

DELINQUENCY FACTS

FACTS:

- “Delinquency” is primarily a legal term, not a psychological one.
- Important to make a distinction between delinquent behavior and official delinquency, because some behaviors described as delinquent are quite common.
- Key to delinquency – get caught, get warned or charged.
- Refers to a juvenile (usually under 18 years of age) who has committed an “index crime” (i.e., illegal for adults as well as for juveniles – theft, aggravated assault, rape or murder) OR a “status offense” (illegal only for juveniles i.e., truancy, associates with “immoral” persons, curfew violation or incorrigibility).
Adjudicated dependent – CYS involvement. Adjudicated delinquency – Probation involvement.

RISK FACTORS FOR DELINQUENCY:

- Committing a first juvenile offense before age 12 is the single best predictor of seriousness, number and variety of future offenses.
- Longitudinal studies suggest that delinquent behavior is stable across generations, including:
 - Family socioeconomic status
 - Family size
 - Marital disruption
 - Poor quality parenting
 - Parental neglect
 - Parental psychopathology
- Also, impacting delinquent behavior:
 - Poor peer relations
 - School failure
 - Low self-esteem
 - Depression

SUBTYPES OF DELINQUENCY:

- **Socialized** –
 - Having bad companions
 - Stealing in company of others
 - Belonging to gangs
- **Unsocialized** -
 - Do not seem to be part of a delinquent peer group.
 - Often emotional or behavioral disturbance is present.

CONTINUUM OF DELINQUENCY:

It is important to recognize there is a continuum of delinquent behaviors. Some behaviors may fall on the extreme side of delinquent behaviors, such as rape and violence, while others may fall on the other side to include curfew violations and truancy.