

Engaging with children and young people



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Introduction

Perhaps more than any other engagement, the first encounter that a young person has with police can form their perception for years to come.

Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children 2013-2014, Baroness Massey of Darwen, is clear that:

Children's first encounter with police officers can have a lasting effect on how they view the police and engage with them as adults. Many young people spoke passionately to the inquiry about the positive impact of developing close relationships with police officers – through community projects, in schools and with Volunteer Police Cadets – but we found that too frequently these initiatives were the result of the enthusiasm of a handful of staff, and practice was not widespread, leading to a 'postcode lottery' effect.

(All Party Parliamentary Group for Children, 2014, p. 2)

The key implication of this is that first impressions count. If children and young people are able to develop a neutral if not hopefully positive impression of the police, then it will support more positive outcomes and interactions in the long term.

In this course, we take a look at how police engage with children and young people, and how it might be done differently.

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- understand more effective ways of engaging with children and young people
- understand the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- understand the difference between 'at risk' and 'risky behaviours'
- evaluate potential steps that can be taken to better support children and young people.

1 What do we mean by 'children' and 'young people'?

The National Police Chiefs' Council's *National Strategy for the Policing of Children & Young People* focuses on young people ranging from birth to the age of 24. In particular they break the population of children and young people down into three distinct groups:

- Those aged under 10
- Those aged between 10 and 17 years of age
- Those aged between 18 and 24 years of age

Activity 1 Defining 'children and young people'

Allow 10 minutes

In this clip, Arlene Kee of the Education Authority of Northern Ireland discusses what is meant by the term 'children and young people' and why it is important for police and others providing social and community services to engage with children and young people.

As you watch the clip, reflect on the key points made and think whether you would define the term 'children and young people' in the way that Arlene Kee does.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1 Arlene Kee



Discussion

It is important to recognise that while in many ways children may seem more mature than in years gone by, for both social and legal reasons the definitions of 'children and young people' have not changed significantly. In addition, and as Arlene Kee outlines, children and young people have unique needs which means that it is important for policing and others providing services to ensure that they consider all children and young people.

This course focuses specifically on children and young people under the age of 17. This is for a number of reasons, not least because it aligns with general social and legal norms relating to adulthood and the age of majority. This also aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an internationally binding treaty to which 196 countries, including the United Kingdom, are party to. In particular, Article 1 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

(OHCHR, 2020)

Box 1 What is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?

The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

The Convention must be seen as a whole: all the rights are linked and no right is more important than another. The right to relax and play (Article 31) and the right to freedom of expression (Article 13) have equal importance as the right to be safe from violence (Article 19) and the right to education (Article 28).

...

The UNCRC is also the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world – it's even been accepted by non-state entities, such as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), a rebel movement in South Sudan. All UN member states except for the United States have ratified the Convention. The Convention came into force in the UK in 1992.

[Summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.](#)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In Child Friendly Language



"Rights" are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is the best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

Article 1
Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2
All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly at any time.

Article 3
All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4
The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and make all laws necessary where you live grow and reach your potential.

Article 5
Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to understand your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6
You have the right to be alive.

Article 7
You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality. No child is a stateless.

Article 8
You have the right to an identity. It is an official record of who you are. The state should take the steps to help you.

Article 9
You have the right to live with your parents, unless it is best for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 10
If you live in a different country, that your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11
You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12
You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13
You have the right to tell what you think and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way, unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14
You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide when to begin and when, and when to stop for you.

Article 15
You have the right to choose your own friends and to set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Article 16
You have the right to privacy.

Article 17
You have the right to get information that is important to your wellbeing, from radio, newspaper, books, television and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful and help you find and understand the information you want.

Article 18
You have the right to be raised by your parents if possible.

Article 19
You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in many ways.

Article 20
You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21
You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

Article 22
You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee or if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country, as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23
You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24
You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25
If you have to live in a different situation away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements based on respect for you and if they are the best arrangements.

Article 26
You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27
You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be discriminated so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28
You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29
Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30
You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion – in any way chosen. Minority and indigenous groups must special protection of this right.

Article 31
You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32
You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and a limit to your health and education. If you work, you have the right to fair work and good pay.

Article 33
You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

Article 34
You have the right to be free from sexual abuse. No one is allowed to touch or look at you in a sexual way.

