

Psychopathy & Sociopathy & their role in family violence

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CURTIS ST. DENIS, MA, QMHP
MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Overview

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- ▶ Clarifying
- ▶ Causes & Key symptoms
- ▶ Kids, Parents and Parenting
- ▶ Interventions

10 Signs Your Man Is A Psychopath

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Written by [Kiri Blakeley](#) on CafeMom's blog, [The Stir](#)

- ▶ 1. **Flattery** like you've never heard before
- ▶ 2. **He is just like you** = soul mates
- ▶ 3. **Pity plays** What he says on first few dates about his exes/other people
- ▶ 4. **Illnesses and injuries**. Pay attention to how many illnesses and injuries he's had
- ▶ 5. **Great sex**. Everyone wants great sex, but those who have been with a psychopath often say it's the best thing they've ever experienced.
- ▶ 6. **Cracks in the mask** sometimes blurt out something odd about himself.
- ▶ 7. **Silent treatment**. Once psychopaths have you hooked after the "love bombing" and "idealization" phase, they then begin to devalue you
- ▶ 8. **Triangulation** love to work you up into a state of obsessive frenzy.
- ▶ 9. **Discard Phase** usually move on to another
- ▶ 10. **"Hoovering."** He doesn't quite want you moving on either.

I don't show
interviews of serial killers

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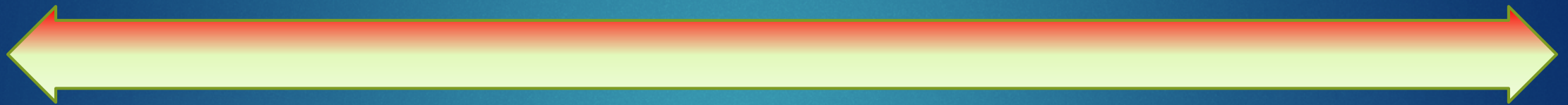
What is Psychopathy?

- ▶ Combination of narcissistic + antisocial PD's
- ▶ A constellation of traits
- ▶ A severe personality disorder:
 - ▶ Lifespan
 - ▶ Rigidity in symptoms
 - ▶ Patterns of problems: emotional, relational, social

The Antisocial Spectrum

“psychopathic” and “sociopathic”

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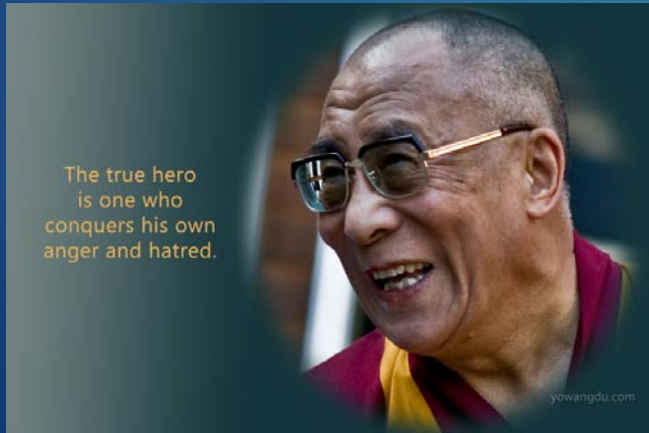


Benevolent

Normal

ANTISOCIAL

PSYCHOPATHIC
SOCIOPATHIC



A Matter of Degrees

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Antisocial

- ▶ Onset mid-teens
- ▶ Excitement/ rebellion
- ▶ Low attachment
- ▶ Narcissism = self-absorbed
- ▶ Some things they won't do
- ▶ Changes (80%) in up through late 20's – mid 30's

Sociopathic/ Psychopathic

- ▶ Onset before age 12 (avg. 8)
- ▶ **CU = callous/ unemotional**
- ▶ Little to no bonding
- ▶ Aggressive narcissism
- ▶ Opportunistic & versatile
- ▶ High volume, versatility
- ▶ Slows down but...

