

Pathways From Childhood Conduct Problems To Adult Criminality

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Criminal psychologists have conducted several studies on the psychiatric disorders that lead to criminal behaviour. These studies have consistently confirmed the lasting impact of the mental problems that occur in childhood on future antisocial personalities, particularly the demeanour issues that lead to antisocial behaviour and criminality (Mordre et al., 2011). According to Mordre et al. (2011), studies on convicts in Western nations show that 50 per cent of prisoners fulfil the diagnoses of grave conduct or antisocial personality disorders when imprisoned. Even though conduct disorder is a renowned precursor of antisocial temperaments, other infancy disorders as antecedents of antisocial traits are contentious in some way. However, some studies have confirmed that ADHD and antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), together with conduct disorder, can lead to antisocial behaviour and criminality later in life (Mordre et al. 2011).

Conduct Disorder

Conduct disorder is an array of behavioural as well as emotional problems that typically start during childhood or teenage years. Kids and teenagers affected by the disorder experience difficulties in following rules and ensuring their behaviours are socially acceptable. From time to time, they can be hostile, destructive, and dishonest. Such practices can violate the rights of other people, especially those who do not understand their causes. Individuals with conduct disorder at times are also affected by other psychiatric conditions as the personalities of hostility or conduct for each may overlap. Examples of traits that come along with this situation are assaults, theft, and bullying. Some kids may also show cruelty to animals or engage in arson (Abraham, 2017).

Research has shown that deviant behaviours in childhood can lead to a life that encompasses criminality. For instance, according to Pajer (1998), there is a stable connection between a mental disease occurring at a given time and the reoccurrence of similar symptoms under a similar or different mental problem in the future. This account is based on a study that he conducted in 1998, which examined the relationship between delinquent behaviour in teenagers and criminal behaviour among grownup males. Another survey by Soderstrom et al. (2004) associated psychiatric issues with aggressiveness or relapse and a lifelong history of hostility. The findings of the study linked conduct disorder, ADHD, and ASPD with an antagonistic tendency, where the affected individuals would return to a psychiatrist for help. The study confirms that once a person contracts at least one of the behavioural disorders, there is a possibility that they will have it for the rest of their lives.

Attention Deficit Disorder with or without Hyperactivity (ADHD)

Every person can have trouble sitting quietly, paying attention or avoiding impulsive tendencies for some time. Nevertheless, for some individuals, the challenges are incredibly pervasive and continuing, and they find it very hard to control them. Some characteristics of ADHD are challenges in paying attention, impulsivity, as well as hyperactivity. According to Fletcher and Wolfe (2012), a person affected by the syndrome between five and twelve years of age has a higher possibility of engaging in criminal activities as a young grownup than any other person. Fletcher and Wolfe (2012) further said that the pattern remains intact even when the study takes other aspects that can affect it, such as poverty and gender, into consideration. The outcome is also in agreement with the anticipations of the economic models of crime. A person affected by ADHD has a limited market expectation, and therefore, s/he is more likely to exhibit criminality than other teenagers or young adults (Fletcher & Wolfe, 2012).

Moreover, an individual with attention challenges is more likely to show criminal behaviours than people who are ADHD-free. S/he has a high likelihood of engaging in crimes encompassing planning, for example, drug trafficking or shoplifting. Individuals suffering from impulsivity appear to be more involved in more senseless crimes like robbery and mugging. However, people affected by a combination of ADHP symptoms are less engaged in criminal activities (Fletcher & Wolfe, 2012).

The findings by the two researchers show that there is a high probability for children who have ADHD to exhibit poor results as young adults. For that reason, one can use the discoveries from the study to come up with intervention programs to avert the risks. The plans and the accompanying assessments will help in reducing the probability of these kids committing a crime. Children with ADHD can prosper in life. However, there is a need for proper identification and treatment as the condition can be severe if not checked. Examples of consequences of ADHD are poor performance in school, family problems, drug abuse, criminal behaviour, and job loss.

Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)

ASPD is a psychiatric condition that causes irresponsible neglect of social rules, impulsive tendencies, and incapability to experience guilt. The frustration tolerance of individuals with ASPD is near the ground (Aggarwal, 2013). They also exhibit an exaggerated sense of self-esteem and have personalities that make them infringe on the rights of other people. The condition also has a link to co-occurring psychiatric diseases and other medical co-morbidity. It also has a relationship with a high rate of natural as well as unnatural deaths, such as suicide and homicide, and it is a precursor of inferior treatment response. ASPD typically starts before age ten. Researchers identify it as a conduct disorder in infancy, but after eighteen years of age, the condition graduates to ASPD in case antisocial conducts persist (Black, 2015). Moffit (1993) says that though it is rare for people to commit crimes

after adolescence, there are some individuals who get into adulthood while still exhibiting ASPD symptoms. Other people seem to improve with age (Black, 2015).

In sum, conduct disorders in tandem with ADHD and ASPD can lead to adult criminality. Children commonly exhibit deviant behaviours at a young age. The actions, however, change as they transition to adulthood. However, there are some exceptions where these tendencies spill into adulthood. Such conduct includes those described under ADHD, ASPD and behaviour disorders (for instance, bullying, burglary, and substance abuse, among several others). Individuals who carry the symptoms of the diseases to adulthood regularly engage in criminal activities, which means that there is a connection between deviant behaviour during infancy and adult criminality.

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