Article 35
You have the right to protection from any form of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

Article 37
No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

Article 38
You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39
You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40
You have the right to a legal help and fair trial even in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41
If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the rights in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42
You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

Articles 43 to 54
These articles explain how governments and international organisations like UNICEF will work to make sure children are protected with their rights.





Figure 1 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: in Child Friendly Language

Activity 2 Challenges engaging with children and young people

Allow 10 minutes

In this clip, Arlene Kee of the Education Authority of Northern Ireland continues her discussion of children and young people. In particular she focuses on some of the challenges engaging with children and young people and how police and others providing services can engage more effectively.

As you watch the clip, reflect on the key challenges engaging with children and young people highlighted by Arlene Kee.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 2 Arlene Kee 2



Discussion

While there can be many challenges engaging with children and young people, as Arlene Kee highlights in these two clips, it is crucially important that police and others providing social and community services of all kinds continue to do so in an effective manner.

2 Understanding children and young people

While it might seem obvious, in order to support young people effectively it is crucial to go beyond the legal and ethical frameworks that guide interactions and actually understand the needs, wants and challenges of young people.

But how can you do this?

This section will look at steps you can take to better understand children and young people in order to develop more successful relationships and, ultimately, engage more effectively.

2.1 Talking on their own terms

An important place to start when engaging with children and young people, most particularly those who are vulnerable, is to treat them individually and to speak to them on their own terms.

A UK-wide study of social workers published in 2017 (Winter *et al.*, 2017) found that while engaging with children and young people might be difficult those difficulties should not be overstated. A crucial step for anyone working with children and young people is to go beyond standardised frameworks and recognise that each child has individual needs and comes from their own specific context with particular challenges. By taking this step, relationships and conversations with children and young people can be improved dramatically.

As Gillian Ruch, professor of social work at the University of Sussex and one of the lead researchers of the project asserts:

The study underlined that it was not the application of a particular tool or method that was important, but the subtleties of relationships, and that these were unique to each child and family. This might not be a popular message for some, as it wasn't about targets or tick boxes to satisfy the government or Ofsted. Instead, it was about finding out about the dynamics for every child, and working on a case- by-case basis.

(Lepkowska, 2017)

A key aspect of the dynamics referred to is understanding the young person's particular context and being genuine and authentic in interactions. This same research made the very clear point that 'far from children being passive receivers of social worker messages, they, like adults, can detect genuineness, in terms of interest in, and value attributed to, hearing their feelings, views and thoughts.' (Winter *et al.*, 2017, pp.1441-1442).

Activity 3 Police engagement with children and young people

Allow 10 minutes

Even though this research looked at the interactions between social workers and young people in particular, to what extent do you think it would also apply to police officers and staff undertaking their day-to-day job?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

While those involved in policing may often engage with children and young people in different circumstances to others, some of the same basic principles apply. The most important of these is the recognition that each child has individual needs and comes from their own specific context with particular challenges. This should always be taken into consideration when engaging with children and young people.

2.2 What happens when you listen to children?

Asking children what they think, but taking it no further will send a message that there is little real interest in their view.

(Mooney and Blackburn, 2002, quoted in Clark *et al.*, 2003, p. 45)

A review by Alison Clark and colleagues of consultations with young children found that the impact of listening occurred at a number of levels: individual, institutional and strategic. These impacts are summarised in the following table:

Table 1 The impact of consultations with young children

Level	Group	Impact
Individual	Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in everyday experiences, e.g. being allowed to do new things or changes to their environment Raised self-esteem and confidence Acquisition of new social or practical skills
	Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling enabled and encouraged, e.g. to continue promoting child participation Feeling the benefits of working more democratically with children – e.g. not having to know all the answers
	Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of child's competencies Raised expectations for child

Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities to reflect on practice, e.g. rethinking relationships, routines and activities• Changes to policies• Changes to the environment
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dissemination of local projects• Organisation of special consultations, e.g. bringing the views of young children to the attention of strategic planners

(Based on Clark *et al.*, 2003)

A key finding of this review for police and anyone else working with children and young people was that any engagement should be undertaken carefully, sensitively and with genuine interest. If not, there is a real risk that the drive to listen to and consult might be perceived by young people as simply an exercise in surveillance rather than consultation.

3 Adverse childhood experiences

While it is important to listen to and engage with young people, an awareness of context is also vital. A key part of anyone's context is the way that the experiences we have had growing up shape and form us. In particular, it is important not to underestimate the impact of what have been termed 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' or ACEs.

