

Helle Midskov Brynaa

WHO CONDUCTS THE ORCHESTRA?

Effective crime prevention

This book was written in close cooperation with:

P.-O. Wikström – Professor of ecological and Developmental Criminology
at Cambridge University.

Rune Kappel – MSc Psychology at Aarhus University.

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Preface

This book is about crime prevention, why most of us do not become criminals and what this can teach us in relation to where, when and how we can prevent crime.

The book is about the outcome of my meeting and excellent cooperation with Professor Per-Olof Wikström (Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge), and what this meant for the crime prevention efforts and for the SSP cooperation (partnership between Schools, the Social services and the Police) in the field of crime prevention in the Danish municipality of Vejle and, not least, my cooperation with the crime prevention unit of the Vejle Police.

This cooperation also involved Rune Kappel, MSc Psychology, Anne Dorthe Hasholt, MSc Psychology, and Senior Consultant of MG-Udvikling Marianne Grønæk. These people enabled me to convert P.-O. Wikström's theories into practice within the municipality of Vejle and the Vejle Police.

According to P.-O. Wikström, criminology is a fragmented discipline, and the most important theoretical and empirical insights achieved have been poorly integrated with each other. For this reason, it can be difficult for politicians, decision-makers and practitioners to point out, on the basis of evidence, exactly what can be done to prevent crime.

Wikström's Situational Action Theory was developed with the purpose of integrating important knowledge from various parts of criminological research with knowledge obtained from social and behavioural sciences in general. A new element is that Wikström has included psychological theories in his crime prevention work, which will be described in further detail in this book. The purpose of Situational Action Theory is to create a crime prevention action plan that considers the complexity of the particular circumstances when it comes to crime and the reason why some people become criminals while others do not.

The purpose of this book is to disseminate information on P.-O. Wikström's theories and on how the municipality of Vejle has converted the theories into practice. Through my experience working with children and adolescents, managing adults who are working with children and adolescents, and dealing with interdisciplinary cooperation, I have not previously encountered research that clearly provides an insight into how to create effective crime prevention.

In the book, I will describe how, over a period of two years, I converted P.-O. Wikström's Situational Action Theory into practice in the SSP cooperation on crime prevention within the municipality of Vejle. The book describes how Wikström's theories form the basis of a 17-day interdisciplinary training programme called "Who Conducts the Orchestra", in close cooperation with P.-O. Wikström, Rune Kappel, Anne Dorthe Hasholt, Marianne Grønæk and Lars Bo Hansen from the Vejle Police. So far, more than 100 people working with children and adolescents within the municipality of Vejle have been trained together across professional skills. The educational programme continues and it is, in fact, the first time that so much has been invested in a crime prevention, interdisciplinary educational programme within a Danish municipality.

Introduction



In recent years, through my SSP work in the municipality of Vejle, I have focused more on the group of vulnerable children and adolescents at risk of dropping out of school and turning to crime and abuse. My experience tells me that once young people lose their sense of belonging to the school and its close fellowship, the risk of losing touch with the surrounding community, its rules and norms increases considerably.

Therefore, I am preoccupied with the question of how we – professionals working with children, young people and families – can get even better at preventing crime and intervening as early as possible. How do we crack the code so that the target group chooses the developing fellowship in e.g. primary and lower secondary school, rather than an exclusionary behaviour pattern characterized by absence and at risk of ending in crime and abuse?

The big questions are: Where, when and how do we create the best crime prevention?

This book is my suggestion as to how we can use P-O Wikström's theory to professionalise interdisciplinary cooperation and achieve better crime prevention.

In 2013, I was introduced to Per-Olof Wikström, a Professor of Criminology at the University of Cambridge. This meeting with P-O Wikström, his research and the cooperation we have built since 2013 have resulted in a cultural change within the SSP cooperation and the work on crime prevention in the municipality of Vejle.

