their internal struggles. Peter fights to convince himself that he belongs in the professional world. Lynette shields herself with a wall of determination that makes others shy away. Madeline seems compelled to juggle work, school and family and expects excellence in all three. Yet these struggles do not appear to have the power to unhinge their lives. It may be that in having resolved other struggles they are less frightened of and more able to manage the dilemmas they currently face. They are, by their own admission, fulfilled and happy.

Summary

In late adolescence and early adulthood, the direction of Peter, Lynette and Madeline's developmental trajectories changed. First a series of crises ignited their desire to change. In response to this spark, they acted. Then the environment supported their actions, which in turn fostered more personal change and so on. If the crises, response, or support had been missing their stories might have been quite different.

In addition, it appears as if Peter and Lynette's relationships with their older brother and sister set the stage for change. The experience of being well cared for may have buffered the negative impact of their exposure to family conflict, family management problems,and discrimination. At very least, their siblings acted in ways that reduced the respondents' exposure to these risks.

It may be that some of the respondents' early experiences fostered the development of an internal model that was incongruent with their failure to meet conventional expectations. For example, Peter's success in the highly capable program may have helped him develop an expectation that he would succeed in mainstream society. In addition, his experience in this program may have taught him some of the cognitive and interpersonal skills necessary to succeed in school.

However, these early experiences were not apparent in the respondents' behavior during their adolescence. It took a series of crises to kindle a desire to change, and each had the intrapersonal and cognitive skills to make sense of the crises ,and to determine what needed to be done. They understood that jail, death, pregnancy, rape and betrayal "epitomized what life would be like" if they continued in the direction they were going.

In addition, the respondents needed substantial support to make the necessary changes. Peter and Lynette received an all-encompassing, ongoing, profound level of support from their immediate family and their romantic partners. Madeline's support was more varied and came from more people. For the most part, her supporters helped her for a limited period of time and with a specific developmental task. Madeline appears to have the least serious risks (i.e., no violence or abandonment) and the least amount of encompassing support (i.e., no extended family or sibling to guide her). If her risks were more extreme she might have needed a more enduring and encircling level of support in order to change. It may also be that the support she received across domains provided as much protection as that offered by Peter and Lynette's families and partners.

In summary, the change in each respondent's developmental trajectory was the result of a complex interplay between the individual and the environment. The seeds of change were sown early. A series of crises seems to have prepared the soil. Support and success fostered growth.

APPENDIX F

UNSKILLED, ADDICTED, DEPRESSED AND ANXIOUS AT 25

At age 25 Ron, Simon and Catherine are struggling. Simon and Ron are unemployed, and Catherine is working in a fast food restaurant. They each live with a parent(s) and, during the past three years, each has committed felonies including drug sales, fraud, and assault. In addition, they each have problems with alcohol or other drugs, and have a diagnosable mental illness. Finally, they are frustrated with their lives, and confused about what they should do next.

In this appendix, I examine the similarities and differences in these three individuals' developmental paths. First, I explore the situations and circumstances that shaped their childhood and adolescence and the ways in which these experiences influenced their behavior, internal models and skills. Then I explore how circumstances and the decisions they made perpetuated and deepened their life difficulties in early adulthood. Finally, I conclude with a synopsis of the themes common to all three life-stories.

Early Influences and Their Impact: Childhood and Adolescence

Ron, an African American, and Simon and Catherine are European Americans. All three had childhoods that were full of family conflict, parental alcohol and drug use, and a lack of supervision. Each had difficulties in school and dropped out before they graduated. In addition, all three began using alcohol and other drugs and committing crimes in early adolescence.

Ron

When Ron's adolescent mother became pregnant both sets of parents forced the pair to get married. Within a year they had a second child, Ron. It was a difficult marriage at best. In the beginning Ron's father was in the Navy, but he was dishonorably discharged for stealing from his commanding officer. For the rest of their 15-year marriage his mother worked as a nurse's aide and supported the family.

Consequently Ron's father was his primary caretaker through his childhood. According to both Ron and his mother, his father was a "cruel person, very, very cruel." For example, he pushed Ron down the stairs, leaving a deep gash on his head, which required stitches. In addition he often refused to allow Ron and his sister to play with their friends, wanting them to stay home to keep him company. At times, he would make Ron play videos with him until the early hours of the morning, and still expect him to go to school on time. Ron and his mother believe that his father's erratic behavior was related to his use of crack cocaine, which often consumed most of the family income, and left his mother to wonder "where the next month's rent was coming from."

Ron was afraid of his father, in part, because he regularly beat his wife. On several occasions she left him, but returned when he threatened her or her children with violence. When Ron was eight years old his mother left his father, and his father "kidnapped" the children and took them to Georgia. His mother came back home. When Ron was between 14 and 16, his mother left his father

for good. He never paid child support or visited his children again. Ron knows his father is still around because his sister has seen him on the streets, but he has not had contact with him nor does he want to.

As a single parent and sole support of the family, Ron's mother often worked a double shift, and her kids would "just take off and go." Frequently she was unaware of where they were, what they were doing, or whom they were with. She says she didn't realize Ron was running with wild friends, stealing cars, and using drugs until he was 13 and began to get in trouble at school and with the law.

Extended family. Many of the men in Ron's extended family and in his parents' friendship network were involved in illegal and often violent activities. His Uncle Joe ran an escort service, and many of his other 'uncles' were selling drugs. To Ron, it seemed like everybody he got close to as a child died or had suffered tragic circumstances. From his mother's perspective, all Ron saw from the men in his family and neighborhood was "a lot of fighting and no working."

Yet within this conflict-filled environment there was an island of stability for Ron. His grandparents were always available to him. If he was hungry he knew he could go down to "granny's and get something to eat." His grandparents' home provided a kind of emotional sanctuary. If things were bad he could go there and rest. In contrast to the other arenas in his life, it felt safe.

School and peers. Ron remembers being placed in a program for highly capable children when he was in elementary school. His teachers told him he was smart and would do much better if he would "apply himself," but he thought school was "too easy" and boring. By the time he was in seventh grade he had lost all interest in school. He didn't believe the teachers were saying anything important. They taught about the past and he wanted to be "learning about the future." He responded with defiance: skipping school, swearing at his teachers, and getting into fights. His mother remembers being routinely called by the school to come pick him up because he was being suspended for one infraction or another.

What was important to Ron was his friends and money. He and friends decided the best way to get "quick and easy" money was to sell drugs and steal. At 13 Ron was arrested, for the first time, for stealing a car.

Alcohol and other drugs. Ron says that, from seventh grade on, his life has "revolved around drugs," both using them and selling them. He began drinking and smoking marijuana when he was 13. Since then his use has expanded to include cocaine, ecstasy, and hallucinogenic drugs.

The first indication that Ron's drinking was out of control came when he was 17, when he passed out while walking down the street. His friends called the ambulance, and he was rushed to the hospital where he was treated for alcohol poisoning. When he was released he went home and "slept for two whole days." But after the negative effects wore off he was "back out on the streets again."

Ron remembers thinking that being with his partners and using was better than being sober with his family.

Ambition. Ron believes he has always been smarter, deeper and more mature than his friends. Although he and his friends have been selling drugs since they were in seventh grade, in the back of Ron's mind, he has always known being a "street-corner drug seller" was not what he wanted to be. He believed he could avoid the "trials and tribulations" of dealing if he was smart enough to figure out a "short cut" and become a big dealer.

Selling drugs and stealing cars led Ron to become involved with a gang. He saw the gang as a family of "partners" who would stick together, share whatever they had, and make a lot of money. Together they would open up businesses where they could launder the money from their illegal drug operation. So long as they were loyal to each other they could make it into the big time.

Yet, by the time he was 18, Ron saw that his plans were not working, and he was frustrated. He knew that with the money he had blown partying he could have rented a very nice apartment. But everything "just happened so fast." The money just seemed to vanish. In addition, over time, he discovered that his partners weren't "really friends." They talked behind his back and ripped him off in drug deals. When he was broke, they wouldn't even "spare (him) a dime."

Furthermore, his conscience bothered him. He recognized that his father's cocaine use had been at the root of his family's problems. Yet here he was dealing drugs, "contributing to the demise of other families." His guilt "took a toll" on his life. Yet regardless of the guilt and exhaustion he experienced, Ron continued to immerse himself in drinking, using drugs, and trafficking cocaine.

A lack of opportunities. When Ron looks back and tries to understand why his life has gone in the direction it has, he attributes his difficulties to no one giving him "any breaks." The knowledge that he never had a champion and the belief that society is structured in ways that assures his failure "eats away" at him.

He resents both of his parents. He attributes his "bad attitude as a child" to his father. His father wanted him to play football when he was in junior high school. He loved to play and was excited by the possibility. But his father wouldn't get him the proper equipment. Ron remembers, "you don't even got a real football helmet and you're forced to go play. So it plays a thing on your ego and it plays on your mind." He coped by quitting football and choosing "other roads."