3.1 What are 'Adverse Childhood Experiences'?

SafeguardingNI (no date.) describe ACEs as follows:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child or affect the environment in which they live...

ACEs can include the following:

1. Verbal abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Physical neglect
5. Emotional neglect
6. Parental separation
7. Domestic violence
8. Mental ill health
9. Alcohol or drug misuse
10. Household member incarcerated

While we might intuitively recognise the potentially negative impact of any one of these factors, it is worth looking at why this impact occurs and how it can be understood. As Mulcahy outlines:

Since 1998, Vincent Felitti, Robert Anda and colleagues have accumulated evidence that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) literally attack the structures of a child's developing brain, leading to "lasting effects on brain structure and function". This brain injury – acquired in infancy or adolescence – has serious individual and societal costs.

Basically, ACEs cause the production of toxic stress or cortisol in children which activate the "fight/flight/freeze" response and stunts the development of normal neural pathways. Childhood trauma haunts people into adulthood. Over time, the traumatized person's "window of tolerance", where they can comfortably "metabolize" the ups and downs of daily life, shrinks. This causes them to either remain constantly on high alert for danger, responding with anger, violence, impulsivity or defensiveness (hyperarousal) or by shutting down/disconnecting (hypoarousal) when emotionally overwhelmed or triggered.

(Mulcahy, 2018)

Since that initial research by Felitti, Anda and colleagues, multiple studies in various countries – including the nations of the UK – have shown a clear relationship between adverse childhood experiences and poor outcomes later in life,

...with the more ACEs a person suffers the greater their risks of developing health harming behaviours (e.g. substance misuse, risky sexual behaviour), suffering poor adult health (e.g. obesity, cancer, heart disease) and ultimately premature mortality...

(Hughes *et al.*, 2016)

3.2 The importance of a supportive network

While many of the elements of adverse childhood experiences are beyond the scope or remit of policing bodies, police nonetheless have a vital role to play. In particular, through their various dealings with children police can play a role in helping to provide a protective network around children:

Focusing on the positives and the strengths in a child's life is likely to help to improve outcomes by building a protective network around children (Daniel and Wassell 2002). At the same time, it is always important to be alert to whether any adversity or vulnerability is putting children's well-being at risk and make sure this is taken into account. Home is important but so too is what is going on in the rest of a child's world. School and spare-time activities, for example can provide opportunities for enhancing resilience.

(Scottish Government, 2010)

The crucial importance of this network is underlined by Ellis and Dietz (2017) who highlight that the impact of adverse experiences during childhood is even greater when combined with *adverse community environments*, summed in what has been called *The Pair of Aces* model:

