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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I am proposing an alternative education high school for youth involved in the juvenile justice system, Freedom High. Freedom High combines counseling, family involvement, positive youth development, and education to promote desistance. The first section of the paper is a literature review that details how counseling, family involvement, positive youth development, and education combat juvenile recidivism. The second section details how Freedom High will incorporate each method into the school and lower reoffense rates.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBT ..... Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

DBT ..... Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

MRT ..... Moral Reasoning Therapy

R&R ..... Reasoning and Rehabilitation

SITCAP-ART ..... Structured Sensory Intervention for Traumatized Children, Adolescents, and Parents—Adjudicated and At-Risk Youth

TGCTA ..... Trauma and Grief Component Therapy for Adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

Tens of thousands of youth between the ages of 10 and 17 are arrested and referred to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (2020) yearly. Their crimes vary from petty theft to capital murder. Companies affected by the criminal act have to spend money and time fixing and replacing broken or stolen items. The owners of smaller companies will lose revenue and struggle while rebuilding after being a victim of juvenile crime. Individual victims have more at stake than companies. On top of replacing or fixing the crime scene, individual victims may have to pay hospital bills and live with physical pain or trauma. Many times, children and adolescent victims are affected throughout adulthood (Menard, 2002). On top of the lasting individual and societal consequences accrued during adolescent criminal activity, Texas spends upwards of a hundred million dollars on juveniles who commit crimes yearly (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2020).

The juveniles who commit crimes do not stop after committing one criminal act (Menon & Cheung, 2018; Unruh et al., 2009). Menon and Cheung (2018) and Unruh et al. (2009) explained that 60% of adolescents who commit crimes will reoffend without appropriate intervention. Menon and Cheung further explained that 50% to 75% of previously incarcerated youth will also commit crimes as adults without intervention. However, research shows that protective factors and developmental assets negatively correlate with recidivism. A juvenile's likeliness to reoffend lowers as the juvenile acquires more protective factors (Cuervo & Villanueva, 2015; Lodewijks et al., 2010). Some of the protective factors associated with lower recidivism are personal characteristics, positive attitudes, peer influence, response to authority, and family conditions (Cuervo & Villanueva, 2015; Lodewijks et al., 2010; van der Put et al., 2012). Additionally, prosocial involvement, employment, school commitment and achievement, social support, attachment, socially valued behaviors, and effective leisure time negatively correlate with recidivism (Cuervo & Villanueva, 2015; Lodewijks et al., 2010).

Some of the developmental assets that help youth desist from crime are social competence (e.g., prosocial conflict resolution, decision making, planning skills), positive identity, constructive use of time, boundaries and expectations, empowerment, positive values (e.g., integrity, equality, caring, self-improvement, social justice, honesty, restraint, empathy, responsibility), commitment to learning, and support (Lodewijks et al., 2010; Menon & Cheung, 2018).

Unruh et al. (2009) explained that successful reintegration and intervention programs lower recidivism rates by more than 20%. Successful reintegration and intervention programs offer a wide range of activities that promote social skills and self-determination, including education, mentorship, job placement, behavioral health intervention, support, and substance use treatment (Menon & Cheung, 2018; Unruh et al., 2009). Additionally, schools are a vital part of positive development and lowering the reoffending rate (Azad & Ginner Hau, 2020; Cuervo & Villanueve, 2015; Jung et al., 2021; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Swisher & Dennison, 2016; Unruh et al., 2009) because education positively correlates with positive individual behaviors, opportunities, expectations, outcomes, aspirations, competencies, and self-worth (Azad & Ginner Hau, 2020; Swisher & Dennison, 2016). Schools teach prosocial behaviors while negating negative behaviors (Azad & Ginner Hau, 2020; Cuervo & Villanueve, 2015; Jung et al., 2021; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Swisher & Dennison, 2016).

Intervention schools are alternative education programs that provide a safe, positive environment that focuses on youth's positive assets and strengths while providing youth with the opportunity to develop further and gain protective factors and developmental assets while focusing on intervening in a specific part of a youth's life (e.g., substance use, criminal activity; Azad & Ginner Hau, 2020; Cuervo & Villanueve, 2015; Jung et. al., 2021; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Swisher & Dennison, 2016). Freedom High is an intervention school that will incorporate education, family, substance use treatment, counseling, and behavioral intervention, providing the students with the ability to thrive into adulthood while lowering the likelihood of recidivism. Azad and Ginner Hau

(2020) portrayed the purpose of intervention schools with the quote, “Schools are one of the locations where it is theoretically possible to address the educational, emotional and behavioral needs of children and youth” (p. 339).