From Ron's perspective, his mother also betrayed him. When Ron turned 18 his mother became ineligible for welfare and low-income housing. So she and Ron moved in with her boyfriend. Within months, Ron was kicked out of the house. As he remembers it, he knew the boyfriend was "not cool." So he kept a close watch on him, and warned his mother that her boyfriend was trying to control her. When the boyfriend realized Ron was on to him, he told Ron's

mother to either get rid of Ron or he would kick her out, leaving her homeless. Ron believes his mother chose her boyfriend over him.

Ron's mother sees this story in a different light. From her perspective the matter was much simpler. She and her boyfriend kicked Ron out because he was sneaking girls into the house and they found crack in his room. After they kicked him out, she tried to help Ron establish a life of his own by paying his rent for six months. In return he was supposed to look for a job. She believes she did everything she could to help him out, yet to this day, the fact that she kicked him out of her home is a grievance that Ron regularly assails her with.

Ron's feelings of having been betrayed extend well beyond his parents to include the government. He asserts that part of the reason why he has never been successful is because he was "raised as a Black child" and he "didn't grow up having any Black presidents…or any person of color in power." In addition, he believes that being Black has inhibited his ability to be a successful drug dealer. After all, he's "never going to be the government who can ship a hundred kilos." Although he was 25 when he did this interview, he used recent newspaper stories about the high percentage of young Black men who end up dead or in prison to support his belief that he was "strictly headed to death before I'm 21 or I'm strictly headed towards the penitentiary."

Oppositional identity. As an adolescent, Ron adopted an oppositional identity. He believes that growing up Black and in poverty cut off his access to conventional paths to power. Therefore it was the only identity open to him that would allow him to have a sense of strength. If he couldn't beat the system, he would "choose other ways to do what [he] wanted to do and accomplish what [he] needed to accomplish." He and his friend decided that they "were not going to go to work for a big corporation when [they] could start [their] own business and have [their] own money flowing in." They were never going to "work for the man."

So, as Ron's adolescence came to a close he was deeply involved in a gang and selling cocaine. He hoped the gang would be the close-knit family he never had, where he and his partners would watch one another's backs and run a successful drug trafficking business.

Simon

Like Ron, Simon's early years were filled with violence. He lived with his mother and father and three younger siblings until his parents divorced. During these years he repeatedly saw his father beat his mother. Simon remembers being eight years old when his father punched her "in the face and cracked her cheekbone." She fell in a ditch by the side of their house and lay there weeping, while Simon looked on consumed by sadness and helplessness. There was nothing he could do to help her without incurring the wrath of his father, whom he was deathly afraid of. It was at that moment that Simon recognized his hatred for his father, a feeling that continues to this day.

Although Simon's father did not "beat" him, he did "spank" him with a paddle and belt. However, Simon was more frightened of his father's emotional cruelty than these spankings. One Christmas, Simon's parents bought him the bicycle he had been begging for. However, the following spring, when his father needed money to follow his latest get-rich scheme, he sold the bike without asking or telling Simon. Simon was devastated.

Simon's mother and father separated when he was seven years old. For the following two years, until his parents' divorce was final, they fought a prolonged custody battle. During this period, when his father would come to pick him up, Simon would run away. After the divorce, when his mother received full custody of the children, his father moved to another state. Simon hasn't seen him since, nor does he want to.

Simon's mother, Jeanette, remarried a year after her divorce. Her new husband, Matt, brought a degree of stability and consistency into the household. However this was not an easy task. Simon was already in plenty of trouble. Matt and Jeanette meet with Simon's teachers, stayed in close contact with the parents of his friends, made agreements with Simon, and established consequences for his misbehavior. However, most of the time Simon just "ignored the rules."

When Matt tried to impose consequences Jeanette thought he was being too tough. Simon remembers that, after the divorce, she would have done anything "to hold onto" him. She wanted to make up for the pain she and his father had put him through. She was "so nice" that Simon "could basically do anything" he wanted.

School and friends. In retrospect, Matt believes that Simon suffered from an attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder as a child. In elementary school he was unable to sit still and pay attention, and was "a really violent kid." He would get into fights, "for no particular reasons except that it made [him] feel good." Many of his classmates' parents wouldn't allow their children to play with him.

In junior high school, Simon wanted to feel important, powerful, like he was "more than the average person." According to his stepfather, he liked school and was interested in his courses, but he didn't study and failed academically. During this time he became friends with other students who were also not doing well in school. By the time he reached high school most of his friends had dropped out, and he was in school with kids who were "better achievers." By the middle of ninth grade, Simon faced the possibility of getting all F's and being held back a year. In order to avoid the looming humiliation, he dropped out of school, telling himself that he was as smart as the more successful students, but school just wasn't for him. He would succeed in a different way.

Simon knew there were other paths to success. By ninth grade he was spending most of his time with friends who were deeply involved in crime and drug use. He was particularly attached to Rick, who was four years older than he was. Rick had dropped out of school and had everything Simon wanted: girls, an apartment, nice clothes, and fancy cars. He got these things by selling used cars

during the day, and trafficking drugs at night. Under Rick's tutelage, Simon began selling drugs.

Avoiding negative consequences. For many years, Simon was able to avoid serious consequences for his misbehavior. He learned that partial compliance would keep him from getting into trouble. When his mother made him go to church, he would simply slip out the back door and return when the service was over. Simon also avoided getting into trouble by being charming. His stepfather remembers that Simon usually got "his wrist slapped" for offenses his brother would get suspended or expelled for because he would "charm and manipulate" school officials.

Alcohol and other drugs. A persistent undercurrent that runs through Simon's childhood and adolescence is his budding problem with alcohol and other drugs. He started drinking when he was nine years old. When he was 12, his parents found a bottle of scotch hidden under his bed. He had stolen it from his aunt. From then on he drank regularly, at least twice a week through ninth grade and daily ever since. Simon tried marijuana when he was 13 years old. He remembers that it was "really fun" because it would make him laugh. By the time he was 14, he was selling marijuana and smoking it at least three times a week. By the time he was 19 he was selling cocaine.

Not only was Simon using and selling drugs, he was committing other crimes as well, primarily stealing cars and breaking into houses. He brags that by the time he was 20 he was making $4,500 a week. He could go anywhere he wanted, buy anything he wanted, and do anything he wanted. Yet it was more than the money that enticed him. When he was committing crimes he felt omnipotent. He remembers:

> I felt powerful. I felt like I could do anything I wanted. I'm like an eagle. I can see everything below me. I see an injured animal. I take it. [I see a] nice stereo system in their car. I feel like he's weak enough to where I can take it from him. It is the advantage you have over other people.

Yet the lifestyle Simon was living had its price. When he was between 13 and 16 years old, several of his friends died violent deaths. One was in a car accident, another found dead on the streets, another hit by a car in a crosswalk, and another died in a car accident that was the result of a police chase. In all but one of these cases, the deaths were related to alcohol and drug use.

Having a baby. When Simon was 15, he and his girlfriend had a baby. At the time he found the situation confusing. Having a baby was not illegal, but it was "still a problem." He explains:

> When you are a child and have a baby, you can't automatically say okay I'm a Dad. We're going to do this. You still don't know anything yourself.... [I needed] to realize who I was and to learn who I wanted to be before I could actually want to be a part of [the baby's] life.

Simon and his parents both believed he was not ready to be a father. He needed to work on his own accomplishments and be concerned with himself before he could take on the responsibility of having a child.

However the court didn't see it that way, and ordered him to pay child support. To Jeanette this was not justice. From her perspective the court ruined Simon's life. She believes the court should have ordered Simon to finish high school, and suspended his child support payments until he did so. In addition, she believes the girl was responsibility for getting pregnant because she was a year and a half older than Simon and had "enticed him."

Defiance as a response to trauma. Since elementary school Simon has worn the "you can't make me" mantle of defiance. He has resented "the pressure of people wanting [him] to do anything." In almost every setting he has been unwilling "to go along with what somebody was forcing [him] to do." At home, when Matt tried to set and enforce rules. Simon told him, you "can't tell me what to do. You're not my father." In elementary school, when he was called to the principal's office, Simon would think, "Nobody is going to hit me, so why do I need to do that?"

Much of Simon's defiant behavior can be understood as an attempt to prevent himself from being a victim. Simon frequently draws a correlation between following orders and being victimizes. He remembers feeling sorry for his mother and responding to his feelings of sadness by not wanting "to do anything that somebody wanted me to do." Part of this unwillingness to follow directions is related to his belief that if he complies he will be less than the person who gives the orders. He says he doesn't pay his traffic tickets because he doesn't want to admit that the police officers are "better than" he is.

What Simon calls his "problem with authority" masks a deep sense of unworthiness. When he was in elementary school he remembers being unhappy with everything, especially with who he was. By the time he was in junior high school he felt like he "wasn't supposed to be in this world." His saw himself as flawed, defective part. During this time, Simon remembers not caring about himself, or anyone else and not wanting to talk to anybody.

Much of Simon's behavior and attitudes appears to be related to his prolonged exposure to violence. Children who have witnessed domestic violence often experience lingering feelings of grief, stress, and depression (Dyson, 1990; Pynoos & Eth, 1985). In addition, people who were victims of child abuse are

more likely to display a wide range of social, emotional, and intellectual problems including aggressiveness, hyperactivity, poor social skills, low self-esteem, and learned helplessness (Farber & England, 1987; Kempe & Kempe, 1978).

