

A DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK FOR JUVENILE CASES

ROPER	DEVELOPMENT	STATEMENT	TRIAL	DISPOSITION	
<p>•Behavioral immaturity mirrors anatomical immaturity of brain</p> <p>•Rely on amygdala, primitive emotion center of brain when adults would process similar information through frontal cortex</p> <p>•Frontal lobe --responsible for impulse control, decision-making, judgment-- develops slowly until early 20's</p> <p>•Prone to risk-taking; it is statistically aberrant to refrain from risk-taking in adolescence</p> <p>• More susceptible to stress, which further distorts already poor cost-benefit analysis</p> <p>•More vulnerable to peer pressure Importance of approval makes already risk-prone impulsive teen even more so</p> <p>•Normal adolescents cannot be expected to operate with maturity, judgment, risk aversion or impulse control of an adult; teen who has suffered brain trauma, dysfunctional family, violence, or abuse cannot be presumed to operate even at standard levels for adolescents</p>	<p>IMMATURITY</p>	<p>• <i>Immature thinking</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unable to anticipate -Unable to see choices -Minimizes risk <p>• <i>Immature identity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not successful -Unstable self-definition -Wants acceptance -Can't function independently <p>• <i>Moral development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fairness fanatic -Fragile moral reasoning -Empathy 	<p>Can't look ahead to statement in court</p> <p>Only way to go home--say what they want</p> <p>Can always take back what I said</p> <p>Self-conscious about being "slow"</p> <p>Unsure of self; hurt if called a liar</p> <p>Compliant; does what is asked</p> <p>Naively trusts police; taught to tell truth</p> <p>Can't believe police would manipulate, lie</p> <p>Snitching=morally wrong</p> <p>Does not understand rights</p> <p>In shock about offense; shame</p>	<p>Did not plan: "it happened;" impulsive</p> <p>Carried weapon with no plan to use</p> <p>Believed it was "just talk" (fantasy)</p> <p>Sensitive to being picked on</p> <p>Does not ask for adult help</p> <p>Wants to belong even with negative peers</p> <p>Easily influenced by older co-defendants</p> <p>Can't walk away, especially when high, even though knows right from wrong</p> <p>May have been righting a wrong</p> <p>Did not realize there would be a victim</p>	<p>Must be tailored to each youth's unique needs, but could include services (in a facility or the community) such as:</p> <p>Instruction in anticipating consequences</p> <p>Instruction in how to see choices & pros & cons</p> <p>Instruction in decision-making: think before acting</p> <p>Instruction in planning & following a plan</p> <p>Being successful at something & opportunities to show it</p> <p>Guided process for defining self; becoming a leader</p> <p>Instruction in how to think without being influenced</p> <p>Improved social skills to be acceptable to positive peers</p> <p>Preparation for work & deciding to live on modest income</p> <p>Developing job skills; support on the job for good decisions</p> <p>Learning positive ways to deal with unfairness</p> <p>Practicing good moral reasoning under stress</p> <p>Victim empathy training</p>
	<p>DISABILITIES</p>	<p>• <i>Processing problems</i> (digesting information)</p> <p>• <i>Limited executive functions</i></p> <p>• <i>Impaired sequencing</i></p> <p>• <i>Difficulty concentrating</i></p>	<p>Doesn't comprehend meaning of Miranda</p> <p>Can't follow questions-doesn't ask</p> <p>Can't read well</p> <p>Focuses on getting it over with</p> <p>Thinking compromised by lack of sleep, cold, hunger, other conditions</p>	<p>Can't comprehend others' intentions</p> <p>Things happened too fast</p> <p>Poor planner</p> <p>Couldn't envision what would happen next</p> <p>Became agitated under stress</p>	<p>Specialized instruction to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve reading by learning how to decode words • Improve reading by digesting more of the meaning • Improve sequencing: seeing cause & effect • Practicing comprehending instructions • Improve organization; learn how to prioritize • Learn how to concentrate & manage distractibility • Learn how to manage stress
	<p>TRAUMA (causes delayed development)</p>	<p>• <i>Over-reacts to threat</i></p> <p>• <i>Depressed</i></p> <p>• <i>Numbs feelings with substances</i></p>	<p>Scared of police, especially 2-on-1</p> <p>Tearful, exhausted, poor eye contact; slow thinking; gives in easily</p> <p>High, coming down during questioning</p>	<p>If victim aggressive, responds as if a repeat of past maltreatment (primitive reflex)</p> <p>Feels worthless, anxious, powerless; life is out-of-control; self-destructive</p> <p>Lowered inhibitions, poor judgment if high during offense</p>	<p>Trauma treatment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about traumatic events • Hear about others' trauma • Separate past maltreatment from present provocations • Learn not to blame self and stop self-destructive acts • Not assume others are hostile; not act like a victim <p>Learning to anticipate loss of control & how to manage</p> <p>Learning to soothe self when agitated without substances</p> <p>Positive, realistic view of self in future</p> <p>Help with family where there is active substance abuse</p>