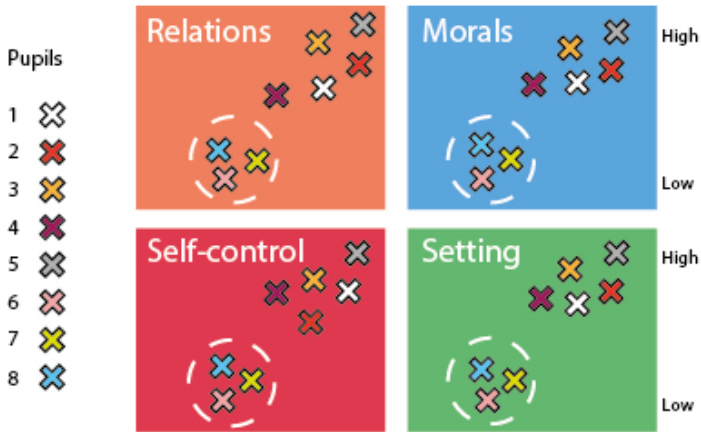
In principle, P-O Wikström has turned traditional crime research upside down. Instead of focusing on the small group of children and adolescents in the risk zone, he chooses to focus on all young people, including the large group of young people who choose to go to school, do their homework and follow the norms and rules of society. What is the reason why these young people did not end up in crime?

Why do these young people meet the rules and norms of our society? In short, P-O Wikström has researched why these young people do not become criminals, while others do.



In the book *Breaking Rules* (Oxford University Press, 2012), P-O Wikström describes his theory of situational action based on a number of field studies and interviews with young people in Peterborough, a representative British city. Peterborough is the size of Vejle and can largely be compared to a municipality like Vejle. His research touches upon many elements of young people's lives and why they may, and may not, commit acts of crime. Some of the concepts in play are relationships, self-control, morals and the environment, which are key concepts in Wikström's Situational Action Theory.

In my thesis (Diploma in Criminology) I examined whether P-O Wikström's theories can be used in a Danish context. The starting point for my survey was a school class in Vejle. Based on P-O Wikström's theories and methods, I studied the students' relationships with their families and friends, their morals and manners, their self-control and the environment in which they are growing up outside school. Subsequently, I made an analysis of the answers I had received through the interviews, and I put them into a matrix. The matrix showed the children at risk and in which areas they were at the highest risk and, as something new, I discovered that the study also clearly indicated what the most vulnerable children in the study requested from the preventive work.



I discovered that Situational Action Theory cannot only be used to analyse the exposure of young people, but also to tell us which efforts are needed to create crime prevention.

Knowledge of Situational Action Theory as an analytical method and of the way it can be used in preventive work gave rise to the development of "Who Conducts the Orchestra", and thus resulted in this book.

It is my hope that "Who Conducts the Orchestra" as well as this book will provide inspiration, desire and curiosity to the future preventive work in Denmark so that, as professionals, we will be even better at taking care of all vulnerable children and adolescents in the future.

Chapter 1.

“Who Conducts the Orchestra” – a brief introduction

“Who Conducts the Orchestra” is an educational programme in crime prevention and a professionalization of interdisciplinary cooperation. The programme is based on Professor P.-O. Wikström’s crime prevention theories with an interdisciplinary approach, i.e. health visitors, teachers, child and youth workers, police, SSP employees, social counsellors, family counsellors and psychologists are trained together.

This book describes the background for “Who Conducts the Orchestra” as well as the underlying theoretical and methodological elements.

Can we crack the code?

“Who Conducts the Orchestra” was started as a preventive pilot project focusing on primary and lower secondary school students who were at risk of opting out of school and its close fellowship, norms and values, and ending up in crime and abuse instead.

Neither primary and lower secondary school, institutions, health visitor services nor family efforts can solve the challenges of preventive work all by themselves, although they are all well-established and highly professional occupational categories providing a good and qualified job. We believe that the educational programme “Who Conducts the Orchestra” can make a decisive difference because we are trained together, focusing on interdisciplinary and coordinated efforts and collective knowledge of the triggering factors and mechanisms that affect both the individual child and the family as a whole.