A Meaningful Separation

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PSYCHOPATHY

- ▶ 1% of the population
- ▶ Genetic?
- ▶ Low emotional capacity
- ▶ Planned violence with low emotional arousal
- ▶ No attachment
- ▶ Cold and calculating
- ▶ Educated/ sophisticated

SOCIOPATHY

- ▶ 4% of the population
- ▶ Environmental?
- ▶ Anxiety/ more emotional
- ▶ Impulsive & reactive: volatile/ explosive/ violent
- ▶ Shallow attachment
- ▶ Disorganized crime scenes
- ▶ Low education/ unsophisticated

Not to be confused with Developmental Psychopathy

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Stats

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- ▶ Prevalence: 15- 25% of Max Custody; 1-5% of community corrections
- ▶ Earlier onset:
 - ▶ 9.3 for nonviolent crime
 - ▶ 12.1 for violent crimes
- ▶ Higher Volumes (~125 crimes/ yr)
- ▶ Stranger Crimes (2x) & Violence/ Homicides (7x)
- ▶ Higher Recidivism (3x)
- ▶ Higher Violent Recidivism (4x)
- ▶ Longer Lifespan (half reduce criminal activity by the age of 35-40)

Tend to be Male + Versatile, BUT...

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- ▶ Female Psychopaths: detached from children, more dysphoric/flat, high manipulation abilities, \$\$\$
- ▶ Juvenile Psychopaths: CU = calloused and unemotional, early onset, stimulation seeking, bullies
- ▶ Sexual Psychopaths: "irresistible impulses," impersonal relationship to V, excitement driven ("try sexuals"), rape + CM
- ▶ Sexual Homicide: predatory, sadism + sex, overkill, calloused crime

Not Just “criminals”

10-20% of CEO's

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Martin Schkreli during Senate hearings after he raised price of a AIDs treatment drug from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill

HOW

Nature, Nurture

All Cultures

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- ▶ Half of the variance is genetic & multiple genes
- ▶ **Calloused and Unemotional (CU) is heritable**
(shallow affect, lack of empathy/ guilt)
 - ▶ Youth high on aggression have deficits in processing of emotionally distressing stimuli
- ▶ “Hard to socialize temperament” = predisposed toward antisocial behavior regardless of childhood experiences

Fledgling Psychopaths

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- ▶ Traits can be reliably assessed starting at age 4, but even 2-year-olds can exhibit signs:
 - ▶ Fighting, bullying, lying, cheating and stealing
 - ▶ Don't react to distress
 - ▶ Don't respond to punishment
 - ▶ Routinely being aggressive
 - ▶ Respond to distressing in others with aggression

Genetics?

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Benjamin Paddock



Steven Paddock

Environmental Factors

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- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Neglect (A/D, MH)
- ▶ Violence
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Permissive parents
- ▶ Antisocial parents
- ▶ Early institutionalization



Trauma + CU

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- ▶ Community violence
- ▶ Childhood relational trauma
 - ▶ Physical + Sexual
- ▶ Familial + Societal “Training”
 - ▶ SES context -> exposure -> violent reward -> cruelty

Types of Aggression/ Violence

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Reactive

- ▶ Motive = self-preservation
- ▶ Perceived threat
- ▶ Fear and anger
- ▶ Physiological arousal
- ▶ Protect Self
- ▶ Impulsive reaction
- ▶ Time limited