The remainder of this paper will include two sections. The first section is a literature review detailing how education, various counseling, positive youth development, and familial involvement promote successful treatment and intervention. In the second section, I will utilize the different strategies from the literature review to propose Freedom High. Freedom High will be an intervention high school that incorporates multiple aspects of juvenile treatment to lead youth towards desistance and thriving. Freedom High refers to the students as scholars since every student has the ability to commit to learning and thrive academically with the proper motivation and environment. By graduation, Freedom High’s scholars will continue to or have let their past traumas, mindsets, and behavior patterns go in exchange for the freedom that comes from knowing their true self while consistently striving for better.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Schools are a single location that can incorporate a multitude of intervention strategies. The sections below introduce four intervention strategies that negatively correlate with recidivism. A school may adopt these strategies to create an intervention high school that helps youth desist from crime. The four intervention strategies are counseling, familial involvement, positive youth development, and education. Research shows that various forms of counseling reduce juvenile crime rates (Andrews et al., 2006; Ajzen, 1991; Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000; Dembo et al., 1995; Evans-Chase, 2014; Fine et al., 2016; Giordano et al., 2002; Goldstein et al., 1986; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Henggeler et al., 2002; Izzo & Ross, 1990; Kiriakidis, 2006; Leve et al., 2015; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Moffitt, et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2013; Parker, 2013; Perrone et al., 2004; Piquero, 2010; Piquero et al., 2016; Pratt & Cullen, 2000; Pratt et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 2013; Simourd & Olver, 2002; Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996; Vitacco, et al., 2002; Zeola et al., 2016). Familial involvement in juvenile intervention helps youth desist from crime by strengthening their family foundation. Positive youth development reduces the likelihood of adolescent's reoffending by introducing and strengthening an arsenal of protective factors and developmental assets. Lastly, educational achievement negatively correlates with recidivism (Abeling-Judge, 2019; 2020; Azad et al., 2018; Swisher & Dennison, 2016; Zingraff et al., 1994).

Counseling

Mental health counseling includes a focus on traumatic stress, general mental health problems, chemical abuse/ dependency, and mental disorder. Assessing and treating each part of mental health lowers juveniles' risk of reoffending (Dembo et al., 1995; Moore et al., 2013; Parker, 2013; Ryan et al., 2013; Zeola et al., 2016). Trauma, chemical abuse, and general mental health problems are examples of mental stressors that increase the risk of recidivism but are not always diagnosable. Counselors who treat all areas of mental health reduce mental stress and symptoms of

juveniles in their care by helping reduce feelings of shame and anger, criminal identification, dangerous behaviors (Zeola et al., 2016), drug abuse, and relapses (Parker, 2013). Mental health treatment is often combined with behavioral therapy to ingrain healthy coping mechanisms and prosocial behaviors better when dealing with mental stressors.

Due to the many aspects of adolescent behavior, behavioral therapy takes many shapes and faces. Counselors individualize therapy based on the youth's unique needs. Some aspects behavior counselors focus on during criminal intervention that are known to reduce reoffending rates include self-regulation (e.g., coping skills, aggression, emotional regulation; Ajzen, 1991; Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000; Evans-Chase, 2014; Fine et al., 2016; Goldstein et al., 1986; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Kiriakidis, 2006; Leve et al., 2015; Moffitt, et al., 2013; Perrone et al., 2004; Piquero et al., 2010; Piquero et al., 2016; Pratt & Cullen, 2000; Pratt et al., 2004; Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996; Vitacco et al., 2002), criminal attitude (Andrews et al., 2006; Ajzen, 1991; Fine et al., 2016; Giordano et al., 2002; Kiriakidis, 2006; Simourd & Olver, 2002), social interactions (Andrews et al., 1990; Henggeler et al., 2002; Izzo & Ross, 1990; Leve et al., 2015; Menon & Cheung, 2018); and other behavioral skills (i.e., goal setting, planning, decision making; Menon & Cheung, 2018).

Self-regulation is taught and practiced throughout behavioral counseling. Counselors teach juveniles different regulation skills to cope with overwhelming emotions and regulate their responses. Youth who have a hard time regulating their behavior in response to emotion are likely to engage in unhealthy risk behaviors and criminal activity (Leve et al., 2015; Meldrum et al., 2015; Moffite et al., 2011; Monahan et al., 2009; Pratt & Cullen, 2000). The journey to self-regulate begins with identifying individual triggers that upset the counselee or give the counselee an impulse to participate in antisocial or delinquent behaviors (Leve et al., 2015). Once both the counselor and adolescent know which triggers and emotions to target, they can practice coping skills, avoidance techniques, and prosocial behavior. Through constant practice, youth will develop better self-

regulation skills. Fine et al. (2016) explained that "youth with more self-regulation tend to offend less than youth with less developed self-regulation" (p 227), indicating the vital role self-regulation has in lowering recidivism rates (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Moffitt et al., 2013; Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996). Nevertheless, increasing self-regulation has a more negligible effect on reoffending avoidance when youth have a high criminal attitude (Fine et al., 2016).