The programme offers participants a whole new form of professionalization of interdisciplinary cooperation. A professionalization that creates a platform to illuminate and analyse own actions, behaviours and dialogues in cooperation with children, young people and families, through examples and personal experiences from everyday life. The intention is to create a new understanding and a framework that helps the participant see the challenges of preventive work from new angles together with the other course participants and teachers.

At the same time, participants contribute personally to the development and creation of the future interdisciplinary platform, which we hope will help us decipher why children and young people in the risk group often choose an exclusive behavioural pattern and disconnect from the “system”.

Experts create experts

We know that experts create experts. All teachers of the “Who Conducts the Orchestra”-programme are some of Denmark’s most recognized experts in the field and have been carefully selected because their teaching is linked to P.-O. Wikström’s theories and methods. And because their methods are tied up with practice, so you cannot avoid bringing your learnings into play. This makes sense and is very useful.

The educational programme consists of a total of 17 training days, divided into 4 modules and carried out during the course of approx. 4 months. On the first module, called "Prevention", P-O Wikström presents his Situational Action Theory, Rune Kappel disseminates knowledge about self-control, and Lars Bo Hansen from the Vejle Police and I talk about the efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency in the municipality of Vejle. On the second module, Anne Dorth Hasholt provides basic insight into cognitive theory and methodology, while the third module is presented by Marianne Grønbæk, focusing on the dialogue models VækstModellen (The GrowthModel) and Positionering (Positioning). The programme is completed by an exam module, which brings together the entire course, and in which a professional, who comes from another municipality, presents the participants with a case about a young person. The interdisciplinary group is then to solve the problem, using the theories and methods they have learned during the programme and as they will be solving problems at future interdisciplinary meetings.

The leadership role

All managers who have employees attending the programme have the opportunity to participate in an introduction to the programme and to visit Kings College in Cambridge, where P.-O. Wikström introduces Situational Action Theory. In addition, the managers will witness the programme exam, thus gaining knowledge and insight into the contents of the course.

It is important that the managers know what the educational programme entails and what their position is in relation to the programme and its contents.

Following the educational programme, an extra day will be held for managers and employees, discussing how the programme is used in practice, what they have experienced after the course, and what initiatives they have started up based on new knowledge and practice.

Common starting point for interdisciplinary cooperation

For many years the various professional groups have worked together, and the main focus of this interdisciplinary cooperation has been on the organisation and composition of the interdisciplinary partners. Through "Who Conducts the Orchestra" it has become apparent that interdisciplinary cooperation and the results of interdisciplinary cooperation can be professionalized when we create a common professional platform with theories and tools. A platform that trained staff can subsequently use to incorporate the common interdisciplinary efforts in preventive work throughout the municipality, thereby creating the necessary change, support and efforts for vulnerable children and adolescents and their families.

Providing a common starting point for the individual effort does not just qualify the effort. It also saves resources and creates a common interdisciplinary boost. This makes the work of the individual profession more professional and ensures that a task is solved only once. The educational programme helps to break down 'silos' and create growth across the various occupational categories. In this way we will get more self-sustaining members of society.

Both the young people and their families who have participated in interdisciplinary meetings based on the new theories and methods say that

they have not previously participated in meetings that have created such a foundation for moving on and helping them out of concrete problems.

Cultural changes that make a difference

The educational programme gives the participants an insight into tools that can support, expand and protect children's large social capital. In this way trained professionals can help promote good-fellowship and well-being, thus leaving room for everyone. And if we succeed in preventing recognisable risk behaviour, which may have major consequences for the target group in the long term, we have achieved a great deal in our work.

This type of interdisciplinary training has not previously been tested, but we are quite sure that it can help make a difference for the children and adolescents at risk so that they ultimately choose to continue their schooling and education and avoid a criminal future.

The programme theories and methods lead to a major cultural change in the crime prevention efforts and in interdisciplinary cooperation. A cultural change created by the fact that professionals from many different occupational categories have a common theoretical approach to crime prevention from the day the child is born, have knowledge of self-control and cognitive theories, and finally have a playing field and common rules for interdisciplinary professional cooperation.

“

You learn that a person is not the problem, but that the person has a problem.”