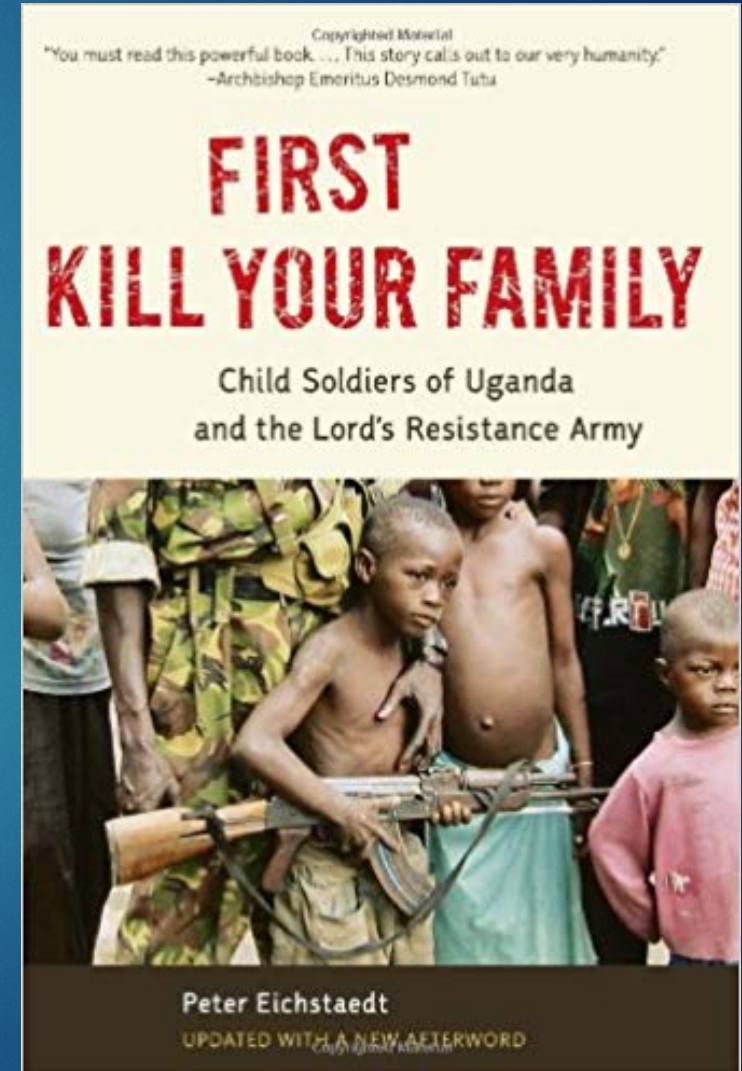
Instrumental

- ▶ Motive = gain: \$\$\$
- ▶ Taking something I want
- ▶ Exciting! Dominance!
- ▶ Low arousal + confident
- ▶ Humiliation of the victim
- ▶ Premeditated
- ▶ Not time limited

Appetitive Aggression

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- ▶ Training & desensitized
- ▶ Self-rewarding Violence
- ▶ “Carried Away” / Compulsion
- ▶ Cruelty increases
- ▶ Dominance
- ▶ Dehumanization
- ▶ More violence = less PTSD

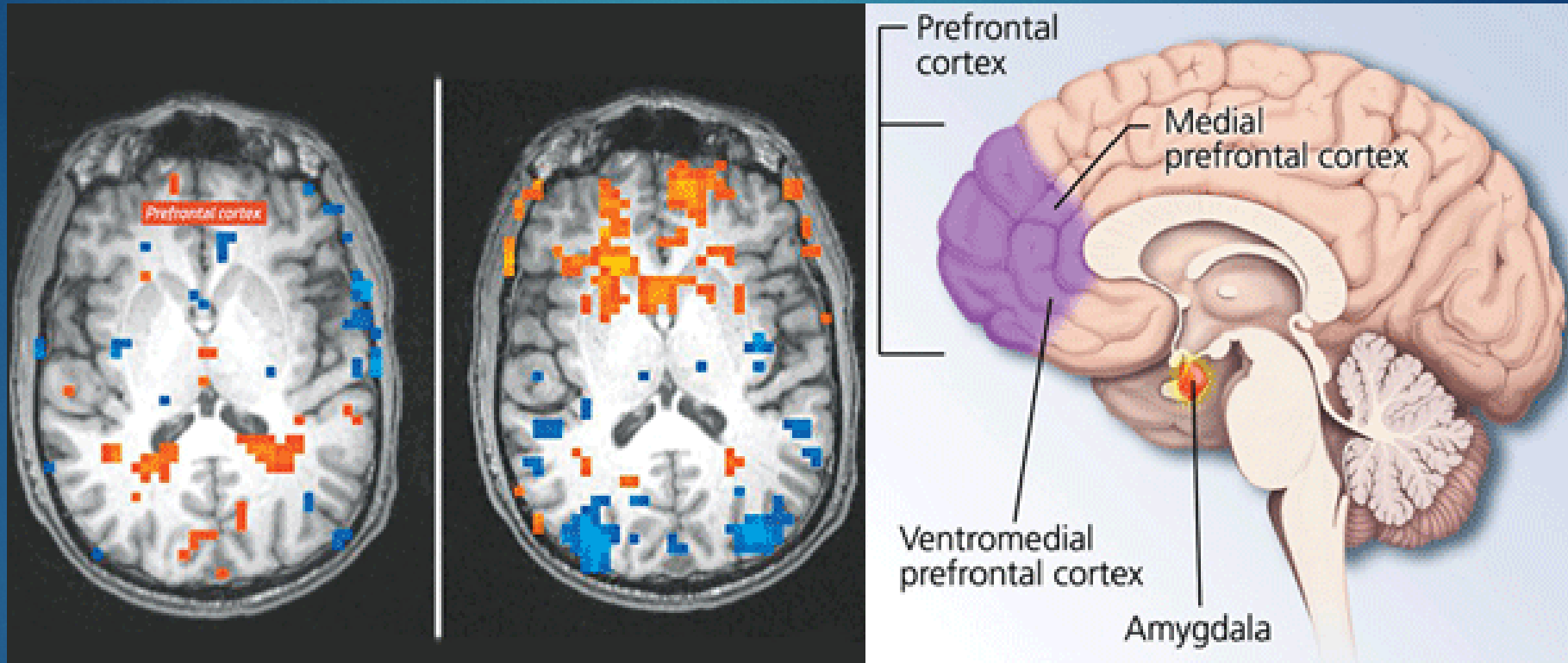


Your Brain

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Their Emotional Brains Too Inactive, Too Disconnected