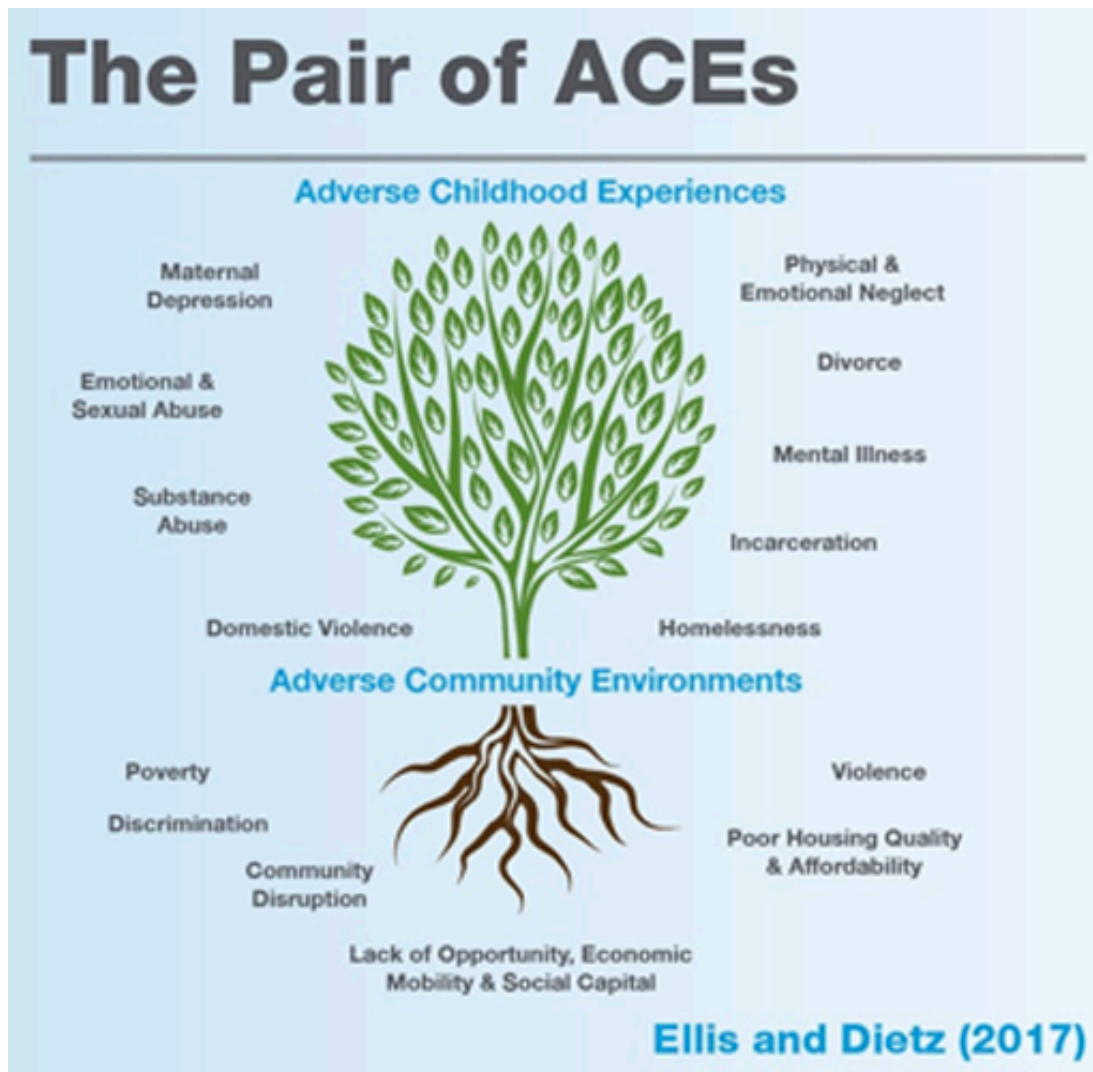


Figure 2 The pair of ACEs

3.3 Limitations of the ACEs model

It is important to note that while the concept of ACEs has proven itself to be very useful in terms of understanding subsequent behaviours, it should not be used as a way of assuming or predicting future challenges or anti-social behaviours.

As Bateson and colleagues (2020) emphasise:

Assessing risk of maltreating a child or committing a criminal offence is a complex issue thwarted with methodological challenges ... Whilst the ACEs concept offers appealing simplicity, its predictive validity for child maltreatment, criminality or being taken into care has not been proven. For example, although four or more ACEs is associated with a 15 times greater likelihood of having committed violence against another person in the past 12 months ... this cannot be used to predict future behaviour of an individual. In the same vein, statistical analysis of traffic trends can tell us the most likely time of day that an accident might occur on a given road but cannot tell us exactly which cars will be involved.

Individuals with a high ACE score, as a group, are more likely to be amongst society's most high need populations so it would be easy to assume that an individual's high ACE score also means they have high current need. However, an ACE score is retrospective and does not necessarily reflect a person's current situation, needs or risks. For this reason, ACE scores are not a replacement for careful assessment of current needs, nor are they suitable to indicate whether someone meets the threshold for a particular service.

(Bateson *et al.*, 2020, pp.4-5)

Activity 4 Applying the ACEs model

Allow 10 minutes

In this clip, Maria Morgan of SafeguardingNI discusses the key elements of the ACEs model and how it can be applied when dealing with children and young people.

Video content is not available in this format.



Video 3 Maria Morgan

Having reflected on the comments made by Maria Morgan of Safeguarding NI, what do you think are the key benefits of the ACEs model and what are some of the limitations?

Provide your answer...

Discussion

While the ACEs model provides a very strong framework for understanding the various adverse experiences that children and young people might encounter as they grow up, it is vitally important that the limitations of the model are clearly understood. No model or framework is ever perfect, but the ACEs model goes a long way toward helping those who engage with children and young people – be they police or others providing various services – to consider the impact and implications.