Catherine

Catherine lived with her mother, sister and brother until she was five years old. She describes her mother as someone who "just seemed not to get it together." She had three children with three different men but never married. She smoked marijuana every day, throughout each day. For most of her life she was on welfare, but she did run an in-home daycare for several years.

When Catherine was five her mother moved in with Earl, the man Catherine refers to as her father. Earl was an alcoholic who, at times, was so desperate that he drank Nyquil to get high.

Catherine believes she essentially raised herself. If she stayed out of the way, she could do whatever she wanted. There were virtually no rules. Even when Catherine was eight or nine, her parents never asked where she was going or what she was doing. By the time she was 11, she could come home drunk or stoned, and they wouldn't notice. When she would leave empty liquor bottles on her dresser they thought she was "collecting bottles."

Although there were few family rules, and those that existed were rarely enforced, there was punishment. Catherine remembers frequently getting into trouble for demanding too much attention from her mother, at which point she would get "yelled at" or hit with a belt. However, Catherine didn't see hitting as a big problem. For her, what was more difficult was her mother's inconsistency. She remembers:

> She was strange. When I got caught stealing at the store, I didn't get a whipping. But then I came home from school one day with Kool-Aid all over my hands and fingers because we used to eat it for the sugar, I got a whipping for that.

Along with a sense of being neglected, Catherine felt like her mother didn't like her. From the time she was five, her mother told her that she was "cold and mean, didn't have any feelings," that she was a "spoiled brat."

Sexual abuse. Catherine's childhood was dramatically defined by sexual abuse. Her brother, who was five years older than she was, molested her from the time she was three years old until she was nearly nine. He was arrested, convicted, and sentenced for molesting not only Catherine, but also children who attended her mother's home daycare.

Neither Catherine nor her sister have any memory of their mother having sympathy for Catherine or her son's other victims. What they remember is how upset their mother was about "how embarrassing it was to call all those [daycare] kids' parents at their workplace and tell them they had to come to get their children." Catherine's sister also doesn't appear to have any empathy for

Catherine or the other children. In talking about the sexual abuse she focused solely on her brother's arrest, and her anger over the police sending several cars to their house to arrest "a little boy." At no time did she express any unease over her brother's behavior or the negative effect the abuse may have had on Catherine or his other victims.

After Catherine's brother was arrested, her mother "shut down," locking herself in her room and crying herself to sleep. What little she had left to give was directed toward her son. While he was in a state correctional facility, she regularly sent him care packages and frequently went to visit him.

As a result of the molestation the family was ordered to participate in family counseling. However, "Nobody wanted to do it." When the counselor would come to their home, she would ask questions and try to engage the family in a discussion, but no one really participated. Instead they stonewalled her efforts. Catherine was also ordered to participate in individual counseling. She doesn't think it helped her, in part, because she received counseling at a local children's hospital, and her case was assigned to interns. It would take her a couple of months to open up to a counselor and, just when she was beginning to feel safe, she would have to switch because the internship was up.

Catherine says she has never been mad at her brother for molesting her. Instead she focuses her rage on her mother and on the school. During the trial it came out that a neighbor had molested her brother. Therefore Catherine blames her mother for not paying enough attention to her children to know that something was going on. She believes that if her mother had protected her brother from the neighbor then he would not have molested her. In addition, she blames the school for not realizing that "when a child gets into trouble that many times, they're screaming for attention, for help." But no one at school "really heard," instead they just saw her as a "bad child."

School. Catherine's trouble at school began in first grade when she was suspended for fighting and throwing desks. Her sister commented that she had "never seen a little girl get suspended, sent home, kicked out, and expelled as many times." Catherine simply hated school. The only thing she liked was working with handicapped children, which she was allowed to do in third and fourth grade if she kept her grades up.

When Catherine was 13 she quit school because she "just didn't want to go anymore." When she was 16, after she had her baby, she attended a high school that had a program for teenage mothers. The school's childcare program was full, so Catherine had to take two busses to get her daughter to daycare and two busses from daycare to get to school. Caring for her infant daughter and taking eight buses a day for transportation left her "too tired to do anything," so she quit. When she was 17 she enrolled in the Youth Education Employment Program and got her GED.

Drinking, drugs and violence. Catherine can't remember when she began drinking. It must have been sometime in late childhood because she was drinking "bad" and having blackouts by the time she was 13. She began using crack when she was 12 and was selling it by the time she was 17. Her drinking and drug use frequently ignited her temper. When she was drinking she would fly into drunken rages. At times she would wake up, in juvenile detention, not knowing how she got there or what the charges against her were. She was a "very angry" young woman who "loved to get into a fight." As an adolescent she was convicted of assault 26 times. Because of the frequency and seriousness of her crimes, she was incarcerated at a state corrections facility for serious juvenile offenders.

When she was 13 her sister hit her with a phone, and Catherine responded by beating her with a baseball bat. Her mother called the police and they took Catherine to a psychiatric facility. After the initial, mandatory 72 hour evaluation period, the psychiatrist recommended that she remain in the hospital. She ended up staying for 24 days. Catherine dismisses the idea that she was suffering from an emotional or mental problem. She says she "wasn't crazy."

Running away and living on the streets. Catherine ran away from home when she was 13. For almost a year she lived on the streets of downtown Seattle, staying "with the winos" and "sleeping in doorways." In many ways the winos felt more like a family than her biological family did. She remembers that many of the street people were in awe of her ability to make between $1,000 and $2,000 a month from panhandling. She was "one of the best."

By the time Catherine was living on the streets she was already sexually active, and had been treated for a sexually transmitted disease. She had begun having sex with the neighbor boys when she was nine because it made her "feel special." Once she was on the streets she continued to have sex with multiple partners in order to maintain the feeling of specialness. On several occasions she was badly beaten for her refusal to become a prostitute. Prostitution was a line she was unwilling to cross because she wanted to chose whom she had sex with.

Having a baby. Catherine discovered she was pregnant when she was 14 and still living on the streets. She was delighted. This was the opportunity she had been waiting for. She had prayed for a baby so she would have "somebody to love." Finally she would have the chance to be really good at something, for she knew she could be a first-rate mother.

Her mother wanted her to have an abortion because she didn't think Catherine "could care enough about somebody to take care of a baby." But Catherine she set out to "prove everybody wrong," to prove she could be a good mother. She moved in with her parents and stopped drinking and using drugs. Although she and her mother had never been close, they went to Lamaze classes and prenatal appointments together. The pregnancy gave Catherine's mother an

opportunity to be a parent to her daughter, and Catherine an opportunity to be parented.

After Katie was born, Catherine put her baby's welfare ahead of her own desires. Instead of going out with her friends and drinking, she stayed home and took care of her baby, earning her mother's respect. She proudly remembers, "There was never a night when I woke my mom up to say that I couldn't handle my baby." In return, Catherine believes that her mother "started trying to make up for things that happened in the past." She took care of Katie while Catherine went back to school to get her GED. For Catherine it was "fabulous" to be able to rely on her mother.

However, a year after Katie was born, when Catherine was not quite 17, she and her daughter moved out of her parents' home because she felt like it was time for her to be on her own. She had gotten her GED, and believed she was ready to take care of herself and her daughter.

She and her brother moved into a nice apartment and lived happily for several months. Then the landlord raised the rent and they had to move. Catherine got an apartment in an area of the city that had an abundance of homeless teens. In no time at all she connected with her old friends.

Survival. Catherine's experiences with her family and with the criminal justice system taught her lessons that have contributed to her getting in trouble and, at the same time, have helped her to survive. At home she learned that she could get attention by being in trouble. When her brother was incarcerated, her mother lavished attention and presents on him. Indeed, within her family, the only time she got the attention she longed for was when she too was incarcerated.

If trouble got her attention, intimidation got her material possessions. Both Catherine and her sister indicate that Catherine could get what she wanted from her mother by "throwing a fit." If she hassled her mother long enough, she would give in. Even now, Catherine can usually get what she wants from her father by screaming and crying, and on the streets she has a reputation for being "mean."

The criminal justice system taught Catherine how to use the system to get some of her needs met. When she was on the streets she would look forward to being arrested and sent to detention. She says, "It was the best place to be because it was warm, and you could take a shower." In both the state correctional facility and the mental hospital Catherine learned how to tell people in authority "what they wanted to hear." In short, she became system-wise.

Self-definition. Although Catherine resents both her mother and school authorities for their insistence that she was a "bad kid," underneath her bravado she too seems to define herself as someone who is essentially unlovable. At 13, when she was living on the streets, one of her boyfriends beat her up. She justified his behavior by saying, "I have a big mouth and I don't know when to stop."

Catherine cannot name anyone she believes really loved her when she was growing up. She says even her street family didn't really care about her, "They acted like they did, but in reality no." In response, Catherine has decided that, "it hurts more to care than it does not to care." She remembers making a decision to never become too attached to anyone, to never totally open up to anybody, trust anyone, care about anybody else's feelings or be "faithful" to a boyfriend. By imposing these rules on herself, she believes she can keep heartbreak at bay.

As Catherine's adolescence came to a close she was on welfare and living in a small apartment with her baby. She was spending time with friends who were members of a gang, and was using alcohol and other drugs to excess.

