Developmental approaches to understanding adolescent deviance

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The importance of understanding serious externalizing problem behaviors in adolescence—such as delinquency, substance abuse, and school dropout—can be readily grasped by even a brief consideration of their costs, such as the $2.8 billion per year for facilities to detain apprehended juveniles, or the $260 billion in lost lifetime earnings for each year’s class of school dropouts (Catterall, 1987; U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1993). These staggering costs may themselves be only pale reflections of the larger cumulative costs of these problems to individual adolescents, many of whom are also enduring lingering effects of growing up in impoverished conditions. Researchers and theoreticians have sought to explain these problems with sociological, psychological, biological, and genetic theories (Becker, 1973; DiLalla & Gottesman, 1989; Gottesman & Goldsmith, in press; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). Yet, for all we have learned about juvenile deviance, our knowledge has yielded only moderate guidance to efforts to prevent or reduce the incidence of such deviance (Kazdin, 1993; Tate, Reppucci, & Mulvey, 1995).

Given the long and extensive history of research and theorizing in this area, what can the relatively new discipline of developmental psychopathology contribute? Perhaps a great deal. A unique facet of developmental psychopathology is that it focuses not on static correlates of deviance, but on developmental precursors and sequelae of deviance (Cicchetti, 1984, 1990). Psychopathology is also not seen as existing in a vacuum, but within a broader social context in which individual development and larger social, economic, and cultural forces interact over time (Richters & Cicchetti, 1993; Zigler & Glick, 1986). This approach is thus intrinsically well suited to inform real-world efforts to modify or produce such change and development.

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Questions raised by a developmental perspective

With its focus upon change and both normative and nonnormative aspects of development, the perspective of developmental psychopathology suggests a need to look afresh at three of the more well-established findings about juvenile deviance. These three findings have each been consistently replicated and are strikingly well accepted across numerous disciplines:

1. Problem behavior rates shoot up dramatically at the onset of adolescence.
2. They decline almost as precipitously by the end of adolescence.
3. Delinquency rates are highest among adolescents with troubled family backgrounds.

The increase in problem behavior rates is stark and dramatic at the onset of adolescence with rates of serious criminal behavior increasing more than 10-fold from ages 12 to 17 (Blumstein, Cohen, & Farrington, 1988). The decreases at the end of adolescence are less clear-cut, although by the age of 30, serious criminal behaviors decline to less than one-fourth of their adolescent peak (Blumstein et al., 1988). Finally, a long line of research on families of delinquent adolescents has consistently revealed strong links between deviance and parental histories of delinquency in adolescence, poor parenting practices (particularly disciplinary practices), use of harsh disciplinary strategies, and poor monitoring of teens’ behaviors (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Dumas, Gibson, & Albin, 1989; Hirschi, 1969; Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1980; Loebber & Dishion, 1983; Patterson & Loeber, 1984; West, 1982). Taken together, these parenting practices can account for 30% to 40% of the variance in key behaviors such as delinquency or school difficulties (Patterson et al., 1989).

These three recurring findings about adolescent deviance are now accepted as “given” or as background in much research on juvenile delinquency. Yet, if we simply take these three findings for granted and move on to other issues, we miss an immense opportunity to understand the development of adolescent deviance. Specifically, these findings give rise to three parallel questions, that cut to the heart of how and why developmental psychopathology can and must inform our thinking about adolescent problem behaviors:

1. Why does the incidence of problematic behavior increase so dramatically in adolescence?
2. Why does it decline following adolescence?
3. How and why do negative family interaction patterns develop and get maintained in families with deviant teens?