Youth with a high criminal attitude are at great risk of reoffending (Fine et al., 2016). Therefore, counselors need to focus on the juvenile's root cause for having a high criminal attitude and work to negate the criminal feelings during treatment to help the youth desist from crime. The root causes of high criminal attitude may include feeling pride towards their illegal acts (Shields & Whitehall, 1994), dislike for legal authority (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Gendreau et al., 1979), feeling their acts are justified (Andrews et al., 2006; Ajzen, 1991; Giordano et al., 2002), and believing the justice system is unfair (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1990). Once the counselor finds the root cause or causes for the adolescents' high criminal attitude, they should address them in the treatment program.

The last important counseling piece integrated into juveniles' treatment is relationships and social interactions. Learning how to interact with others prosocially lowers the likelihood of recidivism (Andrews et al., 1990; Izzo & Ross, 1990). Counselors help youth build their prosocial toolbox by teaching and practicing conflict resolution, decision making skills, planning, resistance (Menon & Cheung, 2018), starting conversations, knowing when to disclose information, and partner/friend selection (Leve et al., 2015). Youth can better avoid risky situations when they know who and who not to trust, be around, or disclose information to. By learning to build prosocial relationships, juveniles are better able to make healthy decisions and not reoffend (Farrell et al., 2017).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) counseling methods integrate mental health and behavioral counseling into one. CBT's goal may change depending on the underlying reason for use. There are many variations of CBT. One goal is to "change antisocial thinking patterns in order to reduce the negative psychological symptoms associated with trauma" (Follette & Ruzek, 2006; Taylor, 2017, as cited in Zettler, 2021, p. 117). Another goal of CBT is to "correct the cognitive distortions or decisional lapses believed to be behind maladaptive behaviors, including criminal behavior" (Mpofu et al., 2018, p. 172) by focusing on cognitive skills (decision making, alternative solutions, consequence evaluation), cognitive restructuring (recognizing and modifying criminal thinking), interpersonal problem solving (conflicts, peer pressure), social skills (prosocial behaviors, empathy, social cues), anger management (triggers, impulse control), moral reasoning, victim impact, substance abuse, and positive behavior reinforcement (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). CBT programs lower trauma symptoms, mental health issues, and behavior problems (Silverman et al., 2008). Research also reports that the variations of CBT mentioned below reduce adolescents' recidivism (Aos & Drake, 2013; Lipsey et al., 2007).

The first CBT program that reduces youth reoffending rates is Structured Sensory Intervention for Traumatized Children, Adolescents, and Parents—Adjudicated and At-Risk Youth (SITCAP-ART). SITCAP-ART's primary objective is to switch youth's mindset from victim to survivor by counseling the youth to feelings of safety (Jacobs & Steele, 2007). SITCAP-ART completes this transformation by reintroducing the trauma in a safe environment (Raider et al., 2008). Through many sessions, counselors teach youth that their trauma does not define them and guide youth through rewiring their neural pathways so that memories of the trauma do not trigger fear through cognitive reframing. SITCAP-ART successfully combats recidivism by reducing depression, aggressive behaviors, trauma symptoms, mental health issues, and antisocial behaviors.

Another CBT program research that reduces recidivism is Trauma and Grief Component Therapy for Adolescents (TGCTA). TGCTA is a group counseling model with four components: a) improve interpersonal skills by enhancing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral regulation, b) processing through trauma as a group, c) process grief and loss, d) resume developmental progression look to the future (Layne et al., 2002). Through the four components, TGCTA successfully reduces PTSD (Grassetti et al., 2015; Olafson et al., 2018), depression (Olafson et al., 2018), anger symptoms, behavioral issues, and grief reactions (Grassetti et al., 2015), resulting in a lower likelihood to reoffend.

Next, Moral Reasoning Therapy (MRT) lowers recidivism by modifying behavior through moral reasoning (Little & Robinson, 1986). MRT utilizes individual counseling to promote positive moral, social, and behavioral functions by instilling positive values, goals, and motivation for the youth. Research shows that MRT lowers substance use (Little, 2002), depression (Blankenship, 2012), and anger. MRT also lowers recidivism by increasing adolescents' self-esteem and life purpose.

Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R&R) is another CBT program that negatively correlates with juvenile recidivism. R&R teaches youth how to process and respond to their thoughts (Robinson & Porporino, 2001) utilizing nine components: social skills, problem solving, negotiation, emotional management, positive values, creative thinking, critical reasoning, strengthening skills, and cognitive exercises (Ross & Ross, 1995b). Through these nine components, R&R gives youth the tools to resist the stresses and pressures to commit criminal activity (Ross & Ross, 1995a).

Lastly, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) combats recidivism by coaching adolescents on how to respond to overwhelming emotions effectively (Linehan, 1993). DBT consists of individual counseling and group counseling (Koerner, 2012). The individual sessions work through

various mental health issues. The group sessions introduce and teach different skills, so youth are better able to prosocially handle stressful social situations while avoiding criminal activity.