Driving Forces in Childhood and Adolescence: Variations on a Theme

There are numerous similarities in Ron, Simon and Catherine's childhood experiences; chief among them is their exposure to violence and exploitation. Research indicates that there is a psychological impact associated with prolonged exposure to violence. Children who have witnessed domestic violence often experience lasting feelings of grief, stress, and depression, which are characteristic of post-traumatic stress disorder (Dyson, 1990; Pynoos & Eth, 1985). Individuals who were victims of physical child abuse are more likely to display a wide range of social, emotional, and intellectual problems than to those who have not, including aggressiveness, hyperactivity, poor social skills, low self-esteem and learned helplessness (Farber & England, 1987, Kempe & Kempe, 1978). In addition, children who have been sexually abused tend to have significantly more problems with depression and other psychiatric disorders, social isolation, sexual assault in adulthood, domestic violence, and substance abuse (Johnson, 2001; Oddone-Paolucci, Genuis & Violato, 2001).

Child Abuse

Child abuse weaves its way through Ron, Simon, and Catherine's early lives. Ron and Simon were afraid of their fathers, not only because of the beatings they saw their mothers receive and the spankings they got, but because their fathers were unpredictable. The trauma they experienced went well beyond the walls of their immediate families. Both lost extended family members and friends to violence. Catherine's abuse was different. She was neglected by her parents and sexually assaulted, for five years, by her older brother.

Although the forms of abuse were different, all involved the use of power to dominate and humiliate and appear to have influenced the developmental paths of the respondents. Much of their behavior can be understood as an attempt to protect themselves from further victimization.

The Absence of Protection

Not only was there an abundance of violence in these respondents' early lives, there was an absence of protection. However, the only family member who was deeply engaged in a substantial effort to nourish and look after the respondent was Simon's stepfather, Matt. He alone provided ongoing, consistent support and supervision.

None of the respondents had an extensive extended family network to call upon. None report that their parents shared parenting responsibilities with friends, grandparents, aunts, or uncles although Ron had his grandparents to turn to if he needed something.

Finally, school was an unpleasant experience for all three. Although Ron and Catherine had a couple of positive experiences in elementary school, neither had teachers they remembered fondly. The only thing Simon liked about school was being with his friends. In short, there is a paucity of positives in the remembrances of these three individuals.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

All three of the respondents began using alcohol and other drugs at very young ages, with Simon starting as at nine. All sold drugs, and Ron and Catherine made it their livelihood. Finally, they were all dependent on alcohol and drugs by their late teens.

Possible Mental Illness

At least two of the respondents, Catherine and Simon, may also have had a mental disorder that preceded their alcohol and drug use. Without a thorough mental health evaluation it is not possible to accurately determine their psychiatric history. However, their life stories suggest they may have suffered from a variety of mental illnesses in childhood and early adolescence.

There are clear indicators that Catherine had serious emotional problems as a child, she has been in counseling, on and off, since she was five years old. She remembers being told she had to go to counseling if she wanted to be allowed to attend her elementary school. It is unlikely, although possible, that the school mandated counseling[43]. However, they may well have strongly recommended it. Similarly, after it was discovered that Catherine had been molested, she was "required" to go to counseling. In addition, when Catherine was 13 she was admitted into the children's ward of a state mental hospital. The fact that her initial 72 hour hold was extended to 24 days indicates that a psychiatrist believed she was a danger to herself, a danger to others, or totally unable to take care of herself[44]. Finally, Catherine reports that she has tried to commit suicide a "few

[43] If the school required counseling they would have to pay for it. Consequently, it would be very rare for a school to do so.

[44] The law requires that an individual meet these criteria in order to be held beyond 72 hours.

times." All of these factors indicate that she has long-standing emotional problems.

Simon was not diagnosed with an emotional or mental disorder as a child or adolescent. However, there are signs that he had one. His stepfather believes he had attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder as a child, and his history indicates that he may have had a conduct disorder. The American Psychiatric Associations' (1998) diagnostic criteria for assessing a conduct disorder is:

> A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated, as manifested by the presence of three or more of the following criteria in 12 months: aggression to people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness, theft or serious violations of rules (p. 66)

Simon's violent temper, lying, and breaking into cars and houses seem to qualify him for this diagnosis.

Ron's mental health history is more difficult to assess. Throughout his life he has had a deep distrust and suspicion of others. He resents what he sees as betrayals from his father, mother, and partners. He sees mainstream society as conspiring to keep Black men from succeeding. In addition his perceptions that he was "more intelligent" than all of his friends and capable of running a major drug-trafficking business may be signs of grandiosity. The American Psychiatric Association (1998) indicates that these characteristics are indicators of paranoia.

However, because Ron lives in a culture that is outside of the mainstream, it is difficult to tell if his responses are culturally acceptable, reasonable responses to being a gang member or the result of a psychiatric disorder. The two are not necessarily in opposition. His suspiciousness and distrust of others may have made the life of a gang member a good fit for him and kept him alive.

Summary

In the face of persistent exploitation there was almost a complete absence of protection in these respondents' lives. No one, except Simon's stepfather, made a concerted effort to champion the respondents' welfare. In addition, in the face of abuse, each of the respondents had substantial personal difficulties. In all likelihood Catherine and Simon, had a diagnosable mental disorder in childhood, which appear to have preceded their alcohol and drug use. Furthermore, each began using alcohol when they were quite young, between nine and 12 years old, and shortly thereafter began smoking marijuana. By the time they were teens they were selling drugs. In short, each of them entered into adulthood with some very difficult circumstances and deeply entrenched problems.

Although the risk and oppressive factors described in these three stories are personal in nature, residing in the families and peer groups of the respondents, it is important to note that they simultaneously reflect societal factors. In the 1980s, as the economy changed, millions of well-paid industrial jobs were eliminated and replaced by low-paying service industry jobs. The standard of living for most families steadily declined, while mortgage costs rapidly increased.

As a consequence of these economic changes, poverty rates soared for people of color, the working poor, children, and households' headed by women (Eitzen, 1992). Simultaneously, there were significant reductions in the amount of public aid available to poor people.

Digging a Hole: Early Adulthood

At age 25, Ron, Simon and Catherine have adult criminal records, little or no job skills, and few institutions or people willing or able to help them. In this section, I describe the respondents in late adolescence and early adulthood. I explore how their circumstances and decisions perpetuated and deepened the life difficulties that began in childhood and adolescence. I conclude this chapter with a synopsis of the themes common to all three life-stories.

Ron

Ron's young adulthood has been peppered with crises that are the result of his gang membership. He has seen his closest friends beaten, shot and knifed. He himself has been shot three times, the first time when he was 18. He has watched his friends die violent deaths, and has been shaken by the fear that he might die in the same way.

Yet from his perspective, the most difficult crises have been crises of faith. He always thought he and his "partners" would stick together, support each other no matter what, and be a family who stood together against all odds. Those dreams were assaulted by his partners' betrayals. Much to his dismay his fellow gang members were not even "as loyal as girls," and wouldn't even bail him out of jail. During his most recent crisis, which was triggered by his use of ecstasy, he has found himself without their support.

Ecstasy. When Ron started using ecstasy he thoroughly enjoyed it. When he was high he was able to "let all the pressure go," no longer feeling like he had to watch his back. On the contrary, he felt omnipotent, as if he "could do anything [he] wanted to do." Yet, the more he used, the more frightened he became. He knew he liked ecstasy too much, and was afraid of becoming addicted. Still he found himself using more and more of the drug more and more frequently. Over time, the quality of his highs changed. He began to feel "scared of [his] own powers" and realized that he had lost control.

One night he took ecstasy and had a "bad trip." He became angry and paranoid. He tried to call his "partners" to find out what was happening to him, to get them to talk him down, but he didn't get the response he wanted. In the meantime he was scaring his girlfriend with his rage. When she tried to touch him, he yelled at her. Eventually she talked him into taking a shower. As the water cascaded down his back, he screamed, "What have I done to myself?"

His "bad trip" left him with intense side effects. He had frequent flashbacks, hallucinating at unpredictable times. He was angry all of the time and

couldn't control his paranoia. When he was out in public, he was sure that everybody was talking about him. He felt like he had to "watch every move from every person." He knew that he was "untrustworthy," and none of his partners could count on him. He could not even count on himself. To add to the problem he couldn't sleep.

At the height of his fear, Ron called his grandparents and asked them to let him move in with them, like they had let his mother move in when she faced her own crisis. He wanted a place where he didn't have to worry about "rent, being able to sleep…and hearing a nagging girl." He wanted space where he could, "get [his] thoughts together." He wanted to feel safe, and they welcomed him.

Protective relationships. Ron knew his grandparents would take him in; they had always had. When no one else would bail him out of jail he could call his grandfather. He never failed to come get him. Ron knew that even though everything he was doing was against his grandfather's values, his grandfather would love and stand by him. After all, his grandfather was a pastor.

However this time his grandfather was facing his own troubles. His wife had recently been confined to a wheelchair. His daughter, Ron's mother, was staying with them because she had fallen on hard times. There wasn't really room for Ron, physically or psychologically. Yet when Ron called his grandfather could not say no. He told Ron he could stay for as long as he needed.