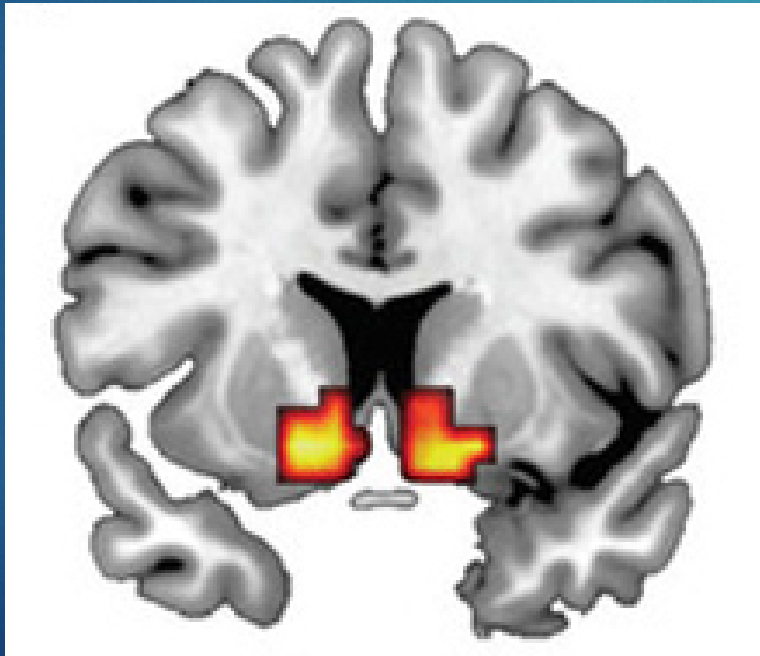
Connections with Ventromedial PFC = Emotion & Moral Judgment, empathy and guilt

Pleasure & Reward Processed Differently

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- HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY TO REWARD = 4 TIMES HIGHER RESPONSES IN THE DOPAMINE REWARD AREAS



- FEEL PHYSICAL/ EMOTIONAL PAIN, BUT CANNOT PUT THEMSELVES IN OTHERS' SHOES
- \$\$\$, SEX AND DRUGS

Measurement & Key Symptoms

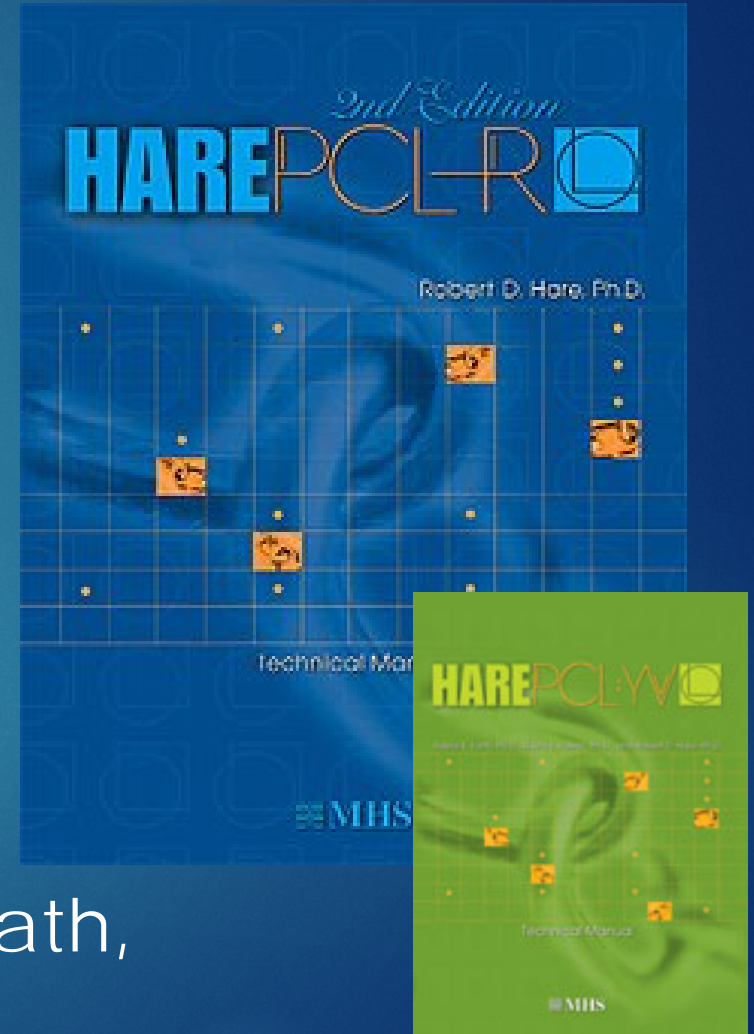
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How It's Measured