MARIANNE GRØNBÆK, 2010

So much for the background and the contents of “Who Conducts the Orchestra”. In the following chapters I will describe the various crime prevention theories and how they can be used in practice.

Chapter 2.

Rule violations and Situational Action Theory (SAT)

In this chapter I present what may take on Situational Action Theory and its implications for prevention.

Why are you not a criminal?

The question why I am not a criminal myself started an avalanche of new thoughts and reflections on crime prevention in my mind. The question was asked by Professor Per-Olof Wikström when I first heard him talk about crime prevention from a completely different angle than I had previously experienced. As professionals who deal with adolescents and crime prevention in various areas, we often seek the answers to such questions based on the criminal aspect. We have searched for causes and drivers among rule-breakers in the most crime-stricken areas. And over the years, I have encountered a lot of methods, theories and ideas for the prevention of and fight against juvenile delinquency. Focus has been on the criminogenic factors and risk factors that we have seen by observing behavioural features and situations of those who ended up in crime. Because of this focus, crime prevention efforts have been based on people for whom everything went wrong.

However, P-O Wikström's question made me realise that there has been surprisingly little focus on investigating causes and correlations in areas where there is NO crime and in adolescents who do NOT commit rule violations.

What is it that young people who do not end up in crime have or do to prevent them from committing crimes? What has kept me from committing a violation? Why are most people law-abiding? Why do some people flirt with crime and then change direction and become law-abiding?

Why do some people immediately see an opportunity to steal when they pass an open sports car with keys in the ignition and a wallet, a cell phone or expensive sunglasses left on the seat, while others do not notice anything but the great red paint job and the beautiful shapes?

Why do some people consider theft, while others hand a wallet found in the street over to the police without even opening it?

As I see it, the answers to the above questions and the solution for crime prevention work can be found in Professor Wikström's Situational Action Theory. Through extensive studies, he has cracked the code and found answers to the question why the majority do not commit crimes. This has enabled me to develop new methods for crime prevention for children and adolescents while at the same time providing the tools to strengthen and professionalize interdisciplinary cooperation, thus reducing the number of young people who end up in crime and abuse. Because once we understand why and what keeps us from becoming criminals, we will also find the answers to what prevents crime.

The importance of early action

It is at home with their families that children and adolescents are affected the most by norms, behaviours, values and morals. However, if families fail to pass on good values, the children rely on institutions and schools to help them acquire knowledge about behaviours that can help them make the best of their abilities and skills, so they get happy with their lives.

Crime and violation of rules start small. According to P-O Wikström's research findings, it is extremely rare that the first violation is serious enough to involve the police or sanctions such as imprisonment or treatment. A previous history is usually at play, and early action should be taken – the sooner, the better. The worst rule violators are those who were already offenders or out of control before the age of 12. In addition, the children who have the longest “list of sins” before their offenses are actually registered are also the ones who commit the most and the worst crimes later on.

There are good reasons for taking action at an early stage: Crime deteriorates what is usually defined as a good life, be it health, life expectancy, education, trust in other people and other factors that we associate with a high quality of life. Crime destroys the good life for both the criminal person and for his/her surroundings.

Effective crime prevention is about teaching children and adolescents to adhere to rules and to build healthy relationships, but it is also about going deeper into the basic reasons why some people refrain from breaking the rules while others become criminals.

What is crime?

P-O Wikström is of the conviction that one of the main reasons why it has been difficult to create effective crime prevention so far is that the field of criminology has been broken up. When it comes down to it, the theoretical knowledge and the empirical evidence have not been merged into an integrated understanding. Neither have recognized results from behavioural studies and social sciences been integrated with the knowledge of criminology as to the role of social environment as well as personal characteristics and experiences. When it comes to crime, there is a lack of links between how environmental and personal characteristics interact. In addition, there are conflicting opinions when it comes to central causes.

This means something for the perception of the term crime, which depends on the textbook you have on your desktop, your nightstand or on your teacher's desk as well as on your personal attitude. It leads to confusion that much of the preventive action against crime is based on unstructured assumptions as to the causes of crime.

