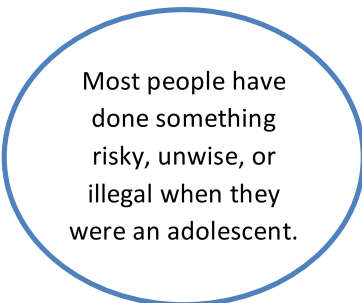


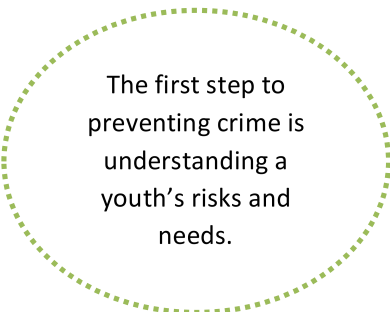
Adolescence is a Period of Enormous Developmental Change...

Compared to adults, adolescents are more impulsive, more influenced by peers, and more oriented towards short-term gains than long-term costs. As a result, many adolescents engage in risk-taking behaviours, and may even commit crimes, such as fighting, vandalism, and shoplifting. In fact, adolescents are more likely than any other age group to be arrested.



Most people have done something risky, unwise, or illegal when they were an adolescent.

What is a Youth's Risk for Offending?



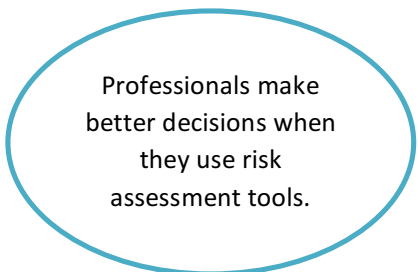
The first step to preventing crime is understanding a youth's risks and needs.

If an adolescent commits a crime, will he or she become entrenched in a life of offending? Or, will he desist with age and increasing maturity? Judges, psychiatrists, psychologists, probation officers, and others must make these assessments every day. Their judgments influence whether a youth is incarcerated or released, and what services, if any, he or she receives.

Wrong decisions are costly. If an adolescent is inaccurately judged to be a high risk, they may be unnecessarily incarcerated, therefore decreasing their chances at becoming a law-abiding citizen. Conversely, if an adolescent is inaccurately judged to be a low risk, it may jeopardize public safety. As such, professionals have an obligation to make the best possible decisions.

What are the Best Approaches by Which to Assess Risk?

One approach for assessing risk is to rely on one's own expertise and clinical intuition. However, these unstructured judgments are unreliable and often invalid.¹ For instance, one review concluded that clinicians were accurate in only one of three cases.²



Professionals make better decisions when they use risk assessment tools.

A better approach is to use a structured risk assessment tool that compiles an empirically-supported set of risk and protective factors for reoffending.

¹ Ægisdóttir, S., White, M., Spengler, P., Maugherman, A., Anderson, L., Cook, R., et al. (2006). The Meta-Analysis of Clinical Judgment Project: Fifty-Six Years of Accumulated Research on Clinical Versus Statistical Prediction. *Counseling Psychologist*, 34, 341-382.

² Monahan, J. (1981). The clinical prediction of violent behavior. *Crime and Delinquency Issues: A Monograph Series*, ADM 81-921134.

Although these tools cannot foresee the future, they are more transparent, reliable, and accurate than the alternative, clinical intuition.³ They also help agencies better allocate resources so that youth with the highest needs get the services that they require.⁴

Our Work



Our goal is to provide science-based strategies by which to reduce reoffending, violence, and harm.

Our research focuses on identifying the **best possible** tools and methods by which to assess risk for violence and offending.

We started this research because of requests from agencies and professionals for guidance and information. From our own work in clinical and justice settings, we recognize that risk assessments are often challenging and stressful.

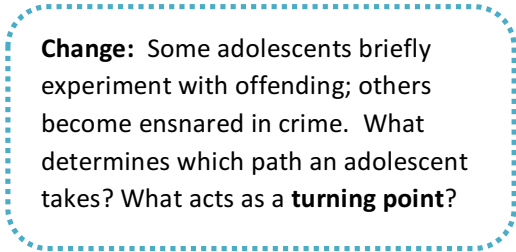
Our research spans from **basic-level science** on risk and protective factors all the way to **local, provincial, and implementation projects**, in which we work with agencies to implement evidence-based practices.