The first two questions suggest that as we look for the causes of deviance within samples of adolescents, we risk overlooking factors that may help us understand why adolescence as an era of development is associated with dramatically increased rates of deviance. Ironically, we spend large sums of money on interventions (particularly punitive and incarceration-based interventions) and action research with
frequently disappointing results in the quest to find ways of reducing problem behaviors (Tate et al., 1995; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993). Yet, as our field struggles with the apparent intractability of juvenile deviance, millions of teens are literally growing out of problematic patterns of behavior each year, as a result of naturally occurring social, psychological, biological, and interpersonal changes (Moffitt, 1993). These developmental changes occur regularly and predictably with little or no professional intervention, across both normal and at-risk populations. Understanding these developmental processes may be one of our best means for identifying ways of intervening to alter them in a more favorable direction. For example, even slight accelerations in developmental processes that occur naturally at the end of adolescence could lead to sizable reductions in the incidence of problem behavior within our society. Although prior research has identified high degrees of stability of problem behaviors within cohorts, these findings should not lead us to ignore the fact that actual levels of deviance for an entire cohort typically change quite substantially over time (Loebel, Stouthamer-Loebel, Van Kammen, & Farrington, 1991). Before we conclude that “nothing works,” we may want to examine the normative developmental processes that already routinely have the effects we desire to bring about with intervention efforts.

**Deviance and adolescent social development**

In the remainder of this chapter we will consider the ways in which problematic patterns of behavior develop and change in adolescence by focusing on their links to adolescents’ progress in addressing the major social developmental tasks of this period. These tasks include revising relationships with parents, forming peer relationships that are deep and lasting enough to serve eventually as attachment relationships, and learning a multitude of microskills necessary to cope emotionally, socially, financially, and even physically as an independent adult (Allen & Pfeiffer, 1991; Hauser & Bowlds, 1990). We need to begin to consider, What happens normatively during the adolescent phase of development to lead to such a dramatic increase followed by a dramatic decline in levels of problem behavior?

We will consider two important aspects of social development in adolescence: increasing autonomy strivings and the changing nature of the attachment relationship as they relate to adolescent deviance. We begin with a consideration of adolescent autonomy strivings, first examining these strivings as a universal developmental challenge for adolescents, and then going on to consider what we are learning about different developmental pathways for handling these strivings, and, in particular, how these different pathways might influence the likelihood of deviant behavior. Next, we consider the growing body of knowledge about the ways in which attachment relationships are maintained and internalized into and beyond adolescence. Here we also begin to suggest some of the more complex interactions that might be expected between different attachment organizations and different paths toward handling autonomy strivings. Because it is impossible to consider social development absent a social context to serve as a backdrop for this development, we conclude this chapter by considering how the individual and familial level developmental processes we describe might interact with major sociodemographic influences that have been linked to deviant behavior.

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**Autonomy strivings**

**Normative development**

One of the most important tasks for adolescent social development is the gradual attainment of both emotional and behavioral autonomy in relation to parents (Collins, 1990; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986; Moore, 1987; Steinberg, 1990). Without attaining such autonomy in adolescence, meaningful practice in developing judgment about complex life decisions becomes virtually impossible. Yet, while greater autonomy opens up new areas in which teens can explore and gain competence, increased autonomy strivings also bring about the potential for problems. As adolescence begins, teens begin to feel that their parents’ judgment should be superseded by their own or by peers’ judgment (Berndt, 1979; Smetana, 1988). Serious difficulties may arise as adolescents “try out” ways of behaving other than those prescribed by their parents. In addition, in their strivings for both autonomy and maturity, Moffitt (1993) has argued persuasively that teens may be increasingly likely to mimic deviant peers who appear to have access to markers of maturity— from alcohol to forbidden activities. Thus, deviance may increase normatively both as a result of increased freedom from parental norms and, at least in some cases, as a means of obtaining the appearance of maturity and autonomy when it cannot be otherwise obtained.

One of the most significant gains in research on adolescent autonomy in the past 15 years has been the recognition that such autonomy optimally is developed not at the expense of relationships, but rather in the context of close, supportive relationships with parents (Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O’Connor, 1994; Collins, 1990). Although increased autonomy may bring with it increased opportunity for problem behaviors and deviance, a strong relationship with parents may serve as a check on deviant behavior (Hirschi, 1969). Such a relationship does not eliminate teens’ ability to explore problem behaviors, but it does increase motivation to conform behavior to limits acceptable within adult society. If we consider autonomy and relatedness with parents as independent dimensions (i.e., adolescents may possess one, the other, both, or neither), we immediately begin raising questions about the different paths adolescents may take toward establishing autonomy within different types of relationships with parents. Based on existing research and theory, we will outline several potential pathways along with their implications for deviant behavior in adolescence.
Autonomy with relatedness

As suggested, establishing autonomy in the context of a positive relationship with parents is one adaptive pathway through which relationships with parents may be redefined during adolescence. Clearly, establishing high levels of both autonomy and relatedness in a single relationship is a complex task, and, until relatively recently, autonomy and relatedness were seen as lying at opposite ends of a continuum (Newman & Newman, 1975). Understanding how adolescents and their parents negotiate this task requires considering both the domains in which autonomy is established and the specific strategies used by both parents and adolescents.