Ron's family has a long tradition of standing behind one another and believes it is important to do so. Yet Ron's mother was reluctant to have him move in with her and her parents. She was beginning to take exception to all that she had been called on to give her son. Over the years, she had paid his rent, helped him with utilities, and given him food. When he was 18, she bought him a car and told him to get a driver's license. He didn't. Since then he has wrecked about five cars, and has never gotten his license. The last one she cosigned for, he totaled, and she is still paying for it.

If she had money and a place of her own, she would more than welcome Ron. But she doesn't. She knows she "could never just cut him off." Yet it irritates her that he doesn't seem to realize that he has to help. She can't afford to pay his rent or buy him another car. Her parents can barely take care of themselves. She wants Ron to "start taking some responsibility for himself."

So although his grandparents' welcomed him, it was with trepidation, at least on his mother's part. They knew Ron was in trouble, but they didn't have much left to give.

An attempt to change. After Ron moved in, he decided to make a change and pursue a career. He enrolled at a technical college to be trained in computers. Once he got there he found that "school was too easy" and the discrimination against him was palpable. He remembers a teacher treating him like he wasn't capable of doing anything but buying "a crack house." At first Ron let the comments slide. Then he had enough, and confronted the teacher during a class.

He wanted to show the teacher that he wasn't a thug. He would beat the man at his own game by making a sound argument and using correct English. Ron believes the teacher was "dumbfounded" by Ron's articulateness and knowledge. However, his strategy backfired.

The teacher became "vindictive." Ron says he took the final exam for this teacher's class, but the teacher said he didn't turn it in. However, Ron found his exam stapled to one of his friend's, and he had scored a 115 out of 125 points. Ron believes the teacher intentionally misplaced his exam because he had done so well.

The teacher implied that Ron's exceptional score was the result of cheating. They took the issue to a higher authority, to the instructor[45]. During their discussion, Ron tried to "set the teacher up" to stumble on his own words. But Ron could sense that neither the teacher nor the instructor wanted to talk to him. They just said, "We'll get back to you."

Ron responded by filing a discrimination lawsuit against the school. He says it was only after the lawsuit was filed that the school got back to him. They told him he had to take the course over again because of his low attendance. He protested, what did attendance have to do with it when his final exam showed that he knew the material. Ron decided he would rather see them in court than take the class over.

Today Ron dreams of winning the lawsuit, and having the jury award him a large settlement. That would give him enough money that he wouldn't have to worry about supporting himself. However, if the money doesn't come through, he isn't sure what he will do next.

Who he is now. Ron is still trying to recover from the negative effects of his ecstasy use. During the nine months he has been living with his grandparents, his flashbacks and paranoia have lessened. However there are still times when he looks out the window and thinks "everybody's trying to get me and...I don't have no gun in the house. I ain't got no protection."

The fact that Ron is still living with his mother and grandparents gets on his nerves. He doesn't like having to live by his grandparents' rules, and living with them hurts his pride. He expects more out of himself, as he says "I should be in my own apartment, be watching my own TV." Yet he knows he needs this time to decide if he wants to resume trafficking drugs or "try and make it by working a job."

One part of him believes if he continues to sell drugs he will end up dead or in prison. Yet he is not entirely sure. He thinks there may be a way to sell drugs without paying such a high price. He thinks the solution may be to not to be too "flashy," to "out smart them."

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[45] The teacher was the person who taught the class, probably a teaching assistant. While the instructor was the actual professor for the course.

When he imagines what his life will be like 10 years from now, he hopes to be running a drug syndicate and "structure [his] businesses as a front for drug sales," and put the money in stocks. Once he has accomplished this he could have a woman, a house, and take "trips around the world."

There are a number of reasons why it is so difficult for Ron to let go of his dream of being a successful, wealthy drug dealer. First of all, he still wants the quick money that drug trafficking provides. He says he is "trapped" by his "addiction to the money, to the lifestyle." He knows how to operate in this context. In contrast, getting a job would put him in an environment that he is unfamiliar with.

Secondly, Ron has no work history to speak of and has not developed the attitude or skills necessary to succeed in a mainstream job. On occasion he has worked in a fast food restaurant, but he is not in the "mode of getting up and going to work." His mother repeatedly tells him, "You don't want to get up and go to work. You don't want to do nothing but sit around the house all day." She believes he is:

> Just waking up to the idea that there's other things that come along with being grown besides hanging out on the streets and having a car and having a girlfriend. There's responsibilities... He's always looked to the fast life. And that's what he has kind of stuck to...he hasn't really considered something else.

In addition, Ron's experience at the technical college taught him that mainstream success would not be easy for him to achieve.

Ron also has concrete obstacles to overcome: an outstanding warrant for his arrest, no driver's license, and $1,500 in unpaid traffic tickets. Until these items are taken care of it will be difficult for him to get a job and be on time every day.

Finally, during the mental health portion of our quantitative interview, Ron met the diagnostic criteria for both an anxiety disorder and depression. He says he has a long-standing problem with depression that a physician has treated him for. The mental health portion of the SSDP interview does not check for personality disorders. However, Ron may also be suffering from a paranoid personality disorder. The American Psychiatric Association (1998) defines paranoia as:

> A pervasive distrust and suspiciousness of others such that their motives are interpreted as malevolent, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts as indicated by four or more of the following:
>
> - Suspects without sufficient basis, that others are exploiting, harming, or deceiving him or her.
> - Is preoccupied with unjustified doubts about the loyalty or trustworthiness of friends or associates
> - Is reluctant to confide in others because of unwarranted fears that the information will be used maliciously against him or her

- Reads hidden, demeaning or threatening meanings into benign remarks or events
- Persistently bears a grudge (i.e., is unforgiving of insults, injuries or slights)
- Perceives attacks on his or her character that are not apparent to others and is quick to react angrily or counterattack (p.276).

Ron meets these criteria.

Some scholars suggest that the criteria professionals to diagnose personality disorders are subjective (Akbar, 1985). Frequently they are unjustified and unwarranted personal judgments made by and observer. Akbar (1985) points out:

> Throughout the existing conceptualizations of human psychology in the Western (and most of the rest of industrialized) world, it turns out that the more you look like, think like, and, in general, behave like the middle-class European American male of European descent, the more you are defined in accord with the paradigm of an acceptable, functional, and effective (i.e., "mentally healthy") human being" (p. 18).

Although conventional society dismisses claims that society conspires to keep Blacks addicted and in poverty, they are not uncommon beliefs in parts of the Black community. From one perspective, Ron's critique of social inequalities seems like a paranoid way to excuse his criminal behavior and failures. From another it is a description of reality. In addition, his heightened sense of paranoia may be part of a set of skills that have kept him alive.

Ron's present state. Ron is caught. On the one hand he would like to continue trafficking drugs, but he feels betrayed by his partners. His overdose on ecstasy has made him doubt his ability to effectively function on the streets. At the same time the idea of getting a job and going to work is unappealing. Complicating the picture are Ron's alcohol and drug use and mental disorders. He appears to be self-medicating his depression and anxiety by his daily drinking and marijuana use, which he says lessens his anxiety.

Simon

Simon's adult life has been controlled, almost entirely, by his drinking and drug use. His drinking, in particular, has brought havoc into his life. When Simon was 19 he was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI). He remembers:

> I wasn't even drunk. I didn't have money for a lawyer. I had like two beers. The police just pulled me over because of what the car looked like. I refused to take the Breathalyzer. I didn't want to incriminate myself... I was basically bribed into pleading guilty or something.

Simon thought he would get off with probation because he had "never been in trouble before." He'd been in jail for driving on a suspended license with unpaid tickets, but he had "never assaulted anybody," "stolen anything" or "had any kind of a felony." He had burglarized houses, but he had never been caught. So he thought he would get a slap on the wrist, but he got much more.

Simon received the customary penalty for a first-time conviction for DUI, a few days in jail and probation. The conditions of his probation were also standard for the offense: a suspended driver's license, mandatory attendance at probation meetings, three Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) meetings a week, three alcohol treatment classes a week, and payment for treatment and court costs.

Simon believes his life would have been different if he hadn't "happened to get a judge that was very strongly against drinking and driving," and gave him an unfair sentence. He explains:

> For someone with no education, it's almost impossible. I mean there are people who do it but...I'm a laborer: I have to be able to drive to work. If I can't drive to work then I have to take a minimum-wage job, which is never going to be able to pay for any of these things.

Trying to comply with the conditions of his probation was extremely stressful, and Simon blames the stress for his increased drug use and alcohol consumption. Eventually it got to be too much. He dropped out of treatment, stopped attending AA, and fled to Alaska, where he stayed for two years.

When he returned to Washington he was minding his "own business, and not doing anything illegal," when he was arrested again for DUI. He admits, "I was drunk, but I was driving carefully. I was going slow. I was pulled over for not having my lights on." This time Simon went to jail for a year.

Simon believes the court took away his "young manhood." He explains:

> You cannot live your life unless you can work and pay your bills. You cannot get to work unless you can drive... It's like telling someone in a wheel chair that they have to run a marathon.