Family Involvement

Familial protective factors increase the likelihood that an adolescent will not commit crimes. Examples of protective factors families provide youth are clear rules and consequences, support, close emotional bonds, and involvement in their child's treatment (Abeling-Judge, 2020; Clemons, 2013; Contreras et al., 2011). In terms of this literature review, families and parents include biological, foster, kinship, and unrelated adoption. Though not every family provides youth with the foundations for protective factors, families can participate in treatment to learn and strengthen their familial foundation to enhance the protective factors in their children's lives (Abeling-Judge, 2020; Conteras et al., 2011; Leve et al., 2015; Robertson et al., 2019). However, families need to be open and accepting to the changes treatment programs will ask of them.

Intervention programs work with families to create a more supportive, inclusive, and prosocial familial environment. Families who commit to participate and follow intervention programs immediately begin to build their familial foundation by showing their children that they are not alone in the change process, criminal activity is not accepted, and people in authority should not be feared (Contreras et al., 2011). The most critical factor families show their children while participating in intervention programs is unconditional love. Through treatment participation, adolescents will see their families will always love and accept them despite their previous actions and future mistakes.

Successful family participation in intervention programs begins with familial input. An adolescent's family may hold keen insights that treatment specialists may overlook during the youth's intake process. On top of knowing their child, a strong and positive family foundation begins with familial involvement. The intervention specialist will discuss and plan three separate family

components: family outreach, family counseling, and parent training, while creating a treatment plan for the juvenile participating in the intervention program (Clemons, 2013; Contreras et al., 2011).

Family outreach occurs when a program specialist looks into and asks parents if the family is struggling with anything and would like assistance (i.e., food service, rent support, child care; Clemons, 2013). If the family seeks assistance that the intervention program does not offer, the treatment specialist will give the family information on resources and programs that may help the family. The program specialist may reach out to the organizations for or with the family directly to meet the family's needs.

Secondly, family counseling will assist the family with revealing the reason the adolescent in the intervention program is participating in antisocial and destructive behaviors (Clemons, 2013). Family counseling also provides families with a safe and unbiased space to heal wounds while becoming a supportive, loving foundation from which their child can thrive. Menon and Cheung (2018) explained that family counseling assists youth with goal setting, planning, and decision-making skills while giving youth more insight into their behaviors.

The last part of creating a treatment plan that involves families is parenting classes. Parenting classes will help families determine what abnormal adolescent behavior is, so parents know when their child's behavior is abnormal and share this with a treatment specialist (Contreras et al., 2011). Parenting classes teach parents to be supportive, build emotional closeness, set rules and expectations, and adequately discipline.

Research shows that there are multiple successful evidence based and evidence informed family centered intervention models. Two successful intervention models are multisystemic therapy (Clemens, 2013; Leve et al., 2015; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Robertson et al., 2019) and functional family therapy (Clemens, 2013; Leve et al., 2015; Menon & Cheung, 2018). Research shows both interventions decrease substance use, reoffending, and psychiatric symptoms while increasing self-

esteem and prosocial family functioning by focusing on behavior problems, mental disorders, and maladaptive family dynamics (Menon & Cheung, 2018).

Multisystemic therapists look beyond the youth's microsystem to the mesosystem and exosystem while treating a youth (Leve et al., 2015). Multisystemic therapy programs are typically short term programs that offer family outreach support. Interventions may include utilizing neighbors as extra eyes to monitor juveniles or other community support as needed (Leve et al., 2015) while focusing on parent discipline, delinquent behavior, school performance, peer association, and family relations (Henggeler et al., 1992). Multisystemic therapy programs have been associated with a wide range of successes, including lower substance use, lower reoffences, increased mental health, and improved family relationships (Leve et al., 2015; Robertson et al., 2019).

Functional family therapy programs emphasize the family by viewing a juvenile's criminal behavior as a symptom of family dysfunction, therefore, creating a treatment plan that teaches and strengthens family behavior patterns (Leve et al., 2015). There are three phases in functional family therapy interventions: a) engaging and motivating family members, b) individual and family cognitive and behavioral interventions, c) guiding the use of and strengthening prosocial behaviors learned through the interventions. Functional family therapy programs successfully reduce recidivism rates and help families cope with severe behavior problems upon completion of the three phases (Clemens, 2013).