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- ▶ 20 items, scoring is 0-1-2; 40 pts is highest score, rough cutoff = 30
 - ▶ Interpersonal & emotional (narcissism)
 - ▶ Behavioral (antisocial)
- ▶ Does not measure Sociopath vs. Psychopath, homicide potential, serial killing,



IT IS NOT SENSITIVE TO OTHER CONDITIONS

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MEET BETH

- Beth Thomas, age 6, subject of 1990 HBO documentary "Child of Rage"
- Diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder after suffering early childhood abuse



- ▶ Reactive Attachment Disorder
- ▶ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ▶ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/ Effect
- ▶ Severe substance use disorders
- ▶ Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (complex)



Two Factors of the PCL-R

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▶ Malignant Narcissism

- ▶ Superficial charm
- ▶ Grandiosity
- ▶ Pathological lying
- ▶ Conning/Manipulative
- ▶ Shallow affect
(capacity)
- ▶ Calloused/ Lack of
Empathy

▶ Antisocial Lifestyle

- ▶ Prone to boredom/
need for excitement
- ▶ Parasitic
- ▶ Poor behavioral controls
- ▶ Early onset
- ▶ Juvenile Delinquency
- ▶ Criminal versatility

Terms Describing Narcissism

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- ▶ Benign
- ▶ Malignant
- ▶ Aggressive
- ▶ Classic/
Invulnerable
- ▶ Vulnerable
- ▶ “Acquired”



SHALLOW

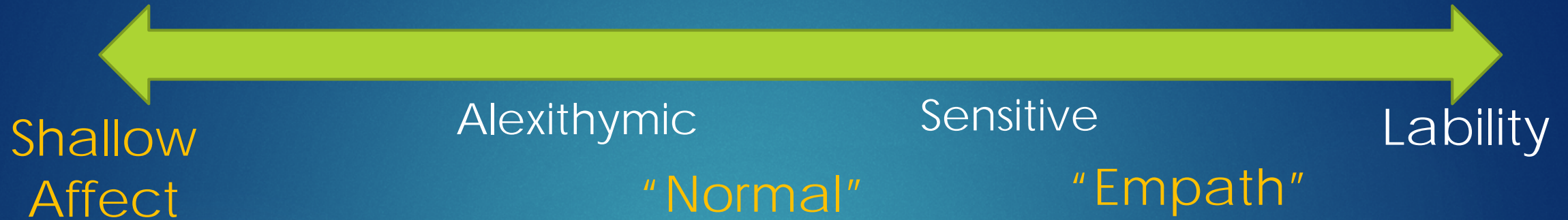
➤ Emotions:

- Not very often
- Not very intense
- Not very long lasting
- Not very social (guilt, shame, remorse, love, loyalty)
- Not enough to inhibit

➤ Attachments:

- Influence, not influenced
- Parasitic
- Exploitive
- Predatory
- No loyalties
- Increased violence

Capacity



Is it all bad?

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“I left (the military) because I could no longer tell if I had to do it (kill) or if I was doing it for fun.”

HONESTY EXERCISE:

Have you EVER...?

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- ▶ KNEW you should have felt bad but didn't?
- ▶ Manipulated or lied your way out of trouble?
- ▶ Took revenge on someone who "did you wrong?"
- ▶ Felt pleasure when someone got hurt?
- ▶ Justified your aggression?





Parasitic



Predatory

Callous/ Lack of Empathy

“My girlfriend said I don’t have any empathy and she was right, I don’t. I just don’t feel.”

