

# Explaining Juvenile Delinquency

---

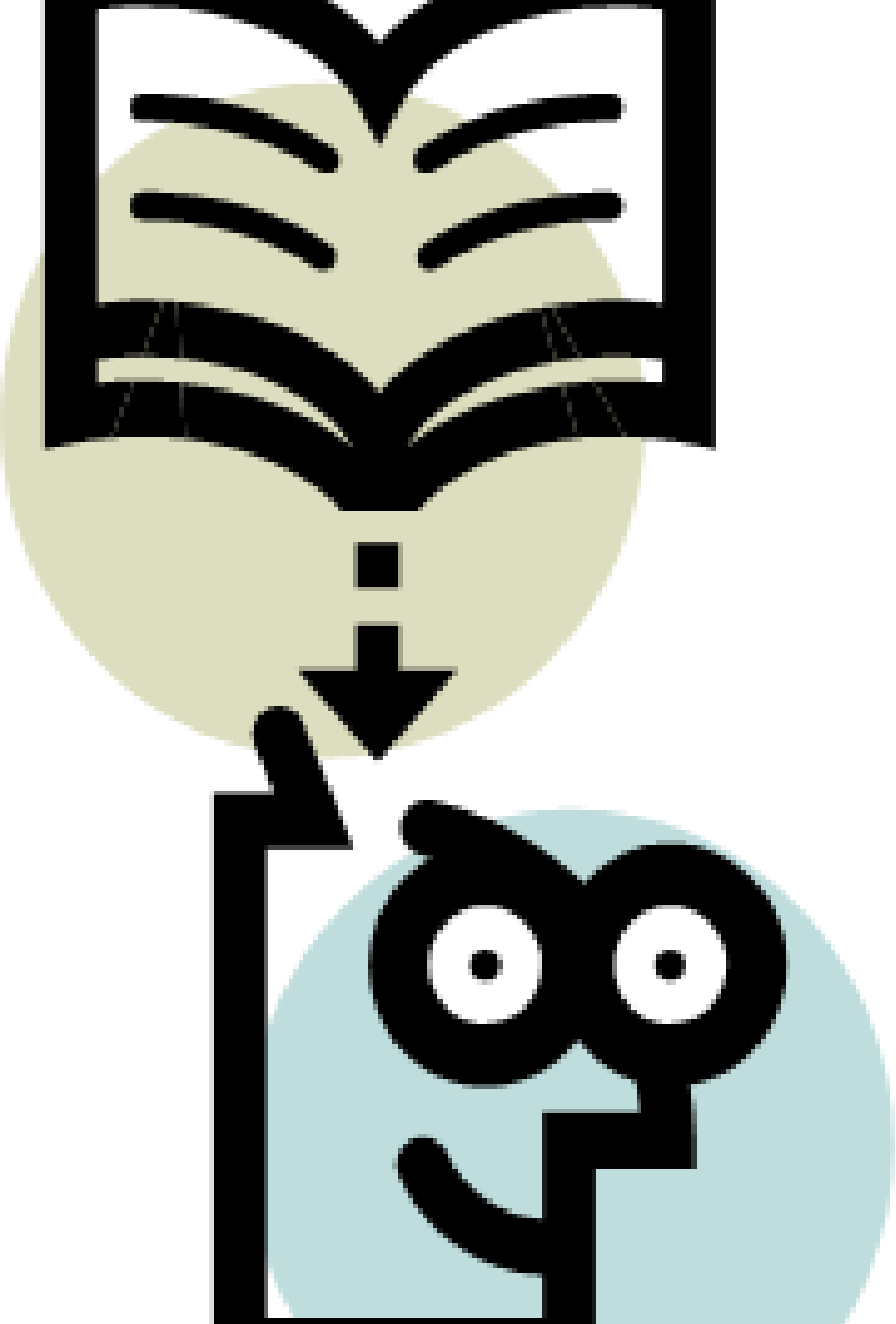
Applying Theory

# Purpose of theory

---



- Attempts to explain an observed phenomenon
- Explaining observed patterns of crime
  - Males have higher offending rates
  - Criminal offending peaks at in late teens to early adulthood
  - Crime rates differ across communities
  - Impulsivity and association with delinquent peers associated with offending