Positive Youth Development

Along with family, the protective factors that negatively correlate with reoffending include personal characteristics (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Hoge et al., 1996; Van der Put et al., 2011), peers (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cuervo & Villanuena, 2015; Hoge et al., 1996; Unruh et al., 2009; Van der Put et al., 2011) education, affective leisure time (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cuervo & Villanuena, 2015; Hoge et al., 1996; Unruh et al., 2009), employment (Cuervo & Villanuena, 2015), and

behavior. Research shows that youth with at least three protective factors take longer to reoffend than youth with less than three protective factors (Shepherd et al., 2016). This indicates that it is vital for treatment programs to work to instill an arsenal of protective factors to help youth negate risk factors and lower recidivism (Farrington et al., 2012; Hartman et al., 2009; Veenstra et al., 2009; Van der Laan et al., 2010). Treatment programs may help youth strengthen protective factors by introducing juveniles into various youth programs, including sports and clubs (Scales et al., 2000). In addition, youth organizations help youth increase positive personal characteristics through the formation and continuation of prosocial relationships with peers and adults. Another method to help identify and gain protective factors is introducing and strengthening developmental assets (Menon & Cheung, 2018).

On the other hand, strengthening developmental assets may be used as its own measure to lower recidivism rates. Sesma and Roehlkepartain (2003) found that youth with more than thirty assets are five to twelve times less likely to reoffend than youth with less than ten assets. Search Institute (1997) divides developmental assets into two main groups: internal and external (Menon & Cheung, 2018). Internal assets are separated into four categories: positive values, positive identity, social competencies, and commitment to learning. External assets are also separated into four categories: support, boundaries and expectations, empowerment, and constructive use of time. Each category of assets plays an essential role in desistance.

Positive values, including caring, social justice, honesty, integrity, equality, restraints, and responsibility, play an essential role in diminishing criminal attitudes (Menon & Cheung, 2018). In addition, as stated in the counseling section, combating criminal attitudes lowers juveniles' recidivism rates (Ajzen, 1991; Andrews et al., 2006; Fine et al., 2016; Giordano et al., 2002; Kiriakidis, 2006; Simourd & Olver, 2002).

Positive identity includes personal power, a sense of purpose, an optimistic view of one's future, a positive ethnic identity, and high self-esteem (Menon & Cheung, 2018). Studies show that the development of a positive identity helps youth successfully reintegrate into society and avoid reoffending (Abrams et al., 2011; Bradford, 2015; Chung et al., 2007; Fields and Abrams, 2010; Haqanee et al., 2015; Kim & Gerber, 2012; Parker, 2013; Zapolski et al., 2016).

Social competencies start through societal connection and include various internal competencies, interacting and working with diverse people, prosocial behaviors (Menon & Cheung, 2018), determination, self-awareness, matureness, decision making and resistance skills (Bradford, 2015), and conflict resolution (Inderbitzin, 2005). Researchers have found that social competencies reduce violent behaviors and lower recidivism.

Commitment to learning lowers the likelihood of recidivism because youth who are more committed to learning are more likely to be academically successful (Lodewijks et al., 2010; Menon & Cheung, 2018).

Boundaries and expectations help lower recidivism rates by helping youth respect and follow authority (Contreras et al., 2011; Cuervo & Villanueva, 2015; Lodewijks et al., 2010; van der Put et al., 2012) and avoid risky situations (Farrell et al., 2017).

Feeling empowered gives juveniles the belief that they can change and positively impact society which negatively impacts recidivism (Kim & Gerber, 2012; Lodewijks et al., 2010; Menon & Cheung, 2018). Kim and Gerber (2012) explained that youth who are given and take the opportunity to restore the damage they cause to society are more likely to feel more empowered to proactively join society and less likely to reoffend.

Constructive use of time lowers the likelihood that a youth will reoffend by making the youth feel that their time is valuable and well spent (Chung et al., 2007).

Support comes in different forms: peer, familial, and unrelated adults. Unrelated adult supports form through mentorship, coaches, teachers, or other adults/ adolescent interactions. Peer support comes to age through friendships, clubs, teams, and class prosocial peer interactions. Familial supports include biological and non biological parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. Connecting with each of these supports reduces the likelihood that an adolescent will continue a path of crime because they give the youth an emotional outlet and create opportunities for additional developmental assets to be gained and strengthened (Blechman & Bopp, 2005; Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008; Menon & Cheung, 2018).

Many times, introducing one asset will introduce or strengthen another. Creating the thread of intertwining developmental assets raises the likelihood of desistance (Sesma & Roehlkepartain, 2003). Many developmental asset threads begin with support, social competencies, and constructive use of time (Bradford, 2015; Kim & Gerber, 2012; Marsh & Evans, 2009; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Priest et al., 2014; Else-Quest & Morse, 2015; Weinrath et al., 2016).

Adults who positively support youth lower recidivism rates by becoming positive role models for the youth (Bradford, 2015; Marsh & Evans, 2009; Menon & Cheung, 2018). For example, Bradford (2015) found that adults who are positive supports for juveniles model positive values that the youth pick up. Boundaries and expectations are other examples of supportive role models opening the door to gaining more developmental assets. Role models teach youth to create and respect boundaries while adhering to expectations (Marsh & Evans, 2009). Other developmental assets that role models help adolescents gain are commitment to education and positive identity (i.e., confidence and self-esteem; Menon & Cheung, 2018).