Furthermore, Simon blames the court for taking away the possibility of his having a relationship with his son. When the baby's mother wouldn't let Simon have contact with his son he couldn't go to court to get visitation because he had outstanding warrants for his arrest. From Simon's perspective, if the court had let him have his driver's license then his life would have been different.

Who he is now. Simon describes himself as "honest, caring, loving and violent." Matt sees him as "a big overgrown kid, very sociable and very smart." Either way he is a person with some serious problems.

Simon has been diagnosed with and treated for a bipolar disorder. When he was in an inpatient substance abuse treatment program he took medication for the disorder and it helped him to "focus." However, once he returned home he stopped taking his medication because, in order to get another prescription he would have had to go to a doctor and he didn't have any medical insurance. As

he says, it became "too complicated." Instead of taking the medication he started drinking, which he says was "was [his] tranquilizer."

Simon wants to ignore his bipolar disorder. As he says, "I'm manic, so deal with it." At the same time, he doesn't like the violence that his mania brings on. He describes this violence as something in his blood, something that is hard for him to control and is triggered by little things. When he was in jail he got into a fight because someone changed the television channel without asking. He explains:

> I feel violent when I am humiliated. I feel like they are violating the person I am. I feel like they are doing to me what my father did to my mother, and it makes me offensive and it makes me feel like I want to be violent.

Matt attributes Simon's difficulty in maintaining satisfying relationships to his bipolar disorder. He observes:

> A lot of times people get fed up with him. Sometimes he comes across as a con man, as a person that's manipulating just for himself, kind of selfish. I think that is a misreading. Even though he has a lot of friends, he's lonely at a certain level. There is something missing there, he's sterile, he's kind of lonely at some level. There is an empty spot. I think it is part of the manic thing.

In addition to his bipolar disorder Simon appears to also have a "pervasive disregard for and violation of the rights of others occurring since age 15 years," which is the definition of an antisocial personality disorder (DSM-IV, 1994). There are numerous examples of his "pervasive disregard," which match the DSM-IV's definition, including his repeated crimes and failure to meet his probation requirements, his continued driving while under the influence, which puts other people's safety at risk, his lying to the courts and his parents, his inability to hold a job even though he has a marketable skill as a painter, his failure to regularly pay child support, and his childhood history of aggression.

However, the most significant marker of Simon's antisocial personality is his apparent lack of remorse about the harm he has caused others, including the people he has assaulted and stolen from. In many respects he treats others as objects, as if they don't have feelings or their own reality. One example is the way he treats and talks about his son. Simon told himself that once he became the person he wanted to be he would concern himself with his son, but it hasn't worked out that way. In fact, Simon has never been alone with his 10-year-old son. He makes child support payments only when his check is garnisheed. Throughout our conversation, he never acknowledged that his behavior may have done harm to or caused pain for his son. In addition, Simon never mentioned his son or his son's mother's names. It was as if they were characters in a book instead of real people.

Not only does Simon have one or more psychiatric disorders, he is an alcoholic and a drug abuser. From his perspective, his major problem is with drugs. Part of what makes it so difficult for him to stop is that most of his friends use drugs. He has been trying to "change crowds," but he misses his old friends. He describes his love-hate relationship with his drug using friends in this way:

> It is like having a relationship.... a boyfriend that beats you up, who you are attracted to, who you love. You keep going back to him, and he keeps beating you up. It doesn't make sense.

Yet return he does. He knows how to act with his drug-using friends; he knows what to expect from them, and perhaps most importantly, they don't want him to change.

Although Simon no longer wants to use drugs, he is not so sure about alcohol. He drinks every day, usually a case of beer a night. He can't think of very many reasons to stop drinking. The standard reasons - to improve his health, have better relationships with others, be able to hold down a job and make a decent living - are not motivating enough for Simon. Other people tell him he has to quit or he is going to end up back in jail. He says that is true for most people, but not for him "as an individual."

Even his one attempt at treatment was not particularly sincere. He decided to admit himself to an inpatient treatment program because he knew his insurance would cover most of the cost, and that he would be leaving his job in a month or two and would lose the insurance. At the same time things were getting difficult on the streets. One of his friends was arrested and someone had stolen something from him. Going to treatment was his way "of saying I want to get away from this."

Yet Simon knows he needs to quit drinking. He says that he prays to God to make him want to quit. When he thinks about what he wants his life to be like in 10 years he says he wants to be "alcohol free." Yet for now, he would quit "if there was an easy way."

Furthermore, his parents minimize his problem with alcohol, which makes it even more difficult for Simon to quit. His stepfather acknowledges that alcohol is a significant factor in Simon's life, but not that significant. He explains, "I read... tobacco kills 10 times more people than alcohol. As many people are killed on the road by drivers that fall asleep because they are over tired than they do because of DUIs." From his perspective, Simon's problem is not with drinking, it is with drinking and driving. He believes that Simon has learned his lesson and will never drink and drive again.

Simon does not have a solid picture of what he wants to do with his life. He says he wants to help people, quit using drugs permanently, be successful with his own business, make money, "eventually" quit drinking, and be happy with the way he lives and the person he's become. This is as concrete as he gets.

Simon believes he has the potential to make good money. Yet somehow success always eludes him. He never does what it takes to achieve the success he wants. He brags that he can easily pass the test required for him to earn a GED,

but he never does. His current idea is to get his driver's license, start a painting businesses, be licensed and bonded within a few years and, when he has made enough money, go into real estate. Yet this plan ignores the fact that his felony conviction and $5,000 in unpaid fines will make it close to impossible to get bonded. As Matt says he is "always just one scheme away from success."

Finally, Simon continues to suffer from deep feelings of worthlessness. Despite the support and protection his stepfather provides, Simon finds it difficult to believe that Matt really considers him to be his son. When he talks about Matt, he says, "He's done so much for me, almost like a real father." Matt sadly acknowledges Simon's doubt, saying, "It feels to me like I am his real father but I don't think that he feels like he's my true son."

In addition, Simon continues to fear being a victim. His definition of himself makes it impossible for him to comply with authority and feel good about himself. He explains:

> The law never gave me a chance to change. They tried to change things for me. They tried to force me to do something. I don't want to do something that someone wants me to do. I'm a man. I want to do what I want to do. I want to do what I feel is right.

Protective relationships. Simon does have some significant assets. He has a marketable skill and is, by all reports, a good house painter. In addition, he has his relationship with his mother and stepfather. Throughout his trials and tribulations he has been able to count on them. Matt is the polar opposite of Simon's violent father. He is gentle, loyal and understanding, "more understanding than almost anybody," and lets Simon know how deeply he cares for him.

Simon knows that Matt doesn't like much of what he does, but he "tolerates it" and understands. Matt has worked hard to empathize with Simon and, at the same time, provide guidance. Matt explains:

> I do try to help him. I do open myself up to whatever he is saying, try to process it the best I can. I'm not that judgmental in those situations, I'm not negative. I always try to steer him in a way. You ought to try and get into this program, you ought to go to court if you have that appointment and not miss it, but I don't think that I overdo it.

Matt has given Simon "so many chances," providing him with a place to live, food and clothing no matter what he has done or how old he is. In addition he has been "semi-consistent," letting Simon know where he stands and what the rules are. In providing him with a stable home, Matt has given Simon the only consistent structure and safety he has ever had.

Yet in order to be consistently understanding it appears that Matt has tended to make excuses for Simon's behavior. For example, when Simon was in elementary school several of the parents of his classmates would not allow their children to play with Simon because he was so violent. Yet Matt doesn't

understand why the parents were so hostile because all Simon was doing was stealing "candy bars, fiddling with vending machines... little pranks."

Matt also protects Simon. For example, when he tried to describe how impossible, rude and demanding the mother of Simon's baby is he relayed the following incident: One morning she called and asked for Simon. Matt explained that he was asleep. She asked him to wake Simon up. Matt told her that he wouldn't because Simon had been out all night and had to work that day. She countered, saying that she needed to talk to him. Matt responded by telling her to call back the following day. She hung up on him. From Matt's perspective, it was totally unreasonable for her to want him to wake Simon up. At no time did it occur to him that she was calling at one of the few times she would be able to reach Simon, shortly before he had to go to work. Nor did it occur to Matt that by not waking Simon up, he was sheltering Simon from the negative consequences of staying out "all night" drinking.

Simon's present state. Simon doesn't feel like he "fits anywhere. He has no peer group. Because of his drug use, having a child out of wedlock, and being in jail, he doesn't see things "the way regular people" do. It is hard for him to feel comfortable with the people he has met at his grandmother's church. From his perspective, church people are "the types of people who have never felt rejection. They don't know what it is like to be a failure, a drug addict, an alcoholic." At times he feels so lonely he wants to go back to the people and places he has known. Yet at the same time he doesn't want to be like his drinking and drugging friends.

Finally, Simon faces concrete obstacles. He does not have a driver's license and currently owes $5,000 in back tickets and fines.

Catherine

Since Catherine was 16 she has become more and more involved with gang members, many of the men she has dated have beaten her up. Through her affiliation with the gang she has been using and selling cocaine. When she was 21 she married a gang member and had a daughter with him. He is currently in prison and she is waiting for a bed to open up in a work-release program at which time she will begin serving her sentence for possession of a controlled substance.