This confusion influences politicians, practitioners or decision-makers, when they are to set out a strategy. A common direction is missing because there is no consensus as to what crime is (e.g. many people think that possession of cannabis is not a criminal act), and because there are insufficient scientific studies that provide common knowledge and direction to prevent it.

What triggers crime or violation of rules does not simply rely on guesswork or homemade theories, but Professor Wikström takes note of the fragmentation

within criminology: All in all, there is no broad consensus as to what crime really is.

Thus, we do not have a recognized and common definition of the term criminal act. Obviously, the lack of an overall definition renders it difficult to find a common understanding of causes and the road to effective prevention.

To overcome the imperfections of prominent criminological theories and gather all valid criminological knowledge available, P-O Wikström developed Situational Action Theory, and his definition of a criminal act is quite simple: an act in which the rules of conduct stated in law are broken.

He established this definition because rule violation clearly defines the outer limits. A clear delimitation of the term is necessary, because it is not possible to start finding common overall denominators that may trigger criminal acts until we have a clear definition of the term criminal act.

It is difficult to find common explanations when it comes to criminal acts. Actions such as rape and high jacking are fundamentally different from shoplifting or insider trading, but the common denominator for all of them is breach of law.

We may disagree with the justice/usefulness/purpose of the law (for example, that people interested in gardening are committing an illegal act when exchanging seeds – this rule was introduced for commercial reasons), but that is a debate for another occasion.

You cannot say that laws reflect the truth, neither universal nor individual laws. Laws are meant to regulate behaviour and do not represent the truth per



se. A law may apply in one country while it does not in another, for example whether homosexuals have the right to marry.

When it comes to crime in Denmark, the case is actually clear: if there is a violation of the current criminal law, it is rule violation and thus a criminal act.

Crime prevention must be based on evidence

Crime is a serious social problem, and serious social problems must be taken seriously.

In general, crime is perceived as a serious problem that we need to do something about, to act on. But to act the best we can, we need to know.

Being able to identify a problem is not the same as knowing how to solve it. According to Professor Wikström, we have to spend money on crime prevention just as resources are spent on the prevention of serious diseases such as diabetes and cancer. These resources should be invested in research and development of validated methods and not spent on unsubstantiated measures or on individuals or institutions working with non-evidence-based methods and theories. And as a society, we must take this seriously and take into account that the methods of crime prevention need not necessarily be changed whenever new political winds are blowing over the country. It would be strange if recognized cancer and diabetes treatment methods were changed according to who is in government or current political negotiations.

P-O Wikström considers projects that are started up with the only purpose of spending the money assigned to them, as side-tracked and often unfruitful exercises. At best, short-term and time-limited projects have no effect; at worst, they are harmful. The focus is not on preventing crime, but preventing the loss of part of next year's financial grant, should the budgeted amount not be spent on something.

Sometimes, a lot of money is spent on projects that are part of a crime prevention package, without well-considered reasons. For example, costly methods such as removing the top floors of high-rise buildings in socially-challenged residential areas, as seen in Great Britain during Margaret Thatcher's reign, do not in themselves affect the crime rate in the area.

If resources are spent in a useful way, it will, of course, have a positive socioeconomic impact as well as mean something for the everyday life and well-being of the individual. For this reason, it is important to have knowledge of crime prevention based on a foundation that combines theory and empirical evidence and which incorporates evidence.

In summary, what works and what does not work and what may have unintended negative effects?

P.-O. Wikström points out three important questions that one must always ask when introducing new measures:

- What is it about the measure that actually works?
- How does the measure work?
- For whom does the measure work?

Research

Still researching and teaching at the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge, P-O Wikström conducts a study of the criminal propensities and experiences of young people in the British city of Peterborough. The city has about 160,000 inhabitants and is thus about twice the size of the municipality of Roskilde (2014) and half the size of the municipality of Aarhus (2014).

The extensive study PADS+ (Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study) has followed 716 randomly selected adolescents since 2003 and is still ongoing. In 2016, the

participation rate was still 91%. The participants were about 12 years old when the survey was launched, and their parents were questioned at the beginning to include their background stories.