Strengthening a positive identity is highly linked to social competencies, while social competencies are related to support and constructive use of time (Menon & Cheung, 2018). Constructive use of time builds opportunities for youth to gain empowerment and social

competencies (Kim & Gerber, 2012; Menon & Cheung, 2018). One proactive way for juveniles to use their time and gain empowerment as one of their developmental assets to lower recidivism rates is restorative justice. Restorative justice gives youth the chance to become empathetic for the damage caused by the crime or crimes they have committed. As a result, youth can repair the damages caused by their crimes or crimes similar to theirs. In addition, by constructively using their time to restore justice, juveniles build social competence by working with others and feel empowered by the positive changes they are making in their community.

A well-researched strengths-based program that has successfully reduced recidivism in adolescents is the Good Lives Model (Barendregt et al., 2018). The Good Lives Model does not explicitly utilize developmental assets or protective factors. However, the Good Lives Model's primary goods or needs utilize various developmental assets and protective factors as secondary goods or means to achieve the primary goods (Willis et al., 2014). The eleven primary goods and their associated secondary goods are life (personal characteristics, behavior, positive values), knowledge (education, commitment to learning), excellence in work (employment), excellence in play (affective leisure time), excellence in agency (empowered, social competencies), inner peace (positive identity), relatedness (social competencies, boundaries, expectations, support), community (peers, social competencies), spirituality, happiness (positive values, positive identity, empowered), and creativity (Purvis et al., 2011; Ward, 2002; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Willis et al., 2014). The Good Lives Model helps youth gain the primary goods by developing an individual good lives plan with the juveniles that raise their quality of life upon completion (Barendregt et al., 2018). The good lives plan consists of individualized abilities, resources, and skills (internal, external, coping) that build upon the youth's current strengths through multiple activities. Completing the good life plan resulting in a higher quality of life helps youth desist from crime (Ward & Marshall, 2004).

Education

Lastly, education and school success have long been an integral part of the human success story. Educational attainment builds a foundation for future opportunities and life chances (Boudon, 1974; Buchmann & Hannum, 2001; Forsman et al., 2016; Nilsson & Estrada, 2009; Oreopoulos & Salvanes, 2011). For example, high academic performance during adolescence predicts higher education admission, completion of an undergraduate degree, and career employment (Nilsson & Estrada 2009; Vinnerljung et al., 2010).

On top of the benefits for youth provided by educational attainment, academic success negatively correlates with criminal activity (Swisher & Dennison, 2016; Zingraff et al., 1994). Education goes beyond lessening the probability of an adolescent participating in criminal activity. Abeling-Judge's (2019; 2020) research findings indicated that educational attainment assists with desistance from crime, indicating that academic assistance is a viable intervention strategy to help juveniles not reoffend (Azad et al., 2018). Academic assistance serves to benefit youth from early years through college. Studies show that pursuing higher education corresponds to desistance (Ford & Schroeder, 2011), while success in remedial courses also reduces recidivism rates (Brunner, 1993; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1999; Leschied et al., 1986). Academic success negates criminal behavior by contributing to positive aspirations, behaviors, and expectations (Hirschfeld, 2017; Little et al., 2013; Payne et al., 2015) as well as a higher sense of self (Ross & Mirowsky, 1989; Schieman & Plickert, 2008) and lower depression (Miech & Shanahan, 2000).

However, there is more to attending school than academic performance. School involvement plays a large part in lowering juvenile recidivism rates (Abrams et al., 2011; Bryan et al., 2012; Dumais, 2009; Shepherd et al., 2016; Unruh et al., 2009; Zaff et al., 2003). Youth positively engaged in school are less likely to participate in criminal activity since school is one of the primary prosocial settings (Shepherd et al., 2016). Schools set the stage for youth to gain and strengthen

healthy relationships with peers and adults. Adolescents' positive relationships with teachers, coaches, and other school personnel create a safe and nurturing space for youth to explore and expand (Bryan et al., 2012; Dumais, 2009; Zaff et al., 2003). Adult-student relationships provide youth with high academic and social expectations yet allow the student room to grow through failure (Christle et al., 2005). By giving juveniles a safe place to fail and grow, school personnel are guiding the youth towards opening new doors, so youth believe in their ability to grow and change by choosing prosocial behaviors and desisting from crime (Shepherd et al., 2016).

To assist teachers and staff with guiding adolescents toward prosocial behaviors and desistance, the school administration may introduce a social emotional learning program. Social emotional learning programs help reduce juvenile recidivism rates by lowering school behavioral issues and aggression, increasing prosocial behaviors, and improving academic performance (Durlak, et al., 2011; Stern & Repa; 2000). Social emotional learning programs focus on seven core competencies: assertiveness, empathy, impulse control, decision making skills, responding to feelings, connection to community, and self-understanding (Stern & Repa, 2000). Becoming sufficient in these competencies strengthens multiple protective factors and developmental assets that help youth desist from crime.