Domestic violence. Catherine's sister recalls that, "A lot of (Catherine's) friends grew up and changed for the worse. They became more violent, more aggressive, more drugs, you know, guns and stuff." Again her sister recalls, "They were gangers, not self-proclaimed gang-bangers. They were hard-core, heat-packing, dope-smuggling, dealing, gang-bangers from California."

Catherine went through "bad relationships" with gang members like water. It seemed like every boyfriend beat her. At one point she got engaged to someone who had just spent five years in prison. He beat her so badly that she took her daughter and fled to a battered women's shelter. The shelter placed her in a

program for teenage mothers, but within a few weeks she went back to her boyfriend. For a while she lived with him in a motel. One morning she woke up to find him gone. He had left her with no money and the rent was due. So she did what she knew how to do. She began selling cocaine.

She was on the streets dealing when she met her future husband, Jeff. Although he had a reputation for "being really mean" he was nice to Katie, Catherine's daughter. Catherine remembers being delighted that he was interested in her because:

> Everybody else wanted him. He was so charming and powerful and good looking. He just knew what to say and when to say it and how to say it and I thought he was the perfect man.

One time, when Catherine got out of jail, she came home to find the roses and teddy bears he had left for her. No man had ever treated her so well.

Four months later, when Catherine was 21, they were married. Five days later he left. For the next year he was in and out of Catherine's life. He would be gone for a week, come back for two. When he was gone he didn't contact Catherine "No phone calls, no nothing." Because he was a "crack head" drug dealer, he was far from reliable. So Catherine "never waited on him." She lived her own life, going to the clubs and having sex with other men.

Then she found out she was pregnant. Jeff was delighted. "That's when all of the promises came," she said. He begged her not to have an abortion, and vowed that he would stay home. For the rest of her pregnancy and the first four months after their daughter's birth, Jeff tried to keep his promises. He did stay home and, for a while, they were a family. However, he just couldn't adjust to the domestic life. He left, and hasn't lived with Catherine and her children since.

Jeff is currently serving a 17-month sentence in prison for drug possession. Catherine says she still loves him, but wishes that she didn't. She thinks he is her soul mate, and they are destined to be together. She doesn't mind that he treats her badly. She is used to it. However, the fact that her daughters are involved makes her furious.

Where to turn. When Jeff left, he took everything. Once again Catherine had no money and the rent was due. Only this time she had two daughters, an infant and a 6-year-old. She called the homeless shelters but they were full. She remembers them telling her that she would have to sleep in her car. Her mother had died, so the only place left to turn was to her father. He refused to take them in. He was already taking care of Catherine's sister's son, and just couldn't manage three more. It was Christmas and Catherine was devastated.

Once again, she solved her financial problems by selling cocaine so she "could get some money" and "have somewhere to go." Within six months she was arrested for drug possession, and sentenced to two months in jail and 160 hours of community service. While she was in jail her father took care of Katie and Sabrina stayed at one of Catherine's friends. During this time her father became attached and committed to both girls. So, when Catherine was released from jail,

35 days later, her father invited them to live with him. For the past 9 months Catherine has been living with her father, her sister's son, and her two daughters in a two-bedroom apartment.

Who she is now. After Catherine was released from jail she failed to complete her community service hours. She says she simply didn't have the time, after all she had "a baby and stuff." The consequence for her failure is that she has to finish the remaining 15 days of her two-month jail sentence. She had been hoping to be admitted into a home detention program, but the authorities looked at her "background, file and charges" and turned her down. However, because she had a job at a fast food restaurant, she qualified for work release. When I last saw her she was waiting for a bed to open up so she could finish her sentence. Her father was going to take care of the two girls.

Catherine's return to jail is symbolic of the kinds of circumstances and decisions that keep her in trouble. The combination of her history, the constraints the system puts on her, and her personality makes it difficult for her to change the texture of her life. It would be hard for any mother of two small children to work, take care of the children, and complete 160 hours of community service. Yet this is what the court told her to do, and Catherine's failure to do so has landed her back in jail. If her history wasn't so checkered, she could have done her time at home and stayed with her children, but because of her previous actions she has to go back to jail and leave her two children behind.

Catherine is caught in a familiar catch-22. The combination of her past behavior and current public policies has taken away whatever safety net once existed for her. For example, she does not have many marketable skills. In fact, at age 25, she has virtually no work history. She knows she needs more education to be able to get a job that would pay her enough to rent a two-bedroom apartment, yet if she goes to school, welfare will not continue to pay for childcare or her children's medical benefits. Housing is so expensive that it is impossible for her to pay the required first and last months' rent deposit on her $7 an hour job. Yet she doesn't qualify for Section Eight, a federally subsidized housing program, because of her prior convictions for drug sales and welfare fraud. Her history simply makes her a bad risk for any landlord.

Yet it is more than just Catherine's history and public policies that make it difficult for her to change. It is also Catherine herself. Although it is not possible to know exactly what her mental status is without a more thorough evaluation it is clear that she has had a lifelong struggle with depression, and has taken antidepressants, on an off, for much of her adult life. In the mental health portion of the SSDP interview her depression was diagnosable.

In addition, her behavior mirrors many of the qualities found in someone suffering from a borderline personality disorder which the DSM-IV defines as:

> A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects and marked impulsivity beginning in early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts.

There are numerous examples of Catherine's instability and impulsivity that make it reasonable to suspect that she has this disorder. She has a pattern of instability and intense interpersonal relationships with men, and she reports that she has had more than 90 sexual partners. She experiences chronic feelings of emptiness and has tried to kill herself "a few times." Finally, she is known by her peers and family to be mean, flying off into rages for insignificant reasons.

Catherine acknowledges that she doesn't know what she wants, what she is doing, or where she is going. She says she is completely confused. Part of her wants a stable, conventional life. She wants an apartment, her daughters to do well in school, and for her and her children to "do things like a family," things like going skating and to the movies. However, another part of her is not sure that she can or even wants to give up her "addiction to chaos."

Catherine misses the excitement and danger of being on the streets. She gets "an adrenaline rush" just thinking about having the police watch her and having to watch everything she does. Furthermore, the fast and easy money she can get on the streets mesmerizes her. As she puts it, "The whole addiction isn't just the drugs. It's the lifestyle."

Catherine believes her infatuation with "bad boys" is nested in her addiction to the lifestyle. She gets "a little taste" of the life by dating gang members. According to her sister, Catherine has:

> Met a couple of ... guys that, you know, they have all of their body parts and all their teeth and they have their own car, you know? And they wanted to date her. She said not in a million years. Because they are too nice.... aren't exciting enough. It is like 'I like bad boys' is tattooed on her forehead. They're just drawn to her.

And Catherine is drawn to them.

Strengths. In spite of Catherine's depression and the apparent bleakness of her life, she does see herself as having remarkable strength. As she says, she just "keeps on going and going." What motivates her is her commitment to her children. Both Catherine and her sister agree that, Catherine's children "come first and foremost." They are her "world," her reason to live.

Catherine admits that by conventional standards she has put her two daughters, especially the elder, through hell. She has exposed them to gang activity, domestic violence, living in motels and unreliable men who come in and out of their lives. Yet Catherine asserts that she is "a wonderful mom." It is the one thing that she knows she is "doing right."

Her belief in herself as a parent comes from her conviction that she is a better parent than her mother was. She knows the mistakes her mother made, and she is trying not to repeat them. She sees herself as doing her best to provide her children with some stability in that she tries to make sure they always have dinner together. She waits until they are asleep before she leaves to party, comes home early in the morning, goes to sleep for a few hours, and then gets up with the kids.

Unlike her mother, she pays attention to her children, likes them and listens to them. For example, when Katie was approximately five years old she was molested. During the week after the molestation, Katie was acting different and Catherine knew something was wrong. When Catherine pressed her, Katie told her what had happened. Catherine immediately got Katie into counseling. Catherine emphasizes that this reaction was totally unlike her mother's. When Catherine was molested, her mother didn't notice anything wrong and the molestation went on for five years.

However, Catherine seems completely unaware of some of the potential harm she is causing her children. In some respects, she is providing them with a less stable existence than her mother provided her. For example, the people Catherine invites into her life put her children in harm's way. It was the son of one of her friends that molested Katie. Although she doesn't go out until after the girls are in bed, when she does she chooses to be with the most violent man she can find, making it quite possible that her daughters will grow up without a mother.

Finally, Catherine describes her relationship with nine-year-old Katie as a "friendship" that is built on trust, where they "talk about everything." Yet this "friendship" appears to meet Catherine's needs more than Katie's. A nine year old is not developmentally ready to know "everything" about her mother's life.

Driving Forces in Young Adulthood: Variations on a Theme

Violence and exploitation distinguished Ron, Simon and Catherine's childhoods. Substance abuse and mental illness mark their late adolescence and early adulthood.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

All of the respondents have a serious problem with alcohol and other drugs, which significantly affects their lives. Simon has been in jail for drinking and driving. Catherine has been in jail for possession of a controlled substance, and it remains to be seen if Ron will ever totally recover from his overdose on ecstasy. Each has tried to control or limit their use of alcohol and drugs, but none have made a serious commitment to quit.