Smetana (1988, 1989) has shown that parent–teen conflicts can be meaningfully distinguished in terms of whether they simply reflect issues of personal style and choice, or larger social conventions and moral issues. When adolescent autonomy is established around issues of personal choice (such as style, taste, and personal preferences), autonomy strivings need not threaten parental authority nor the adolescent’s relationship with parents (Smetana, 1988). Questions such as hair length and style might even briefly become “life and death” issues to teens without necessarily threatening their relationship with parents, precisely because these are not “life and death” issues for parents. At the same time, these issues do not necessarily interfere with teen functioning. Quite the opposite, establishing some independence from adult norms – at least in noncritical areas of functioning – appears linked to better overall functioning with peers (Allen, Weissberg, & Hawkins, 1989). Thus, autonomy can be established in some areas, reflecting personal style, while parental authority may be maintained in other areas that are more central to adaptive functioning, such as maintaining adequate academic performance and avoiding serious illegal behavior.

Autonomy strivings that focus primarily around personal choice issues are typically met as the adolescent matures, and is granted increased responsibility and freedom by parents (Smetana, 1988). These strivings may also drive some deviant behavior; however, we would expect that the likelihood of their leading to highly deviant behaviors would decrease to the extent that the strivings were met in adaptive ways (Allen, Aber, & Leadbeater, 1990). From this perspective, the natural rise and fall of autonomy strivings may account for part of the rise and fall of more serious deviant behavior before, during, and after adolescence. Understanding teen autonomy strivings may thus tell us something about why deviance increases as adolescence begins and then decreases as it ends.

A second key quality of the process by which teens establish their autonomy in relation to parents is how it is established, whether via negotiation and cooperation or hostility and withdrawal (Allen, Kuperminc, Philliber, & Herre, 1994). Teens need not declare war with their parents to establish their autonomy. They may, however, need to engage in protracted and tense “peace talks” in which they both directly question their parents’ authority while also responding to thoughtful responses their parents make in return. In our research, we have examined the extent to which parents and teens handle disagreements by focusing on the reasoning underlying each of their positions. When individuals focus on why they hold their positions, they can consider the merits of their own and others’ reasoning as a basis for addressing the disagreement, rather than trying to decide who should give in and to what extent (Allen et al., 1994). Positions may change not because of pressure from another person (i.e., via relinquishment of autonomy), but through careful consideration of another person’s reasoning about that issue.

In practical terms, an adolescent who becomes convinced of the dangers of drug use may adopt this as his or her own value, rather than seeing it as a compromise with parents. Drug use, then, would no longer be a focus (or a result) of autonomy struggles with parents. Ironically, a successfully negotiated solution can leave both sides feeling autonomous and in control of the outcome, whereas impulsive and unilateral adolescent assertions of autonomy followed by equally unilateral and harsh parental reactions can leave both sides feeling less autonomous and in control. Successful negotiating patterns may help teens establish autonomy without forgoing a positive relationship with parents, whereas unsuccessful handling of autonomy strivings may cause teens to feel both less autonomous and more in need of ways to establish their autonomy.

Of course, even a successful negotiation of autonomy issues that maintains the parental relationship may not eliminate deviant behavior. Rather, it may simply provide avenues by which autonomy can be obtained while also allowing the parent to play its normal function of limiting the extent and seriousness of deviant behavior. Although the developmental function of autonomy strivings may help explain overall patterns of change in deviance across adolescence, particular difficulties in handling these strivings may help explain why particular adolescents display high levels of deviant behavior relative to their peers. Some of these difficulties are considered here.