Some Areas of Focus

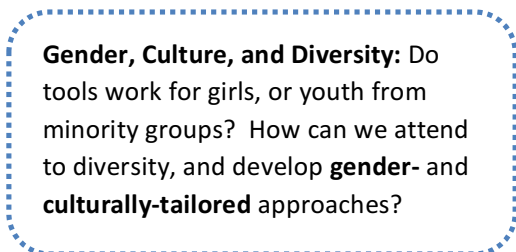
Our projects are tailored to the needs of our agency partners, and the interests of trainees in our lab. Some examples of areas of focus are:

Risk Management and Treatment:

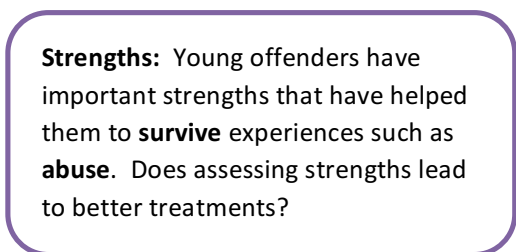
The goal is not solely to predict risk but to **prevent** violence. Thus, how can tools help plan treatment and ultimately, reduce offending?



Change: Some adolescents briefly experiment with offending; others become ensnared in crime. What determines which path an adolescent takes? What acts as a **turning point**?



Gender, Culture, and Diversity: Do tools work for girls, or youth from minority groups? How can we attend to diversity, and develop **gender- and culturally-tailored** approaches?



Strengths: Young offenders have important strengths that have helped them to **survive** experiences such as **abuse**. Does assessing strengths lead to better treatments?

³ Hilterman, E. B., Nicholls, T. L., & van Nieuwenhuizen, C. (2014). Predictive validity of risk assessments in juvenile offenders: Comparing the SAVRY, PCL:YV, and YLS/CMI with unstructured clinical assessments. *Assessment*, 21(3), 324-339. doi:10.1177/1073191113498113

⁴ Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., Gershenson, B. G., & McCabe, P. (2012). Does risk assessment make a difference? Results of implementing the SAVRY in juvenile probation. *Behavioral Sciences & The Law*, 30(4), 384-405. doi:10.1002/bsl.2014

Examples of Recent Publications and Presentations

Book Chapters

Viljoen, J. L., Gray, A. L., & Barone, C. (in press). Assessing risk for violence and offending in adolescents. In R. Jackson and R. Roesch, *Learning forensic assessment: Research and practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Viljoen, J. L., Brodersen, E., Shaffer, C., & McMahon, R. J. (2016). Risk reduction interventions for adolescent offenders. In K. Heilbrun et al. (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology and juvenile justice* (pp. 517-544). Washington: American Psychological Association.

Research Articles

Spice, A., Viljoen, J. L., Douglas, K. S., & Hart, S. D. (2015). Remorse, psychopathy, and psychopathy among adolescent offenders. *Law and Human Behavior*, 39, 451-462. doi:10.1037/lhb0000137

Viljoen, J. L., Gray, A. L., Shaffer, C., Latzman, N. E., Scalora, M. J., & Ullman, D. (2015). Changes in J-SOAP-II and SAVRY scores over the course of residential, cognitive-behavioral treatment for adolescent sexual offending. *Sexual Abuse: Journal of Research and Treatment*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/1079063215595404

Tools & Guides

Viljoen, J. L., Brodersen, E., Shaffer, C., Muir, N., & ARROW Advisory Team (2014). *Adolescent Risk Reduction and Resilient Outcomes Work-Plan*. Burnaby, British Columbia: Simon Fraser University.

Viljoen, J. L., Nicholls, T. L., Cruise, K. R., Desmarais, S. L., & Webster, C. D. with contributions by Douglas-Beneteau, J. (2014). *Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability: Adolescent Version (START:AV) – User Guide*. Burnaby, British Columbia: MHLPI.

Conferences & Workshops

Bhanwer, A., Shaffer, C., Gray, A., Viljoen, J., & Douglas, K. (2015, June). *The relationship between protective factors and reoffending in adolescents*. Paper presented at the 3rd NACCJPC Conference, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Gray, A. L., Viljoen, J. L., & Douglas, K. D. (2015, June). *Assessing psychopathic traits in adolescent offenders*. Paper presented at the 3rd NACCJPC Conference, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Muir, N. M., Gray, A., & Viljoen, J. (2015, June). *The relationship between foster care, gender and recidivism in young offenders*. Poster presented at the 15th Annual IAFMHS Conference, Manchester, England.

Shaffer, C., Bhanwer, A., Gray, A., Viljoen, J., & Douglas, K. (2015, June). *Do gender-relevant domains of risk add to the prediction of offending?* Paper presented at the 3rd NACCJPC Conference, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Viljoen, J. L. & Muir, N. (2015, April). *Adolescent Risk Reduction and Resilient Outcomes Work-Plan (ARROW): Two-day training*. Ministry of Children and Family Development, Kelowna BC.