Grandiosity

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- ▶ NOT DELUSIONAL (part of MH disorder) = exceptionally skilled and unique – not a superhero
- ▶ Better than + Derogatory of others
- ▶ Self-assured, cocky, opinionated, overconfident
- ▶ Success = ME, failure = bad luck
- ▶ Controls the “press conference”
- ▶ Jailhouse lawyer



Golden State Killer

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JOSEPH JAMES DeANGELO



Pathological Lying

as defined by

- ▶ An integral part of interactions with others
- ▶ Purposeful = confuse, take advantage (e.g. aliases)
- ▶ Fabricated & elaborate accounts of past
- ▶ Preference
- ▶ Highly skilled or at least try to be

Manipulation

As defined by...

- ▶ "Con Man"
- ▶ Using deceit to cheat, bilk, defraud
- ▶ Predatory attitude vs. prey
- ▶ Schemes, scams, stings
- ▶ Uses others for personal gain
- ▶ No concern for impact on others or larger systems

Manipulation

Psychopathic offenders are over 2 times more likely to be released than their non-psychopathic counterparts.

Need for Excitement

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Poor Behavioral Controls

- ▶ **Across relationships** (bio family, intimate, children, acquaintances, strangers)
- ▶ **Across domains** (public, at home, in prison)
- ▶ **Spontaneous and unprovoked**
- ▶ Short tempered
- ▶ Irritable, annoyed, impatient
- ▶ More serious when using alcohol/ drugs

It Matters

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Mr. P

- ▶ All family members legit work; dad owns a business
- ▶ Likes “waving guns” = Banks, drugs, pimp
- ▶ Loner = Gang associate
- ▶ Federal and state prisons
- ▶ Disciplinary misconducts include violence & serious assaults
- ▶ - Marriage

Mr. S

- ▶ Generations of gang members
- ▶ Mother’s death in his early teens was “hard”
- ▶ Drug dealing and violence
- ▶ **Gang** dropout
- ▶ CA/ OR prisons
- ▶ Few DR’s while in prison
- ▶ +Marriage

BREAK

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"I LIKE TO WATCH PEOPLE SQUIRM"

Family Violence & Interventions

HOW ARE THEY MADE AND HOW CAN YOU PARENT THEM?

Mistakes

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- ▶ Biases
- ▶ One symptom
- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Vivid
- ▶ Violence
- ▶ Homework
- ▶ Therapeutic Nihilism



MISTAKES

IT COULD BE THAT THE PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE IS
ONLY TO SERVE AS A WARNING TO OTHERS.

The Psychopathic Parent

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Parent – Effects Model

Bonding

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- ▶ **Poor parental bonding** (e.g. lack of maternal care + low paternal overprotection)
- ▶ **Parental negative attitudes** toward children = Influences the risk of antisocial behavior in children
- ▶ **Negative parental affects** observed at ages 9–10 -> child's later psychopathic personality at ages 14–15
- ▶ **Number of early life stressful events** => emotional component of psychopathy/ sociopathy

Parental Styles, Personality & Violence

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- ▶ Too Harsh: parenting style + Negative Emotionality = Reactive aggression + vulnerable narcissism
- ▶ Too Cold: Neglect + Narcissism traits = predict higher antisocial behavior scores in men
- ▶ Too Warm (overly indulgent): Parental CU + Indulgent = Instrumental aggression, grandiose narcissism
- ▶ Just Right: Maternal warmth + Narcissism = lower (mostly Antisocial)PCL Scores

- ▶ In men, the relationship with the mother serves as an important factor in the development of antisocial component of psychopathy

The Narcissistic Parent

Lack of attachment, bonding, love

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- ▶ Emotional neglect
- ▶ Dismissiveness
- ▶ Disregard for the child's welfare
- ▶ Violence within/ outside of family
- ▶ **Purposeful** attempts to corrupt a child
 - ▶ E.g. exposure to pornography
 - ▶ E.g. encouraging delinquent behavior

Parents who Abuse their Children

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- ▶ 64% of fathers and 76% of mothers had a suspected Personality Disorder
 - ▶ 11% of mothers and 29% of fathers had a criminal record
 - ▶ Half of the fathers were psychopathic
- ▶ 48% had an emotional disturbance

Children Witnessing DV

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- ▶ DV exposure may be one factor -> manipulative interpersonal style
- ▶ Witnessing domestic violence was significantly associated with overall level of psychopathy (particularly strong relationship with Narcissism on PCL-R)