Difficulties in establishing autonomy

Because establishing autonomy is such a critical task for adolescents, teens who are not able to establish autonomy while maintaining positive relationships with parents are likely to be at high risk for a number of disturbances in functioning. For example, in our observations of teens and parents discussing previously identified areas of disagreement about hypothetical moral dilemmas (an area suggested by Smetana [1989] as likely to be in teens’ growing province of issues about which they expect to have some control), some families actively undermine one another’s emotional and cognitive autonomy. They may do this by overpersonalizing discussions, turning them into battles between persons rather than discussions of ideas, or by placing undue pressure on the other person, rather than by offering reasoned arguments (“You just won’t even understand what I’m saying, you’re just too young (or old),” or, “Will you just give up and stop arguing?”) Autonomy-undermining behavior in discussions at age 14 has been found to predict increases
in levels of hostility demonstrated toward parents from age 14 to age 16 (Allen, Hauser, O'Connor, Bell, & Eickholt, 1996). The clearest predictions come not from parents' behaviors undermining autonomy in the discussion, but from teens' own autonomy-undermining behaviors. A likely explanation is that teens who are having difficulty achieving autonomy within relationships with parents may eventually seek to undermine those relationships with hostile behavior—either out of frustration or in a less-than-optimal attempt to gain autonomy through angry confrontations with parents.

In addition, families in which parents undermine teens' autonomy at age 16 have teens who are later viewed as unusually hostile in interactions with peers at age 25 (Allen & Hauser, in press). These correlations are strong (r = .50), robust (occurring in both normal and previously psychiatrically hospitalized groups of adolescents), and suggest long-term sequelae of difficulties with this critical developmental task. One possible explanation is that teens who have had their autonomy undermined in interactions with parents carry forward expectations of close relationships in which their basic social and emotional needs are unlikely to be met. They then approach new relationships with a defensive, hostile stance. Such teens may have also developed patterns of seeking autonomy at the expense of relationships, based initially on interactions with parents, but eventually generalizing to interactions with peers.

These findings suggest that the feelings of anger and hostility that are associated with adolescent deviant behavior may be partly understandable as a reaction to failure at a critical developmental task (establishing autonomy vis-à-vis parents) at a critical juncture in development (Allen et al., 1990). This may not be the only source of such anger and hostility, but it does suggest an explanation of why adolescence may be a time of particularly hostile interactions for some families. Even in families where autonomy-granting takes place relatively smoothly, transient difficulties in this process may also lead to hostility or to teens' efforts to establish autonomy by violating parents' behavioral norms. Most important, this perspective suggests that development may well open up different avenues for intervention at different points in the life-span. Whereas behavior management training and mastery-based and skills-training interventions may be most effective with young children (McMahon & Wells, 1990), interventions that offer nondeviant paths toward autonomy—for example, by offering ways of being better accepted in the larger social world beyond the family—may carry the most salience in adolescence (Allen et al., 1994).

**Further questions about adolescent pathways to autonomy**

There are many other paths besides the two outlined for handling issues of teen autonomy, and many variations off of these paths. For example, teens may simply withdraw from the task and from parents—a behavior pattern that we have observed to be relatively stable over time, and to predict depression more than hostility.

*Understanding adolescent deviance* (Allen et al., 1994). In addition, this discussion raises other important questions such as, What are the *precursors* at earlier stages of development of teen-parent difficulties handling autonomy strivings? How do strivings to gain cognitive and emotional autonomy, as described earlier, interact with strivings to gain direct control over one's behavior and to escape parental monitoring and control? And, are there teens for whom increased autonomy from troubled relationships with parents may lead to *decreased* deviance, or ways in which completion of the task of establishing autonomy leads to decreased deviance for most teens?

Even this brief list of questions should make clear that the preceding discussion illustrates only one way in which understanding different pathways for handling teen autonomy strivings may help us understand adolescent deviance. Other pathways clearly exist and warrant equal attention (e.g., see Moffitt, 1993). We now turn to consider one perspective on the history of the parent-adolescent relationship—offered by attachment theory—as an example of ways in which patterns established at prior periods in development might interact with current developmental challenges to influence current levels of problem behaviors.