The participants are interviewed regularly about their lives and possible criminal actions. At the same time, researchers have consent to access their criminal records and the young people provide details of unregistered crimes and the circumstances in which they are committed, i.e. crimes that are not listed in their criminal records. In this way, researchers minimize the risk of being misled by lies, bragging and vivid imagination, and not least gain an insight into what acts and crimes the adolescents had committed before the police and the authorities in general began recording their acts and offenses. It also indicates the location of criminogenic areas and environments, and identifies actual criminal hot spots.

Among other things, the study clearly shows that the vast majority of crime among adolescents is committed in groups and that crime falls during periods when young people spend more time away from their friends, e.g., with their parents. It is also clear that most juvenile delinquency is committed between late afternoon and midnight. The young people most likely to commit criminal acts are responsible for up to seven times as many rule violations during this time period as registered within the same group throughout the whole day.

Data is continuously extracted from PADS+. In addition, polls were carried out in 2005 and 2012 among 6000 randomly selected citizens over the age of 18 from the same city. These citizens were asked about their communal values.

The results of the studies provide a solid foundation for identifying what impedes young people from breaking the law, and gaining knowledge about what causes some people to commit crime while others are law-abiding.

Individual and environmental differences

Historically, criminological theories and research have looked at the causes of crimes, both in the individual human being and in his/her environment. The classical criminological division between environment and individual is understandable when assuming people act while environments are not able to act. P-O Wikström maintains, however, that the classical perception does not get to the bottom of the interaction between the environment and the individual.

He identifies two essential factors that distinguish people in relation to criminal behaviour. First, it is a question of morality and the ability to exercise self-control (the personal aspect) and secondly, it is the environmental impact (settings). P-O Wikström shows how he believes that the two factors interact and lead to action (criminal or not) with his PEA theory:



P criminal Propensity
E criminal, or criminogenic, Exposure
A criminal Action

P, criminal propensity. This can be explained as the morals or basic values inherent in each individual, as well as their ability to exert self-control to act in accordance with those values.

The horizontal line illustrates that people may be placed quite differently between the two extremes:



E, criminal exposure. This can be explained as the morals or basic values inherent to the environments in which they spend time, as well as the ability of those environments to enforce those values (e.g., through monitoring and deterrence).

Also here the two outermost points on the line express the extremes and show a distorted image of reality, but the line between the extremes shows that it is possible for individuals to be at a certain spot on the scale during a period of their lives and change position later on.



A, criminal action. This is a result of the interaction between the two factors P and E as well as their relative strengths (placement on the above lines with extremes). In this theory, the interaction between P and E thus leads to a choice by the individual, resulting in A.

The "choice", the perception-choice process, will be explained later in this chapter.

In regards to crime involvement, P-O Wikström's and colleagues research shows that P (criminal propensity) is more significant than E (criminal/criminogenic exposure), and thus the concept of "morality" (in this context the same as basic values) may be a more important factor than the environment and the setting when it comes to crime prevention.

“ If a person has good relationships with others, high morals and great self-control, this person will not commit crimes, wherever he or she is. In other words, this person is resistant to momentary criminogenic influences of settings. On the other hand, a person who lacks relationships with family and friends, and who has low personal morals and low self-control, is very vulnerable to momentary influences of criminogenic settings- and is at high risk of committing crime in settings that encourage criminal acts.”

The preventive effect of reducing criminal propensity is higher than that of reducing criminal exposure. This clearly appears from the results of P-O Wikström and his colleagues' research: If a person holds moral principles or fundamental values that make it unacceptable to commit a criminal act, then that person can easily reside in a very criminal environment without becoming a criminal himself. It can be concluded that if you make an individual resistant to criminal settings, you will have the most effective crime prevention.

An example could be a situation like this: Three schoolgirls go shopping in a supermarket. Two of the girls agree to steal some hair clips, while the third girl simply just looks at it and witnesses the criminal act. The two girls who steal have no trouble violating the rules. The values and moral principles of the third girl make her resistant to the actions of the other two, even though she is challenged on her own personal limits, both in relation to the friendship and to committing a criminal act. The question is how long she can withstand the pressure of the criminal exposure without adopting the values of the two other girls and becoming a criminal herself.



