









UNIVERSITY  
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LANCASHIRE



# Literacy and Emotional Literacy

## Is there a Connection?

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# **My agenda for today**

- 1. Definitions of literacy and emotional literacy**
- 2. Common confusions**
- 3. Mental disorder or educational impairment: the problems of young people who are in contact with the youth justice services**
- 4. Resilience**
- 5. Risk**
- 6. Concepts of impact, burden and cultural sensitivity**
- 7. Concluding comments**

# Definitions and common confusions



# Definitions

- **Literacy**
  - **The ability to read and write**
- **Emotional Literacy**
  - **The ability to express feelings, with specific feeling words, in three word sentences (e.g. I feel ...)**



## **Common confusions**

- **Children and young people's needs for emotional wellbeing**
- **Children and young people's needs for psychological and emotional development**
- **Children's emotions and behaviour when they are distressed, have problems or have a disorder**
- **Behaviour problems, mental disorders and learning impairments**

# Psychological and emotional development

## ■ Psychological development

- Affect control
- Identity
- Perception of the world
- Perception of self, self-esteem & self-efficacy
- Trust
- Safety
- Interpersonal skills
- Interpersonal relations
- Moral development

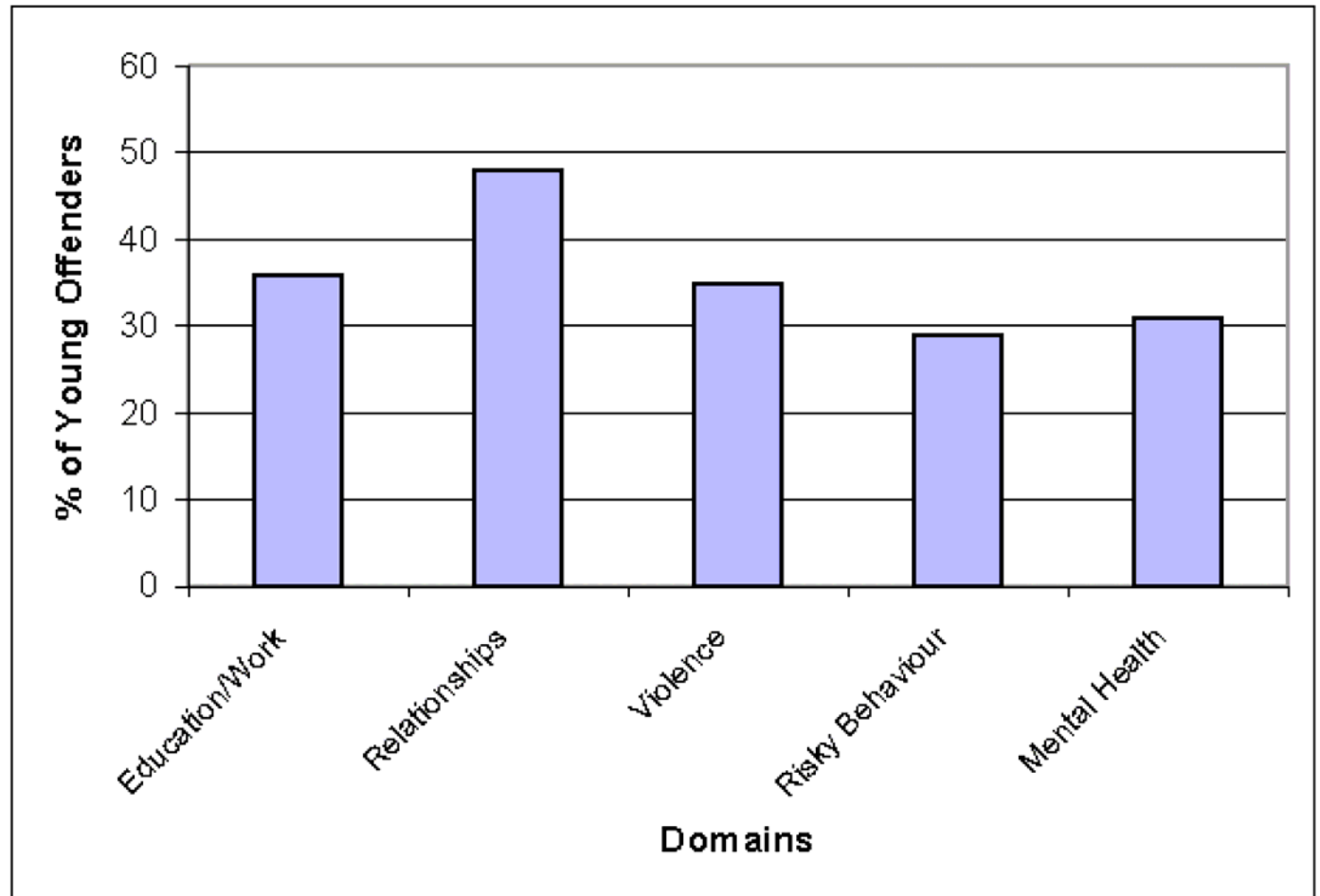
## ■ Emotional development

- Reflecting on own feelings
- Painful memories
- Poor impulse control
- Preoccupation with/compulsive repetition of aggression
- Risk-taking



**Mental disorder or  
educational impairment**

# Needs of young offenders





# IQ

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<b>Descriptive IQ</b>	<b>IQ Range</b>	<b>n (301)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Classification</b>			
<b>Lower Extreme</b>	<b>&lt;69</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Below Average</b>	<b>70-84</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>85-114</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Above Average</b>	<b>115-130</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Upper Extreme</b>	<b>131&gt;</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Missing</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>15%</b>

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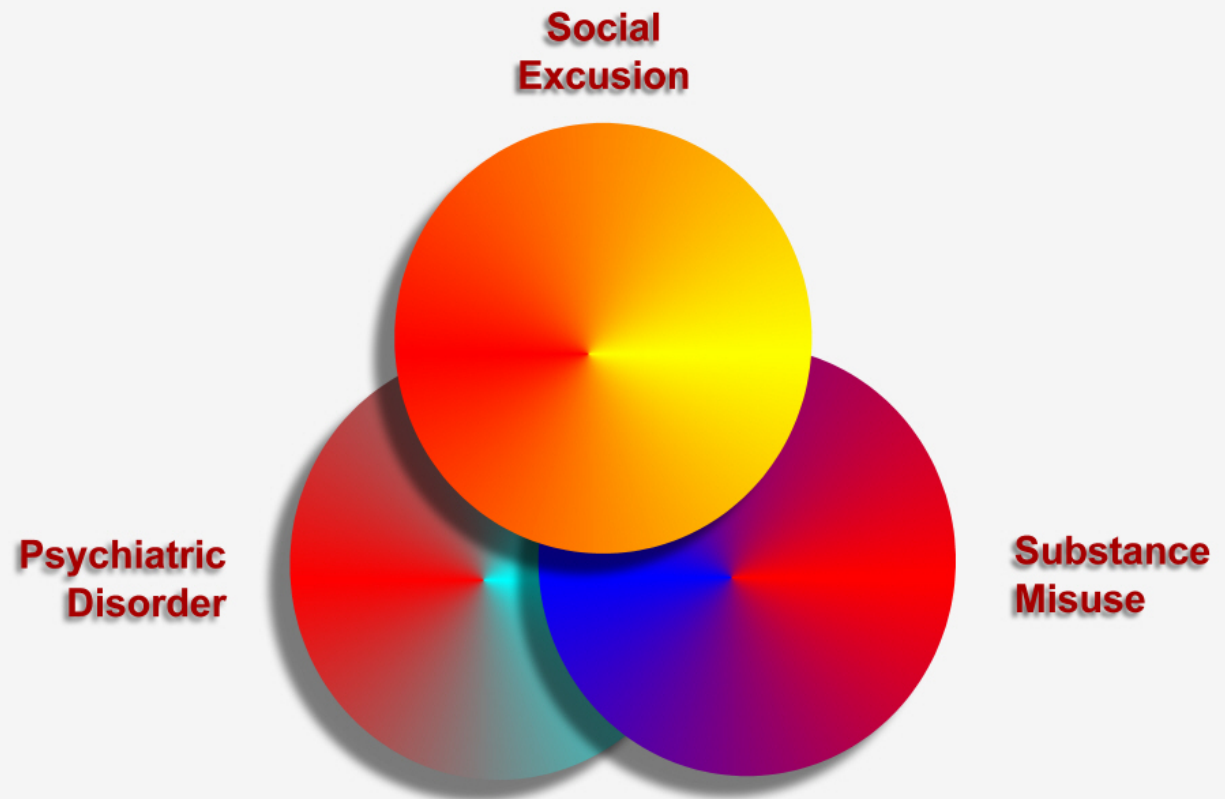