*Adolescent attachment and deviance*

Attachment theory and accompanying research have revolutionized the study of infant development in the past 20 years (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Ainsworth, 1989; Bretherton, 1985; van Ijzendoorn, in press). More recently, the development of interview techniques that assess adults' internal representations of attachment experiences and that have strong theoretical and empirical links to attachment as measured in infancy and childhood have brought the promise of understanding a universal human process with substantial implications for behavior across the life-span (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). Strong continuities observed in attachment organization across the life-span and across generations (Benoit & Parker, 1994; Waters, Merrick, Albersheim, & Treboux, 1995) suggest that attachment theory may offer both a mechanism by which disturbed family interactions may be internalized and carried forward into future relationships, and a potential way to understand the genesis of patterns of disturbed interactions in families with adolescents.

The consistently observed continuities in attachment patterns across the life-span and across generations suggest the likelihood of substantial continuities in attachment organization between parents and adolescents. This in turn suggests that it may make some sense to speak of the attachment organization of family relationships, rather than just of individuals, in adolescence. Adolescence has long been identified as an era in which models of attachment relationships can be reconsidered and reorganized, and in which the relationships on which those models are based can rapidly change (Main et al., 1985; Ricks, 1985; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). In particular, the highly charged stress of impending separation and growing auton-
omy may well rekindle issues and patterns of interaction from far earlier in the attachment relationship.

As will be outlined, available data suggest relations of attachment insecurity to problem behaviors and deviance more generally. Several possible lines of relation among attachment and deviance in adolescence are presented and ways in which attachment organization would be likely to interact with other aspects of development to lead toward or away from problematic behavior are then considered.

Secure attachment organizations

Security in attachment organization, represented in the infant’s secure categorization or in the adolescent’s or adult’s categorization as “autonomous yet valuing of attachment,” is identified as the optimal outcome of attachment processes (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1980; Main et al., 1985). This organization in infant–caregiver dyads is accompanied by flexibility in attending to new stimuli, and by exploratory behaviors that are sustained and supported by the expectation that the caregiver will be available to provide a secure base that can be returned to in the event of need. In adolescence and adulthood, this security is internalized, and characterized by the ability to think and speak coherently about attachment relationships, describing them in logical, internally consistent, and balanced ways (Main & Goldwyn, in press).

As children with secure attachment relationships to parents enter adolescence, autonomy issues can still be expected to arise and lead to predictable family conflicts. However, in secure dyads one might expect these relationships to be characterized by strong efforts by all parties to maintain strong connections between parent and teen. Kobak has referred to the importance in adolescence of the “goal-corrected partnership” in which both parents and adolescents adjust their behaviors in line with the other’s communicated needs and desires as both seek a common goal of fostering adaptive adolescent development (Kobak, Cole, Ferenzi-Gillies, & Fleming, 1993). Our own studies have found far better communication patterns in families of secure adolescents, with parents knowing more about what their adolescent thinks, being trusted and confided in more, and having lower levels of conflict and conflict characterized by multilateral (vs. unilateral) decision making (Allen & Bell, 1995). Both parents’ and teens’ attachment systems may become taxed repeatedly as the adolescent explores values, behaviors, and ultimately residences that are not shared with parents. Such exploration may bring threats, both to adolescents and parents who are resetting life goals and tasks (Hill & Holmbeck, 1986). Yet, these tasks are unlikely to be overly threatening, and such threats are likely to be lessened by the secure expectation that the relationship will remain fundamentally intact and the other person will remain psychologically available. Thus, in secure dyads, teen autonomy strivings are relatively unlikely to undermine the fundamental role of the parental relationship in limiting the most serious forms of deviant behavior.

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Various studies in childhood have linked attachment security to fewer problems in compliance and to fewer childhood autonomy struggles with parents (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Alexander, Waldron, Barton, & Mas, 1989; Lay, Waters, & Park, 1989; Russo, Cataldo, & Cushing, 1981; Sroufe et al., 1984; Waters, Wippman, & Sroufe, 1979). In adolescence, research is just beginning to identify ways in which secure parent–teen dyads avoid struggles over autonomy and control issues that their insecure counterparts do not (Allen & Hauser, in press, Kobak et al., 1993). In adolescence and adulthood, secure states of mind regarding attachment have been related to better social functioning with peers and to lower levels of psychological symptomatology in both normal and patient samples (Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Dozier, Stevenson, Lee, & Veiligan, 1991). Our own research to date suggests that secure teens have somewhat lower likelihoods of engaging in problem behaviors (Allen & Kuperminc, 1995). However, this research also confirms a recurring finding from childhood—that the attachment system is not isomorphic with other important systems operating in families, such as parents’ behavioral control systems.