While the discussion so far has concentrated on the adverse experiences that children and young people might have, it should also be recognised that the process of growing up also entails a degree of risk taking and risky behaviour. Some key elements of this are discussed in the following section.

4 'At risk' or 'a risk'?

Experience: that most brutal of teachers. But you learn, my God do you learn.

(CS Lewis)

Risky behaviours often seem like a natural part of being a teenager or youth. As Suttie points out:

Teens take risks. Some will do drugs, drink to excess, shoplift, and worse – activities that studies show are associated with problems later in life, including depression and anxiety.

But risk-taking is part of growing up, too, helping teens to develop independence and identities – to start becoming adults. Risks help them to find out what they can do, and to gain insight into the meaning of their lives.

(Suttie, 2016)

In many ways it should not be surprising that teens and young people are more likely to engage in risky behaviours. Recent research has shown that the human brain does not mature until around the age of 25 and moreover that different parts of the brain mature at different rates. Consequently, while for many teenagers that part of the brain dealing with pleasure seeking behaviours has already matured to an adult level, other parts of the brain which deal with decision making, attention and an awareness of future consequences remain under-developed, possibly even at the same level as a child (Eagleman, 2015, pp.14-17).



Figure 3 The chaotic brain?

It is for this reason amongst many others, that the National Police Chiefs' Council's *National Strategy for the Policing of Children & Young People* mentioned earlier includes young people up to the age of 24. As they outline:

It has been recognised that the 18-24 year age range is a key stage of development; the brain is still developing, independence is gained, socialising activity increases, and experimentation with drugs, alcohol and sexual relationships takes place. This coincides with a time when they are most likely to come into contact with the police.

(NPCC, 2015, p. 4)

We should consequently expect a degree of risk behaviour from teenagers. There is, however, a significant difference between what might be seen as more normal risky behaviour and genuine indicators of someone being 'at risk'.

4.1 Adolescence as a stage of life

For many, adolescence is also seen as a 'stage' of life when young people are actively seeking risks and pushing the boundaries of what we perceive our family and society expects of us. This often includes such things as drinking, smoking and drug use, although statistics from England suggest that young people are engaging less in these risky behaviours than in the past (NHS, 2015). It can also include 'hanging out' and associating with people in situations which society might regard as being less than ideal. Consider a 14 year old with a group of young men outside a shop who are playing with fireworks, spraying graffiti, setting fire to a bin and getting arrested by the police.

The young person will inevitably be seen by society as primarily posing a risk to the safety of others. But if there were subsequent reports that the rest of the group were older, and the 14 year old has a difficult family background, this may result in a reassessment of the young person as vulnerable, at risk from others, and in need of a response that promotes their safety as well as perhaps punishment.

If we were to learn that the young person in question is female this would perhaps make us think that the primary risk is actually one of her safety, although the issue of whether she is 'putting herself at risk' hanging around with men and older boys may also be part of the perception.

The way in which we – as a society – respond to young people's behaviour is shaped by a number of factors including our own personal and professional background. It can also be influenced by assumptions about whether a young person is simply engaging in risky behaviour, at risk or even a risk to society.

Factors such as gender, ethnicity and community can play an important role in influencing our perceptions. Risk-taking behaviour of any sort is seen sometimes as being more 'normal', and therefore more acceptable, in boys than in girls. In relation to ethnicity, statistics demonstrating the disproportionate use of police stop and search powers on Black and Asian young men in England and Wales have been cited as an example of concerns that the police might act in a discriminatory way (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2013).

5 Steps to support children and young people

The following section looks at a number of programmes which can help children and young people find alternative pathways – and the role that police can play in supporting these.

5.1 Youth engagement

The importance of ‘effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families’ has long been recognised and is one of the six key areas within the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children’s Workforce* published by the UK Government (Children’s Workforce Development Council, 2010). On a certain level the term ‘engagement’ would appear to be fairly straightforward, yet what does it mean in the context of working with children and young people?

In 2008 the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales published a review of evidence entitled *Engaging Young People Who Offend* (Mason and Prior, 2008). Drawing on a range of research and practice material the authors, Mason and Prior, developed the following definition of youth engagement.

Techniques for engaging young people who offend are concerned with the question of how to gain young people’s interest and willing participation in interventions or programmes of interventions intended to prevent or reduce offending. ‘Engagement’ suggests a set of objectives around developing young people’s personal motivation and commitment to involvement in activities. It implies that passive involvement is not enough ... For practitioners, the implication is that specific skills and knowledge (‘techniques’) are required to achieve engagement, in addition to skills and knowledge associated with the particular type of intervention.