Domestic Violence Offenders

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- ▶ Generally violent/ antisocial (GVA) = 25% of batterers
 - ▶ 5% highest risk (psychopathic?)
 - ▶ Antisocial Lifestyle and Impulsivity = risk for reactive IPV
- ▶ Generally violent/antisocial (GVA) batterers typically:
 - ▶ Nonviolent antisocial
 - ▶ Generalized violence
 - ▶ Severe violence
 - ▶ More incidents of familial violence
 - ▶ Poorer treatment response

It Depends

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The Child – Effects Model

Recognize the Early Signs

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- ▶ Stimulation-seeking (law breaking)
- ▶ Overactive reward system (don't stop when punished/lose)
- ▶ **Violence:**
 - ▶ In late childhood
 - ▶ No triggers/ fear
 - ▶ Acted alone without peer pressure
 - ▶ Directed at a teacher/ stranger
 - ▶ Instrumental and/or appetitive

Parent Psychopathic Child

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- ▶ A significant bidirectional relationship:
 - ▶ Both genetic and shared environmental influences were significant in caregiver reported negative parent-to-child affect
 - ▶ Psychopathic child is less responsive

Child Behavior Impact Parenting

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- ▶ Psychopathic child => changes parental affect and aggression:
 - ▶ Elicits negative parenting/ caregiver responses & it escalates
 - ▶ Child's behavior is worsened by negative parental behavior attempting to curb/ control proactive aggression
 - ▶ Research = lifespan: Psychopathic child at ages 9–10 influenced negative parent-to-child affect **later** at ages 14–15, (caregiver reports)

Psychopathy + Child Abuse

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► High levels of the Antisocial Lifestyle/
Psychopathy (impulsive AND irresponsible) + victims
of child abuse = increases risk for later IPV

► Lifespan: Childhood physical abuse at
age 3 => psychopathic personality at
age 28

Good Parenting

(mixed reviews)

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- ▶ Levels of reactive aggression among children low on psychopathic traits decreased with increasing positive parental affect, consistent with a large body of literature on family processes.

AND/ OR?

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- ▶ Positive parenting did not provide protective effects
- ▶ Positive parenting (mother and/or father) did act as a protective factor for children with elevated CU features:
 - ▶ Decrease future problematic behaviors
 - ▶ Higher father-child positive affect predicted fewer externalizing behaviors

Recognize

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Now what?

We Used to Think

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And this is dangerous

Now... If you do things right...

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- ▶ Guarded Optimism
- ▶ Specialized Assessment & interventions (responsivity)
- ▶ Responsivity:
 - ▶ Affective deficits = lack of empathy: Supervision, interventions, treatment
 - ▶ We know NOT to narcissism but antisocial behaviors
 - ▶ Poor response to conventional interventions = specialized interventions

Marion County

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The System

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- ▶ Understand the construct
- ▶ R – N – R model
- ▶ High Stakes = psychopathic and/or high profile
- ▶ Supervisor knowledge & Expertise (no splitting)
- ▶ Support your workers
 - ▶ Know the signs of burnout and trauma
- ▶ Carrots

Needs of the Psychopathic Client

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- ▶ **Disinhibitors** = opportunity, excitement, criminal subculture = “have to (status)”, prosocial behaviors,
- ▶ **Inhibitions** = **Narcissism** = self-interest
- ▶ **Shallow Attachment** =
 - ▶ Rapport = R-E-S-P-E-C-T without punishment
 - ▶ Emotions are not an inhibitor (fear) but objects/ freedom
- ▶ **Appetitive Aggression/ Sadism/ Predation**

Narcissism is the wild card

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- ▶ Highly opinionated AND no self-doubt
- ▶ No accountability = others cause problems
- ▶ Entitlement AND no responsibility or accountability
- ▶ Shallow emotions = no attachment/loyalty
- ▶ Little to no empathy AND don't care
- ▶ Power brokers/ Authority = get a "rush"
- ▶ Manipulative and deceptive interactions
- ▶ AND high inflexibility with all these traits

How bad is it?

Empathy?

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...Because to date no treatments have been demonstrated to be effective at increasing empathy among psychopathic individuals [PCL-R430; Hare, 2003] research aimed at facilitating the development of empathic responses in psychopathic batterers is warranted.