Clearly, in secure dyads, all behavior will not necessarily be in accord with parents’ desires. As already discussed, exploration and autonomy strivings in adolescence mean exploring values and behaviors that are different from those of parents, including deviant behaviors. Experimentation with such behaviors is not necessarily destructive (Shedler & Block, 1990); yet a secure relationship with parents is likely to keep this exploration from going too far and into overly dangerous territory. At the same time, adolescents’ interests in exploring autonomy from parents, combined with security in the availability of the relationship with parents, could actually allow the adolescent heightened opportunities to explore deviant behavior. This would arise because teens may have the confidence to behave autonomously, with little fear of losing the parental relationship as a result of their behavior, even if it contradicts parental norms. The key term here is “exploration.” Secure teens might explore deviant behaviors, but would probably be less likely to engage in serious and destructive patterns of behavior of which their parents disapprove.

Insecure attachment organizations

Insecure attachment organizations have been categorized into three basic patterns described slightly differently in infancy and adulthood: dismissing/avoidant (in adulthood/infancy); preoccupied/amibivalent; and unresolved with respect to past loss or trauma/disorganized (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main & Solomon, 1986; Main & Goldwyn, in press). Each is expected to hold in common past experience with a caregiver who was at some point not adequately sensitive and/or available to meet the attachment needs of the child/adolescent (Bowlby, 1980; Main & Solomon, 1986). In addition, as assessed in adolescence and adulthood, each of these insecure attachment organizations reflects at least some degree of functional deficit.
with accompanying angry behavior as well (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Cassidy & Berlin, 1994). The rate of deviant behavior in these families depends largely upon how such behavior changes the family interaction pattern in a given family. In families where deviance heightens and intensifies interactions among family members (i.e., leads to long, intense discussions), high levels of deviance might well be expected because deviance may come to function as an overused attachment behavior, just as angry protest does in infancy. The adolescent analogue to insecure-resistant/ambivalent infant behavior in strange situations may well be protracted, angry conflict between parents and teens.

Alternatively, in some preoccupied families, adolescent problem behaviors may produce too great a threat to family relationships, and thus be avoided. In this regard, deviance would function more like exploratory behavior in infancy. The perceived fragility and ongoing hyperactivation of the attachment system precludes opportunity for the adolescent to explore behavior prescribed by the parent. Some researchers have even argued, with some empirical support, that low levels of deviance in adolescence may actually reflect a slightly higher level of competence than the complete absence of deviant behaviors (Shedler & Block, 1990).

The unresolved/disorganized attachment organization constitutes the newest, least studied, and most controversial of attachment organizations that are widely used in research (Main & Hesse, 1990, 1992; Main & Solomon, 1986). This classification typically applies when an attachment figure dies, or behaves in frightening or abusive ways, and the individual is not subsequently able to reorganize attachment thought and behavior to take these factors into account. This status has been linked to aggressive and hostile child behavior and to serious adolescent psychopathology (Allen, Hauser, & Borman-Spurrell, 1996, Lyons-Ruth, Alpern, & Repacholi, 1993), but more specific behavior patterns associated with it have not yet been clearly identified. In addition, one pathway toward this status, a history of abuse at the hands of attachment figures, probably bears particular consideration, as it suggests a further means of understanding the observed relation between violent and abusive parenting and child/adolescent delinquency and violence (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Main & Goldwyn, 1984). One possibility is that disorganized attachments can account for highly disturbed (and often aggressive) patterns of behavior both within and beyond the family. Again, this pattern would not necessarily be expected to be limited to adolescence, although increased family conflict around other issues during adolescence could well intensify disturbances associated with this attachment organization.

