

An Assessment of the Risk and Protective Factors Impacting Criminal Gang Involvement among At-Risk Boys Resident at a Juvenile Home in Trinidad and Tobago: The Peer/Individual Domain of the Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm

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Abstract : This study examined the peer/individual domain of the Risk Factor Prevention Paradigm (RFPP) to assess the risk and protective factors that impact criminal gang involvement among at-risk males residing in a juvenile home in Trinidad and Tobago. The RFPP allows for the identification of both risk and protective factors in a single, holistic framework to identify the relationship between risk factors, protective factors, and criminal gang involvement among at-risk male adolescents. Findings showed that having anti-social peers was the most significant risk factor associated with criminal gang involvement, while the most significant protective factor was having a positive social attitude. Moreover, while 65% of the boys reported never having been in a gang, 70% reported having hit, struck or used a weapon against someone, while 52% reported being involved in other violent incidents on more than two occasions. This suggests that while involvement with criminal gangs may not be common among this population, predisposing behavioral patterns are present. Results are expected to assist in the development of targeted strategies to reduce the attractiveness of gang membership.

Keywords : risk factor prevention paradigm, risk factors, protective factors, peer/individual domain, gang involvement, at-risk youth, trinidad and tobago, juvenile home

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