Mental Illness

In addition to their substance abuse problems, all of these respondents had a psychiatric disorder. Co-morbidity between substance abuse and other psychiatric disorders has been thoroughly documented in adults and adolescents in clinical samples (Brooner, King, Kidorf, Schmidt & Bigelow, 1997; Flynn, Craddock, Luckey, Hubbard & Dunteman, 1996; Greenbaum, Foster-Johnson, Moffitt & Silva, 1996) and in adults in the general population (Kessler, Nelson, McGonagle, Edlund, Frank & Leaf, 1996; Reiger, Farmer & Rae, 1990). There seems to be a nearly linear relationship between the frequency of alcohol and illicit drug use and the likelihood of having an emotional disorder (Kandel, 1999).

Among adults the rates of lifetime psychiatric disorders are substantially higher among individuals who have alcohol and other drug problems than among those who do not (Kessler, et al., 1996; Lahey, Flagg, E.W., & Bird, 1996; Lewinsohn, Hops, Roberts, Seeley & Andrews, 1993; Robins & Regier, 1991).

Ron, Simon and Catherine mirror these research findings. All were diagnosed with a mental illness on the mental health portion of the SSDP interview. Furthermore, these emotional disturbances appear to be longstanding. Catherine has suffered from and been treated for depression since she was a child. As adults, Simon has been treated for a bipolar disorder and Ron for depression. In addition, all exhibit feelings, thoughts and behaviors that indicate that their mental and emotional disturbances began in childhood (Catherine and Simon) or in adolescence (Ron).

A Lack of Support and High Expectations

Not only do the respondents have substance abuse and psychiatric disorders, they grew up in environments that had a paucity of protective factors. None had consistent support and high expectations from the adults in their lives.

Catherine's parents neglected her. It was only when she was totally desolate, pregnant and on the streets at 14 or homeless with two children that her parents provided measurable levels of support, and in both instances the support was more for her children than it was for Catherine. In contrast, Ron's mother and grandparents have given him everything they have had to offer. His mother made sure he had food, clothing and shelter, but her need to protect herself from her husband left her with very few emotional resources. Ron's grandparents gave him a place of refuge. Within this support was the apparent expectation that Ron would end up "fighting and not working." It is only within the past year that they have asked him to "start taking some responsibility for himself." Finally, Simon's parents have also given him everything they have to offer: food, clothing, shelter and emotional support. However, by consistently making excuses for his difficulties, they have not established high standards for his behavior.

In addition, many of the members of Ron and Catherine's families live outside of mainstream society and its morality. The extended network of adults they have grown up with has modeled drug use and sales, escort services, fighting and welfare fraud. They live in a different culture, one with rules and standards of behavior that differ from mainstream society. According to conventional standards, Ron and Catherine have failed to make much out of their lives. Yet, how can they be considered failures when they have never really tried to succeed in conventional pursuits? In fact, their primary identity lies in being oppositional. For example, by Ron's standards his failure lies in his inability to develop a loyal group of partners who stick together to run a profitable drug trade, not in his inability to get and maintain stable employment.

Timing

Finally, it is only now, at age 25, that these individuals have begun to consider the possibility that it may be in their best interest to change the direction of their lives. Still, they are ambivalent. They don't like the negative consequences that result from their lifestyles, such as drug overdoses and jail, but they don't really want to change. Most of their energy goes into trying to find a way to continue living the lives they lead and avoiding the consequences. For example, Simon believes the solution to his problems is to not drink and drive rather than to quit drinking. Ron believes he can avoid death and prison if he is not too "flashy" and can "out smart" the authorities. It is only Catherine who says she has to change. She knows she can't sell drugs if she wants to maintain custody of her children. However she has not even considered curtailing her continued involvement with gang-involved, violent men.

In summary, all three of these respondents are struggling. None seem poised to stop committing crimes, to stop abusing alcohol and other drugs, or to gain stable employment.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research and Evaluation Manager, Comprehensive Health Education Foundation.
Provide leadership in the planning and implementation of evaluations and guide the development of curricula and programs. Responsibilities include monitoring current research, work with staff to incorporate research into the development of new products, establish measurable goals and objectives that will meet evaluation standards, hire and monitor independent evaluator, and oversee the planning and implementation of evaluations according to current standards. 9/02 -present

Executive Director, Communities In Schools of Snohomish County. .
Provide leadership and oversee all aspects of the organization's activities. Responsibilities include: facilitate the development of a strategic plan, annual goals and objectives; identify and develop partnerships within the community; develop and manage the annual budget; coordinate and develop a system for assessing, planning, measuring, reporting and managing the organization's activities; hire, train, supervise and evaluate staff; write reports, grants and program materials. 9/99 – 9/02

Independent Contractor.
Provide program development, consultation, training services and outcome evaluations for organizations serving young people and their families. Responsibilities include: develop and implement training packages in parent, teacher, and professional education; clinical consultation; grant writing; developing marketing strategies; and conducting outcome evaluation. Clients include Seattle School District, King County Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Developmental Research and Programs, Ryther Child Center, Cocoon House and others. 9/87 – 9/99.

Research Assistant, Training for Interprofessional Collaboration: University of Washington College of Education. Supervisor: Dr. Michael Knapp.
Doctoral student responsible for working with a research team to design and implement an evaluation of the Training for Interprofessional Collaboration (TIC) project. Responsibilities include: working with a team to design semi-structured interview questions, questionnaires, and protocols for observations; conduct interviews; act as a participant observer in project activities, analyze data, and write a chapter in yearly reports. 9/92 - 8/94.

Parent Program Coordinator, Raising Healthy Children: University of Washington School of Social Work. Supervisor: Dr. Richard Catalano
Responsible for developing, supervising and implementing parent training and home based services for parents of high risk-elementary students. Responsibilities include: review of research and existing programs; work with parents, community groups and school district personnel to develop and implement services; hire, train, supervise and evaluate staff; provide clinical consultation; carry small case load; monitor client performance; and provide board support. 8/90-9/92.

Project Director, Seattle Social Development Project: University of Washington School of Social Work. Supervisor: Dr. J. David Hawkins
Responsible for supervising and implementing an alcohol and drug abuse prevention research project in eighteen Seattle elementary schools. Responsibilities include: developing program materials and procedures; coordinating services with school district personnel and community members; hire, train, supervise, and evaluate staff; provide clinical consultation, parent training and board support; document implementation and monitor contracts and budgets; write reports, grants and program materials. 9/86 - 9/87.

Clinical Director, Project ADAPT: University of Washington School of Social Work. Supervisor: Dr. Richard Catalano
Responsible for developing, supervising and implementing a community re-integration program for institutionalized adolescents. Developed and implemented a skills training curriculum and case management system. Responsibilities include: developing program materials and procedures; hire, train, supervise and evaluate staff; provide clinical consultation and carry small case load; monitor client performance; document implementation and write quarterly reports; monitor budget; develop community resources; provide board support and disseminate program information. 2/84 - 9/86.

Consultation and Education Program Manager: Kitsap Mental Health Services. Supervisor: Larry Keller
Responsible for designing and implementing county substance abuse and mental health prevention services. Administrative responsibilities include: planning, grant writing and fundraising; hire, train, supervise and evaluate staff; and develop and monitor contracts and budgets. Program responsibilities include: conducting community needs assessments; developing programs and program materials; provide consultation to schools; train parents, teachers, administrators, and students; and teach at local community college. 1/82 - 2/84.

Adolescent Day Treatment, Lead Counselor and teacher: Kitsap Mental Health Services. Supervisor: Gene Laes
Lead counselor and teacher for intensive day treatment program for delinquent, abused, and neglected youth. Responsibilities include program design and development; intake evaluations; crisis intervention; group, family and individual counseling. Responsible for developing, teaching and evaluating skill development programs and coordinating treatment programs with school districts, law enforcement, parents and support services. 9/79 - 1/82

Youth Outreach Worker: Umatilla County Mental Health. Supervisor: Jud Morris.
Responsible for individual, family and group counseling with emotionally disturbed, chemically dependent and delinquent youth and their families. Requires formulating problem lists and treatment plans, client advocacy, information and referral, crisis intervention, and on-going counseling. Necessitates community resources development in cooperation with schools, law enforcement, treatment agencies, and parent and community organizations. 6/76 - 9/77.

EDUCATION

MS Counseling, Education Department, University of Oregon, June 1979.

BS Political Science; Basic Secondary Teaching Certificate, Social Studies, University of Oregon, June 1976.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Council on Integrated Children's Programs: Outcome Task Force, 1/96 - 5/97
Children's Campaign Fund: Chair, 10/90 - 10/92.
Children's Alliance: policy and leadership committees. 2/86 - 1/91.
Children's Initiative Campaign: board member and fund-raiser, 1988/89.
Washington State Legislature: Youth Substance Abuse Advisory Committee. 1986/87.
Kitsap County United Way: board member. 3/80 - 2/85
Washington Community Mental Health Council: Children's Mental Health Legislative Committee, chair. 1982/85
Department of Social and Health Services: Children and Family Services Advisory Board. 1983/84.

REFERENCES

Available on request.