# Reading comprehension age compared with chronological age

Reading Comprehension Age compared with Chronological Age	n (209)	%
Same/above chronological age	6	3%
0-4 yrs below chronological age	21	10%
>4yrs below chronological age	133	64%
Missing	49	23%

# **Risk and resilience**

# A triad of experiences





# Risk factors

- Number rather than types of risks
- Low socio-economic status
- Poverty
- Family instability and conflict
- Maltreatment
- Parenting
- Attachment patterns
- Parental psychopathology

**Inequity is usually mediated through caregivers**



# Protective factors

- **Positive temperament**
- **Intellectual ability**
- **Supportive family**
- **Encouraging and rewarding social support system**
- **A good caring relationship with at least one adult**

# Psychological Resilience

- **The individual's capacity for adapting successfully and functioning competently despite experiencing chronic stress or adversity (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1997)**
- **Good outcome in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development (Masten, 2001)**
- **The ability... to maintain relatively stable healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning (Bonanno, 2004)**





# Psychological Resilience

- A person's capacity for adapting psychologically, emotionally and physically reasonably well and without lasting detriment to self, relationships or personal development in the face of adversity, threat or challenge.
- It is NOT about avoiding short-term distress or deleterious responses, but about adapting to and realistic recovery from them.



# The nature of resilience

- **Dynamic**
- **Developmental**
- **Continuous**
- **Interactive**
  - **Passive - increasing a person's ability to withstand trauma**
  - **Active - shaping the environment to minimise trauma**
- **Relates to attachment capabilities**
- **Gender related**
- **Three factors**
  - **Factor 1**  
**Intelligence & temperament**
  - **Factor 2**  
**Family relationships & Level of support available from family**
  - **Factor 3**  
**External support from:**
    - **Other persons**
    - **Institutions**



# How to undermine resilience

- **Dramatise**
- **Pathologise**
- **Catastrophise**
- **Create negative expectations**
- **Blur boundaries (e.g., between disorder & more positive responses)**
- **Hide, mislead, misinform or otherwise manipulate information**
- **Emphasise the role of experts**
- **Ignore; show emotional distance or indifference**

**Impact, burden and cultural  
sensitivity**



# Burden

- Burden is ***“the presence of problems, difficulties or adverse life events which affect the life (lives) of the psychiatric patient’s significant others”*** Angold et al
- Burden takes in both perceptions of the manifestation of the child’s problems and parents’ abilities to cope



# Impact and burden

- The relationship between *burden* and *impact* operates in both directions for children's relationships with adults
- Adults have different sensitivities to internalising and externalising problems and disorders in young people
  - 50% of adolescents' internalising disorders picked up by parents, teachers and counsellors and 25% by children's doctors
- Families' views and their experience of their problems is key but is often subordinated to professional and diagnostic foci

# Concluding Comments



# 'Promoting Mental Health in a Civil Society'

- There is no health without mental health
- Inaction is costly
- Approaches should tackle risk factors and increase resilience
- Improvement requires closure of 'equity gaps'
- Stigma must be reduced
- A multi-faceted approach is required

# Services that can respond to a hierarchy of mental health needs

- **Universal services**
  - To assist the emotional wellbeing, psychosocial development and relationships of all children and young people
- **Selective services**
  - To assist children and young people who have higher than average risks of developing a mental health problem or disorder but have no problems or symptoms
  - Children and young people who are distressed
- **Indicated services for children and young people who have:**
  - Symptoms not amounting to a mental health problem;
  - A mental health problem(s) or
  - A mental disorder





# Service principles

- **Child-centred**
- **Protective of children and young people**
- **Respectful of parental responsibility and lawful**
- **Equitable and appropriate**
- **Competent and responsive**
- **Accountable and future orientated**
- **Holistic**
- **Efficient, effective and targeted**



## **A closing thought ...**

**‘You must be the change  
you wish to see in the  
world’**

**Ghandi**