Conclusion

Counseling, familial involvement, youth development, and education provide youth with necessary treatment and skills to help juveniles desist from crime. However, combining these four intervention strategies into an intervention high school that youth attend daily creates a healthy environment that promotes desistance. Current alternative education programs have successfully lowered juvenile recidivism by promoting and instilling various skills, including conflict resolution (Aron, 2003; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000), social and communication (Aron, 2003), and interpersonal (Aron, 2003; Tonry & Farrington, 1995). Mental

health, behavioral, and relationship counseling are also defining factors in current alternative education programs (Christle et al., 2005; Unruh et al., 2009). Lastly, current successful alternative education programs instill and strengthen supportive relationships (Aron, 2003; Tonry & Farrington, 1995), expectations and boundaries (Aron, 2003), school engagement (Clemens, 2013; Unruh et al., 2009), proactive emotional responses (Clemens, 2013), academic achievement (Tonry & Farrington, 1995); and self-regulation (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000).

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In this section, I will propose Freedom High. Freedom High is an intervention school for youth who have or are involved with the justice system. Students in Freedom High will be called scholars since any adolescent who puts their mind to it has the capability to commit to learning and achieve educational attainment. By attending Freedom High, scholars will have the tools and capabilities for desistance and self-freedom. Freedom High will assist youth along their freedom journey through counseling, family relationships, positive youth development, and educational achievement.

The counseling component of Freedom High will conduct weekly individual sessions with two counselors and two weekly group sessions that include mental health, behavioral, and relationship counseling. Each type of counseling uniquely promotes desistance. Mental health counseling reduces recidivism by combating mental disorder and stress (Dembo et al., 1995; Moore et al., 2013; Parker, 2013; Ryan et al., 2013; Zeola et al., 2016). Mental stress counseling includes treating trauma, chemical abuse, and general mental health problems. The behavioral aspect of the school's counseling will help youth reduce recidivism by promoting self-regulation (Ajzen, 1991; Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000; Evans-Chase, 2014; Fine et al., 2016; Goldstein et al., 1986; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Kiriakidis, 2006; Leve et al., 2015; Moffitt et al., 2013; Perrone et al., 2004; Piquero et al., 2010; Piquero et al., 2016; Pratt & Cullen, 2000; Pratt et al., 2004; Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996; Vitacco et al., 2002), positive social interactions (Andrews et al., 1990; Henggeler et al., 2002; Izzo & Ross, 1990; Leve et al., 2015; Menon & Cheung, 2018), and behavioral skills (Menon & Cheung, 2018) while combating criminal attitudes (Andrews et al., 2006; Ajzen, 1991; Fine et al., 2016; Giordano et al., 2002; Kiriakidis, 2006; Simourd & Olver, 2002). The last aspect of counseling Freedom High will incorporate is relationship counseling. Relationship counseling lowers reoffending rates by teaching youth to build healthy relationships (Farrell et al., 2017) through

practicing conflict resolution, decision making and planning skills, resistance (Menon & Cheung, 2018), starting conversations, knowing when to disclose information, and partner/friend selection (Leve et al., 2015).

Freedom High will combine mental health, behavioral, and relationship counseling through the use of CBT. Once the counselors evaluate the scholars, they will decide which model or mixture of therapy models will be the best approach for the individual. The varying CBT models that will be used are SITCAP-ART, TGCTA, MRT, R&R, and DBT. Each of these methods helps reduce recidivism by lowing mental health symptoms and behavioral issues with minor tweaks here and there depending on the scholar's need (Blankenship, 2012; Grassetti et al., 2015; Little, 2002; Olafson et al., 2018; Raider et al., 2008; Ross & Ross, 1995a). DBT also negates recidivism by teaching the scholars how to cope with overwhelming emotion and mental stress (Koerner, 2012; Linehan, 1993) and social skills (Koerner, 2012).

Freedom High's group counseling will utilize DPT and TGCTA. The DBT group will allow the scholars a fun environment to learn, practice, and strengthen their skills without worrying about messing up. The TGCTA group gives scholars a safe place to share and work through their trauma with other scholars who have experienced trauma.

