

Commentary

Psychological Difficulties of Children for Parental Incarceration

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DESCRIPTION

Particular obstacles and difficulties faced by children whose parents work in the criminal justice system include: psychological stress, antisocial conduct, school suspension or expulsion, financial hardship, and criminal activity. With inconsistent or on-going incarceration of a parent, it is challenging to anticipate how a child would fare, and research findings on the risk factors for these kids are conflicting. Research has shown that a parent's incarceration offers various hazards to a child's emotional, physical, educational, and economical well-being, although each instance is unique and each child reacts differently.

A parent's incarceration is especially feared to trigger a cycle of intergenerational criminal conduct. According to one study, children of incarcerated parents are, on average, six times more likely to end up in prison. However, risk factors don't always appear in all kids, and it's hard to forecast or comprehend these behaviours. In one study, for instance, it was discovered that compared to children of jailed dads, children of incarcerated women had substantially greater rates of incarceration as well as earlier and more frequent arrests. Although further research is needed on this link, this difference may indicate that mothers typically serve as their children's main source of support.

There is conflicting research on depression and aggressive behaviour in kids of incarcerated parents, with significant differences by gender, age, colour, and household circumstances. For instance, one study discovered that children of colour and those whose mother and father are both behind bars experience significantly higher rates of sadness.

Another study indicated that parental incarceration was not generally linked to a change in child aggression, but the results were extremely conflicting. 20% of the children in the sample did see a rise in aggression; boys who had a history of hostility prior to a parent's incarceration were particularly at risk for such

a trajectory. It's interesting to see that there were some aggression declines: If their father had lived in the household previous to being imprisoned and had drug and alcohol issues, about 8% of the kids saw a return to a stable home.

However, research indicates that a child's capacity to overcome obstacles and thrive in life is significantly influenced by the strength or fragility of the parent-child relationship and the calibre of the child's and family's social support system. Therefore, in order to comprehend the particular dynamics of the family in question and try to ensure a safety net for the child as well as a successful re-entry for the incarcerated parent, it is crucial that correctional practitioners forge strong partnerships with law enforcement, public schools, and child welfare organizations.

CONCLUSION

The most frequent effect of parental incarceration appears to be antisocial behaviour, which covers a wide range of actions that defy social conventions, including criminal behaviour and persistent dishonesty. Antisocial behaviours were found to be more prevalent than any other characteristics, including mental health conditions and drug use, in one meta-analysis of 40 studies on children of jailed parents. In a subsequent study, the presence of several potentially harmful childhood experiences, such as imprisonment, was examined in order to expand on those findings. According to the study, having multiple negative childhood experiences throughout their development may increase a child's risk of developing severe depression as well as other problems that last into adulthood, such as substance addiction, sexually transmitted illnesses, and suicidal thoughts. A child's ability to bounce back from other traumatic experiences may be limited by antisocial behaviour brought on by parental incarceration, which could exacerbate the consequences of exposure to other problems.

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