Considering crime prevention, I think the best thing would be to train the morals, manners and self-control of young people from an early age, and subsequently to help them stay in settings with good role models. When parents take responsibility for their children's upbringing and their manners and teach them self-control from an early age, they develop their children's prerequisites for choosing a life without crime.

Rule violation and Situational Action Theory (SAT)

People comply with statutory rules of conduct if they agree and acknowledge the rules (or if the rules are irrelevant to them, e.g., a ban on smoking is irrelevant to non-smokers). People even comply with laws – even if they disagree with or do not care about a particular law – if there is a deterrent effect that is strong enough to cause them to worry about – or even fear – the consequences. People also comply with statutory rules, if they are able to exercise self-control when exposed to external pressure to make them commit crimes.

Professor Wikström points out that it does not help to make rules, if no one is around to make sure that the rules are met. An example: During our summer vacation, we went to see Fredensborg Castle, and after some time we finally found a parking lot with long-term parking. It was situated far from the castle, but my experience from Vejle is that you get a parking ticket, if you do not comply with the rules, and I did not want to risk that. When I subsequently bought our tickets at Fredensborg Castle, a sign read: "There are no parking attendants in Fredensborg". I could not help thinking: why have parking signs, and I wonder if anyone complies with the parking rules in Fredensborg?

People violate statutory rules of conduct when they disagree with the rules or do not care about them, and when they deliberately consider breaking the law and find that there is no form of deterrence that would cause them to fear or worry about the consequences.

In addition, people violate the law if they have repeatedly been successful in breaking the rules (either by giving in to a temptation or responding to a provocation) and breach of law becomes a habit; A form of knee-jerk reaction when circumstances arise.

Sometimes people also violate the rules of conduct even when they agree with the rules and recognize them. This is due to an inability to exercise self-control, and they fail to act in accordance with their own moral concepts when exposed to external pressure that encourages them to break the law. A typical example would be peer pressure.

In order to explain criminal actions, we need to understand the process that creates rule-breaking actions. An action theory explains the process that causes people to act in one way or another. For example, whether to comply with or to violate the rules of conduct.

Situational Action Theory (SAT) explains many aspects of crime, ranging from the lowest level of street crime to crime in large companies and perhaps even international terrorist organisations and the social and psychological development of a suicide bomber. A criminal act is made possible by the morality of the individual and motivated by a situational context.

SAT also identifies the process in which a lawful citizen becomes motivated at first, and subsequently transforms into a person who, as a result of his/her situation or the circumstances in general, perceives a criminal act as an alternative and legitimate means of achieving a desired result.

A prerequisite for this theory is that people are products of the society in which they live, and as such fulfil the social contract established by the "rules" or "norms" of this society.

P-O Wikström explains that people are essentially regulated individuals and that our society is based on common rules. An example of this is that, as a society, we agree that children should attend school every day, and adults should show up at work or comply with other agreements and obligations. Another clear example is the (predominant) agreement we have about traffic rules. Without

general acceptance of and compliance with the rules of traffic, the whole traffic situation would be chaotic. Even though the police can award fines and impose sanctions on traffic offenders, they are not able to regulate all traffic at all times. However, motorists regulate themselves because they know, accept and mainly comply with the rules that apply to traffic.