Freedom High will also incorporate family involvement by utilizing aspects of Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy. The family members that will be included in Freedom High's family counseling and family fun days will be partially left up to the scholar during the family evaluation. Scholar's families will include the people who live with the scholar and the family (biological or not) who the scholar distinguishes as close family. After family evaluation, counselors will sit down with the family to create family plans that focus on their strengths. The first component of the family plans will consist of community outreach to help the family meet their basic needs (Clemons, 2013). Next, the family will participate in biweekly group and individual

family counseling to repair family relations (Henggeler et al., 1992) by engaging and motivating program involvement, cognitive and behavioral interventions, and strengthening prosocial behaviors (Leve et al., 2015). Freedom High will also host parenting classes during the alternating weeks. The classes will teach parents to be supportive, build close family bonds, and follow through with rules, rewards, and consequences (Abeling-Judge, 2020; Clemons, 2013; Contreras et al., 2011).

Lastly, families will participate in Freedom High by having fun. Freedom High will help facilitate familial support through affective leisure time. Freedom High will host family fun days where scholars and their families will come together to find happiness and inner peace through excellence in play. Family fun days are also a time for scholars to introduce their families to their friends and support system. Freedom High hopes that the scholars' family members' support system will grow through the unfiltered fun with other families.

Happiness, inner peace, and excellence in play are primary goods from the positive youth development model that Freedom High will utilize, the Good Lives Model. Freedom High will use protective factors and developmental assets to help the scholars obtain the eleven primary goods (Purvis et al., 2011; Ward, 2002; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Willis et al., 2014) and raise their Quality of Life (Barendregt et al., 2018). The daily schedule allows youth to work on their interpersonal skills (Abrams et al., 2011; Bradford, 2015; Chung et al., 2007; Fields and Abrams, 2010; Haqanee et al., 2015; Kim & Gerber, 2012; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Parker, 2013; Zapolski et al., 2016) and set/follow boundaries and expectations (Contreras et al., 2011; Cuervo & Villanueva, 2015; Lodewijks et al., 2010; van der Put et al., 2012) by building supportive relationships (Blechman & Bopp, 2005; Bouffard & Bergseth, 2008; Menon & Cheung, 2018) with their peers (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cuervo & Villanuena, 2015; Hoge et al., 1996; Unruh et al., 2009; Van der Put et al., 2011) during class and leisure time (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Chung et al., 2007; Cuervo & Villanuena, 2015; Hoge et al., 1996; Unruh et al., 2009). All of the school personnel will push for

desistance by being supportive role models (Bradford, 2015; Marsh & Evans, 2009; Menon & Cheung, 2018) that promote commitment to learning (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Cuervo & Villanuena, 2015; Hoge et al., 1996; Lodewijks et al., 2010; Menon & Cheung, 2018; Unruh et al., 2009; Van der Put et al., 2011), positive personal characteristics (Carr & Vandiver, 2001; Hoge et al., 1996; Van der Put et al., 2011), values (Menon & Cheung, 2018), and identity (Abrams et al., 2011; Bradford, 2015; Chung et al., 2007; Fields and Abrams, 2010; Haqanee et al., 2015; Kim & Gerber, 2012; Parker, 2013; Zapolski et al., 2016), and empower the youth (Kim & Gerber, 2012; Lodewijks et al., 2010; Menon & Cheung, 2018). Each scholar will create their own good lives plan, so they and Freedom High employees know how to build on the scholar's strengths to help them desist from crime (Ward & Marshall, 2004).

Freedom High will help utilize free periods and sparks classes to further scholars' secondary goods (protective factors and developmental assets). Free periods will give scholars plenty of time to interact with their peers and Freedom High staff in an unstructured setting. There will be multiple games and group activities available for the scholars to choose from. Free periods allow scholars to effectively utilize their free time to strengthen their supports and practice their interpersonal/ social skills.

Sparks classes are nonacademic classes that introduce various topics, hobbies, and occupations. Through the sparks classes scholars are able to try new things in hope that they become interested in and want to learn more about and engage in the topics, hobbies, or occupations which will combat criminal attitude. Along with combating criminal attitude, sparks classes will increase scholars' commitment to learning, self-esteem, positive identity, empowerment, and positive values. After the initial introductions at the beginning of the year, the scholars will drive the class topic

Finally, Freedom High will incorporate social emotional learning courses to lower recidivism through the seven core competencies: assertiveness, decision making skills, empathy, responding to feelings, impulse control, self-understanding, and connection to community (Stern & Repa, 2000).

CONCLUSION

At its core, Freedom High is a high school; therefore, most of the day will consist of academic classes. The classes available for the scholars are remedial, on target, vocational, and higher education courses. Educational attainment is one of the foundations of future success (Boudon, 1974; Buchmann & Hannum, 2001; Forsman et al., 2016; Nilsson & Estrada, 2009; Oreopoulos & Salvanes, 2011). Therefore, each Freedom High teacher will work with a dual purpose: scholars' educational growth and successful good lives plan completion.

Graduates from Freedom High will have completed or have a plan to continue working towards desistance. Freedom High graduates will leave the school thriving as productive members of society and know what true freedom feels like. The freedom that comes from attending Freedom High is the freedom of knowing one's true self and believing one can achieve their dreams.

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