# Learning delinquency

---

- Learning theories argue people learn to engage in delinquent behavior
- Influenced by
  - Differential Association, Sutherland
  - Social Learning, Bandura
- Social Learning Theory
  - Akers

# Akers' Social Learning Theory



Symbolic interactionism



Behavior is learned

# Key elements

---

- Four major concepts of social learning theory
  1. Differential association
  2. Definitions
  3. Differential reinforcement
  4. Imitation

# Differential association

---

- Association=exposure
  - To definitions of delinquency
  - To models of behavior
  - To norms and values
  - To reinforcement
- Primary, secondary, and reference groups
  - Nature of association moderated impact



# FLDJJ Risk Assessment Instrument

## DOMAIN 6: Relationships

*For initial (or intake) assessments, the current timeframe is the last six months. For reassessments, current means since the last assessment.*

1. History of anti-social friends/companions:  
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Never had consistent friends or companions
- ☐ Had pro-social friends
- ☐ Had anti-social friends
- ☐ Been a gang member/associate

2. Current friends/ companions youth actually  
spends time with:  
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ No consistent friends or companions
- ☐ Pro-social friends
- ☐ Anti-social friends
- ☐ Gang member/associate

# Definitions

---

- Attitudes and meanings attached to behavior
- Approving attitudes
  - Positive
  - Neutralizing
- Definitions developed/learned in social process

1. Attitude toward responsible law-abiding behavior:	<input type="radio"/> Abides by conventions/values <input type="radio"/> Does not abide conventions/values
--	---



# Differential reinforcement

---

- Anticipated rewards and punishments
- Positive Reinforcement can be:
  - Positive: presenting a positive stimuli
  - Negative: removing an aversive stimuli
- Punishment can be:
  - Direct: presenting an aversive stimuli
  - Indirect: removing a positive stimuli



# Imitation

- Acquisition of behavior
- Characteristics of the model
- Prosocial and delinquent behavior



# Biosocial Theories

---



# Basic tenants

---

- Biology and environment interact
- Traits conducive to delinquency, but not deterministic
- Delinquency most likely to occur when
  - Individuals possess traits
  - Individual in adverse environments

# Behavioral genetics

---

- Attempt to understand genetic influence on delinquency
- Twin studies
- Adoption studies
- Genetic studies
- Genes to brain to behavior



# Aspects of biology

---

- Neurological/cognitive factors
- Conduct disorder/aggression
- Impulsivity/negative emotionality
- Mental/physical health





# Implications for Juvenile Justice

- How do we ethically reduce crime?
- Target social risk factors
  - Biological-social interaction
  - Environment affects biology