Individual development and sociodemographic disadvantage

As mentioned earlier, the developmental processes and attachment relationships that influence the development of deviance in adolescence do not occur in a social and cultural vacuum. Although a detailed consideration of the influences of factors such as poverty, unemployment, racism, and crime within a community upon teen
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behavior toward them. For example, maternal unemployment has been found to lead to a chain of maternal depression, increased levels of punishment of the adolescent, and adolescents' perceptions of a less functional relationship with their mothers, all of which lead to lower levels of teen socioemotional functioning (Mcloyd, Jayaratne, Ceballa, & Borquez, 1994). Similarly, poverty appears to limit the ability of parents' to use their relationship with their teen to set limits on deviant behavior (Sampson & Laub, 1994). When parents are increasingly irritable or hostile, or have increased levels of conflict with their teen, this impairment in the relationship appears likely to lead to higher levels of externalizing behavior on the part of the child or adolescent (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994).

Finally, the effects of sociodemographic stressors are not necessarily additive (Rutter, 1979; Sameroff, Seifer, Barocas, Zax, & Greenspan, 1987). Rather, in the case of deviance, a "multiple gates" model may be most appropriate. Factors such as parental limits on behavior, neighborhood and peer social pressures, the quality of relationship with parents, expectations of positive future societal roles, and basic empathy skills developed in close relationships with caregivers over time may each serve individually as gates to help prevent the most serious deviant behavior. Each of these gates, even functioning in isolation, may be sufficient to rein in the most serious and disturbed deviant behavior even in the face of variations in teens' autonomy strivings and changing attachment relationships with parents. And even completely removing one or two of these gates may lead to only modest increases in deviance. Yet, in situations when all or virtually all of these gates are absent - when extreme impoverishment and economic despair combine with family lives in which parents' have been chronically too overtaxed to handle adequately teens' needs for either autonomy or attachment, all in the context of a dangerous neighborhood - there may be little left to limit adolescent deviance. Such a model, and such circumstances may help to account for the development of the violent, extremely high rate offenders who create such tremendous societal problems.

This perspective is clearly sobering in suggesting the limits of purely psychological approaches to teen deviance. Yet, this perspective also suggests that the most serious deviant behavior may in some ways be quite amenable to preventive interventions designed to maintain the presence of at least one of the gates described here. Indeed, intensive psychological interventions are demonstrating success in reducing deviance even among the most violent juveniles (Henggeler, Melton, & Smith, 1992). Similarly, multifaceted interventions aimed at alleviating the effects of poverty and social deprivation across childhood and adolescence continue to be developed and enhanced (Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Zigler, Styfco, & Gilman, 1993), offering the promise of using our knowledge ultimately to prevent serious adolescent problem behaviors.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have sought to illustrate the ways in which an understanding of
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prisingly, some of the most successful and well-evaluated interventions, addressing problems from school dropout to teen violence to teen pregnancy, share a recognition of the need to address problematic characteristics of teens and/or their families in the context of specific developmental needs (Allen et al., 1994; Henggeler et al., 1992). It is now clearly time for our research efforts to catch up to the level of sophistication implicit in some of our best intervention efforts to date; both research and intervention can only benefit from such progress.

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The education of children (1966) by James S. Coleman, which examined the relationship between social background and educational attainment, has been widely cited in discussions of educational inequality. Coleman's work highlighted the importance of social class in shaping educational outcomes, a finding that has implications for policies aimed at improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged students.

In his book, Coleman argued that the quality of schools is significantly influenced by the social characteristics of the communities they serve. He found that schools in affluent neighborhoods tended to have more resources and better educational outcomes, while schools in poorer neighborhoods struggled with lower standards and outcomes. This disparity, he argued, was not solely a result of differences in school resources, but also reflected broader social and economic factors.

Coleman's research has been influential in shaping policy debates around educational inequality, and his findings have been cited in discussions of how to address the achievement gap between minority and majority students. His work has also been criticized by some for its methodological limitations and for oversimplifying the complex social and economic factors that contribute to educational disparities.

Despite these limitations, Coleman's contribution to our understanding of educational inequality has been significant. His research has prompted further studies and has continued to inform policy discussions around education and social mobility.