(Mason and Prior, 2008, p. 12)

The process of engagement, then, goes beyond a young person just showing up to appointments or meetings, to include a range of other ways of doing things that both supports, involves and enthuses.

Box 2 Caring for Northern Ireland’s youngsters

Social workers across the UK tend to share common challenges associated with their work. But there are some unique features to the job in Northern Ireland. The legacy of the country’s conflict continues to permeate the lives of people living in the different communities.

‘This manifests in many ways,’ says Karen Winter, senior lecturer in social work at Queen’s University, Belfast, and one of the lead researchers for the Talking and Listening to Children project. ‘There remains a clear demarcation between nationalist and loyalist communities

and social workers may experience a level of latent anxiety in travelling into an area that is not of their own identity.

‘Social workers have been threatened in communities that basically police themselves. Poverty, mental health problems and substance abuse are problems all social workers have to deal with, but there is an added social and political dimension here.’

Winter says people who have lived with conflict, perhaps been imprisoned or a victim of violence, have a high level of mental health problems. ‘Affected parents leave their mark on their children and so the problems continue from one generation to the next.’

For social workers like Sheila Simons and her colleagues at the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, one of the five integrated service providers covering Northern Ireland, this can mean access to vulnerable children is all the harder in some families.

‘As everywhere, we get extremes of parents – those who want to be helped and those who are obstructive and abusive,’ says Simons. ‘We have even had social workers’ homes targeted on social media, and because of the context of the Troubles, there can be suspicion.’

‘It can be difficult for a child to see you as their advocate when the parents are being abusive towards you. So you go away and think about how you might have better handled the visit and what you might have done differently.’

(Source: Lepkowska, 2017)

5.2 Finding alternative pathways – influencing positive choices

Police have a crucial role to play when it comes to helping children and young people find alternative pathways. That said, this can only ever be done in conjunction with a broader range of social supports and interventions.

The problem in this regard is overcoming perceptions of what works and what doesn’t and ensuring to allocate sufficient resources. Traditionally, many approaches have focused on improving academic attainment under the assumption doing so will in turn lead to better outcomes for children and young people. Other approaches have tended to emphasise the need to increase the sanctions on children and young people for breaking the law or committing crimes. Yet the evidence to support either perspective is limited.

As Heller and colleagues assert:

Traditionally, social policy interventions for children have tried to improve outcomes by investing (often substantial) resources in improving the academic or vocational skills of young people or changing the long-term benefits or costs associated with crime or schooling, with impacts that have typically been quite limited. By comparison, the rate of return to investing in helping youth make better judgments and decisions in high-stakes moments seems promising.

(Heller *et al.*, 2017, p. 51)

Two programmes which focus on helping you make better judgements and decisions are Becoming a Man (BAM) and Working on Womanhood (WOW), both developed by the Chicago-based Youth Guidance.

Both programmes work on the basis of engaging youth through structured mentoring programmes involving role play and group exercises. A key focus is on enhancing impulse control, emotional self-regulation and personal responsibility. Although the exact mechanism is unclear, research undertaken by the University of Chicago has found significant positive outcomes of the BAM programme:

participation in the program reduced total arrests during the intervention period by 28–35%, reduced violent-crime arrests by 45–50%, improved school engagement, and in the first study where we have follow-up data, increased graduation rates by 12–19%. The third RCT tested a program with partially overlapping components carried out in the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC), which reduced readmission rates to the facility by 21%. These large behavioural responses combined with modest program costs imply benefit-cost ratios for these interventions from 5-to-1 up to 30-to-1 or more.

(Heller *et al.*, 2017, p. 2)

While the BAM and WOW programmes might focus on a particular segment of the youth population, more general interventions such as the Lifestyle programme run by Humberside Police for over 30 years can also have significant benefits for children, young people and police engagement.

6 Conclusion

This course has looked at ways that those working in policing and other agencies can work more effectively with children and young people. Rather than just focusing on laws and social norms, we have looked at ways in which those in policing roles can engage more effectively with youth and young people.

A key element of this relates to an understanding of factors such as Adverse Childhood Experiences, as well as programmes that can be implemented to better support youth and young people better overcome the challenges they encounter.

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