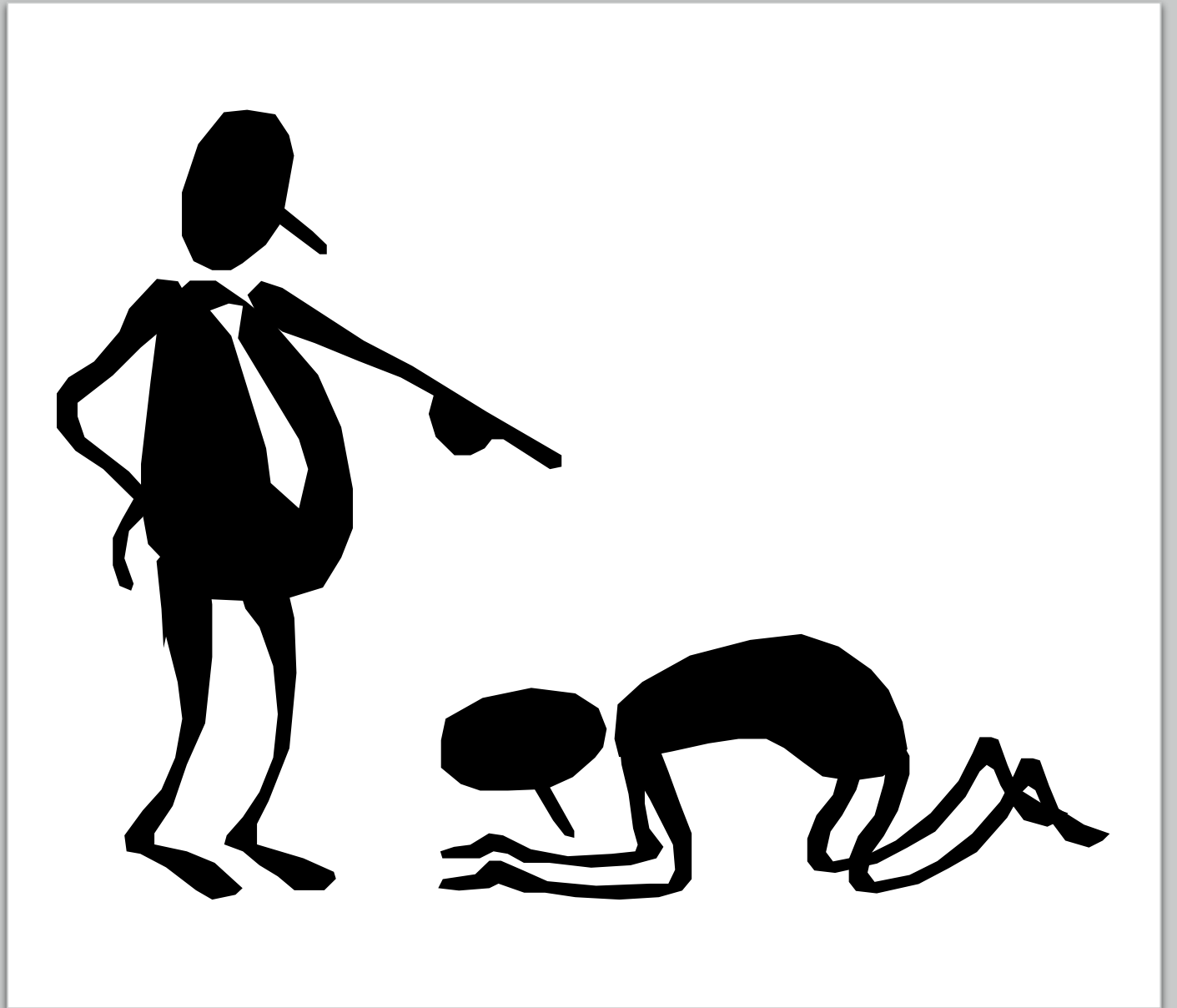
# Labeling Theory

- Societal reaction to offending



# Underlying perspective

- Cause of delinquency is societal reaction
- Focus on response, not initial offense
- Dramatization of evil
  - Association
  - Self perception



# Types of deviance

- Primary
  - Peripheral to identity
- Secondary
  - Identify as a delinquent
  - Learned through social interactions



A group of four teenagers (three girls and one boy) are standing in a line, pointing their fingers towards a boy on the right. The boy on the right is wearing a checkered shirt and jeans, and he is bowing his head down, looking ashamed. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Types of sanctions

- Formal
  - Prison
  - Fines
  - Civil restrictions
- Informal
  - Societal reaction
  - Denied opportunities

# Implications for Juvenile Justice

- Examples?

# Implications for Juvenile Justice

- Pre-arrest and diversion programs
- Community-based treatment
- Sealing records
- Restorative Justice
- Transition programming
- Terminology
  - Delinquent vs criminal
  - Adjudicated vs guilty
  - Referral vs arrest
  - Person first language

A photograph of prison bars, viewed from inside a cell looking out. The bars are dark and vertical, creating a grid-like pattern. In the background, there are other parts of the prison building, including windows with metal grates and some structural elements. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing the text "Deterrence Theory" in white.

# Deterrence Theory



# Key Elements and Findings

- Certainty
- Swifttness
- Severity
  
- Non-legal sanctions
  
- Pratt et al. (2017) Meta Analysis
  - Only one is a significant deterrent
  - Matters more for adults

# Examples in Juvenile Justice

---

- Certainty
- Swiftness
- Severity