Needs of the Sociopathic Client

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- ▶ Attachment = Motivation & inhibition
- ▶ Trauma:
 - ▶ Complex: Triggered, reactivity, moral Injury (atrocities, malevolent environments), MH/MI, reactivity/ explosiveness
 - ▶ Potential for Post-trauma harm
 - ▶ Victim-to-victimizer
- ▶ Criminal Code: "Have to" (punked out)
- ▶ Associate Dilemma = attachment & identity

Probably

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Be Careful

“I’m not going to do time again...if they come after me they can expect I won’t go down without a fight.”

Managing the Case

all of us

78

- ▶ Separate Treatment & Supervision
 - ▶ Do not weaponize treatment reports = “snitches get stitches”
- ▶ For the parent or the child: Assess and reassess
 - ▶ All people: the individual, children, partners, family
- ▶ Field contacts
- ▶ DO NOT SET PEOPLE UP

Channel Your Inner Dexter

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RAPPORT = R-E-S-P-E-C-T

How much do you want to hear?

Case Manager/ PO

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- ▶ Street
- ▶ Investigative
- ▶ TIC
- ▶ **Separate role: PO's = more officer than a counselor**
- ▶ Countertransference, biases and schema's
- ▶ Humility

Provider = TIC

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- ▶ Street – they'll know
- ▶ Cautious with "disclosures"
- ▶ DO NOT MIX RISK: Specialized & High Risk Only
- ▶ Group and/ or individual based on narcissism and history
- ▶ Not the narcissism but the lifestyle
- ▶ Approach to Relationships: Take – to - Exchange
- ▶ Re-offense prevention

Look for Prosocial Motivation & Outlets

- ▶ Prosocial Antisocial (car sales, dangerous jobs)
- ▶ Attachment to something (dog, car, kid)
- ▶ One healthy relationship/ attachment
- ▶ Motivation:
 - ▶ My "time"
 - ▶ Healthy paranoia
 - ▶ Freedom (Big Mac)

Key Cognitions

84

- ▶ Environment = what they have to do
- ▶ Experiences with people in power
- ▶ Take (only way to get vs. greed)
- ▶ Motives: predator is better, status, excitement
- ▶ Nihilism
- ▶ Moral Injury
- ▶ Trauma & betrayal

Helping Victims

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Aftermath: Surviving Psychopathy Foundation

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION PROVIDING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF PSYCHOPATHY

Those Two Cases?

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Mr. P

- ▶ 2+ years without crime
- ▶ 2 police calls within 2 hours with no arrest
- ▶ Polygraph...and passed
- ▶ Ran out of money
- ▶ Car was towed
- ▶ So...???

Mr. S

- ▶ 2+ years without crime
- ▶ Separated from his brother
- ▶ Married
- ▶ Financial troubles -> suspended treatment -> **BUT!**
- ▶ Got a great job – and got a new one!
- ▶ So...

In Conclusion

Spotted in the classified ads...

3

Recruitment

www.thisisguernsey.com/recruitment

EVIL GENIUS SEEKS MINIONS

to sacrifice their lives
in world domination
attempt.

Must be prepared to
work 24-7 for fascist
psychopath for no pay.

Messy death inevitable
but costumes and
laser death rays
provided.

No weirdos.

Visit:

<http://is.gd/minion>

Bus dr

Earn wh New Bu

We are look
residents to

If you have
aged 21 or
and the rig
New Bus D
what you've

The Progra
candidates
bus driving
they train a
at the end

Contact Information: Curtis St. Denis

► Marion County Sheriff's Office

- 3610 Aumsville Highway SE
- Salem, Oregon 97317
- 503-566-6906

Cedar Counseling Center

5040 SW Griffith Dr., Suite 100
Beaverton, Oregon 97005
503-866-4279

Informative Videos & Books

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- ▶ Without Conscience by Robert Hare
- ▶ The Psychopath Test by Jon Ronson
- ▶ "Interview with a Monster" (YouTube)
- ▶ "Shkreli Testifies Before Congress" (YouTube)
- ▶ "Cold Blooded Woman Angela Simpson" interview (YouTube)
- ▶ "The Corporation"
- ▶ "I am Fishead"
- ▶ "Dexter" TV series

About Your Speaker

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- ▶ Curtis St. Denis has a Master's Degree in Psychology Counseling. He has worked in forensic psychology for 33+ years including work in 3 prisons and community corrections. He has specialized in work with mentally ill, violent and psychopathic offenders. He currently works for Marion County Sheriffs Office and is in private practice and does contract work with Cedar Counseling Center, Effective Foundations and Portland State University. He also provides training to law enforcement on topics ranging from personality disorders, coexisting conditions and autism spectrum disorders.