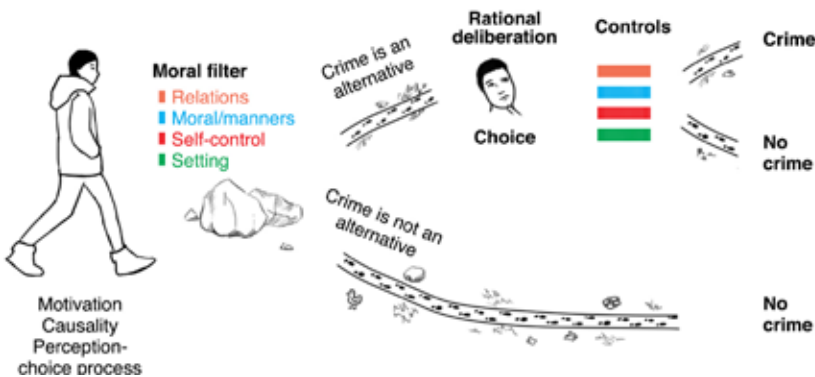
Crime prevention involves setting clear limits for children and adolescents. However, Professor Wikström stresses the importance of not misunderstanding the liberating simplicity of legitimising the use of limitations for children and adolescents as a crime prevention instrument. Given compassionate support, children should learn to regulate themselves, and it is equally important that children and young people have strong, healthy relationships. Being good at relationships is not enough in itself, however. The interaction between all of the above is important and it is therefore essential to dig deeper into all the elements of SAT.

SAT describes a person's behaviour as a crossroads between a person and his/her interaction with the immediate surroundings. The model below elaborates on the PEA theory and explains the perception-choice process implicit in the PEA theory.



FIG. 7.2 (WIKSTRÖM, 2012 P. 17)

Further clarification of the actual "choice":



According to SAT, a criminal act is mainly motivated by: temptations or provocations. Motivation promotes an action process that targets some kind of goal.

A. Temptations may be either

- a result of the interaction between a person's wishes and needs, and his/her opportunities to meet these wishes or needs
- or a result of the interaction between a person's obligations and the ability to live up to such obligations

A) Provocations may take place when a conflict (an unwanted interference from outside) makes a person annoyed or angry with someone or something. The anger may vary according to a person's sensitivity to certain forms of unwanted interference.

To this you may add feelings: Feelings can be very strong, and they can be both positive and negative, since crimes do not just originate from negative feelings, but may also arise out of excitement, fun and games.

B) The moral filter sorts the choices in either/or: If the basic value of an individual is that rule violation is not an option, it is a simple call: no crime occurs. I.e., if people do not consider crime a scope for action in response to motivation, no crime occurs.

C) If crime forms part of what a person perceives as a scope for action, the individual is once again faced with two options:

D) Either a person commits a criminal act out of pure habit. The act is not questioned at all and thus rule violation is the only possible result of the process.

E) Or, the person deliberately negotiates with himself, and the outcome of the negotiations determines whether or not a criminal act is committed.

If the person sees a criminal act as a scope for action, this may or may not result in a crime – depending on the choice process.

F) The outcome of this choice depends on which stop blocks – so-called controls – the individual has and is capable of activating or using. An example might be the ability to resist peer pressure: Not crossing the street on a red light, even if others do, or not stealing candy even though the whole group of peers are out to get candy for everybody. A third example is saying no hash, even if you sit in the middle of a group smoking it. This type of control derives from the ability to exercise self-control, i.e. internal control.

There are also other types of controls: For example, a person may refrain from stealing because the settings disapprove of theft, even though he or she may not personally get any moral qualms at the thought of committing theft. It may also be that you do not cross the red light, for the only reason that there is a police officer nearby.

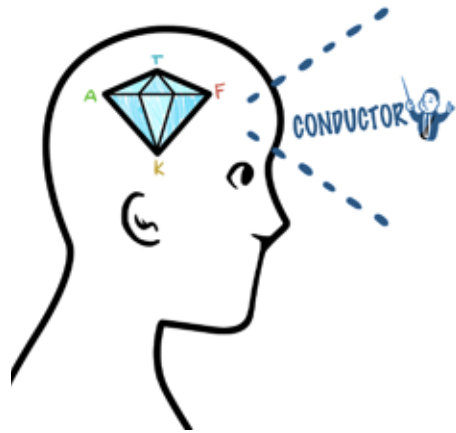
These controls are examples of external controls. The settings encourage people to do something other than they would otherwise do. A third example

is roadside speed cameras. They make people slow down because speeding has a consequence.

If we return to the three girls who go to the supermarket, the process begins with a motivation, which in this case is a temptation: The opportunity to get some nice new hair clips.

The one girl who chooses to watch does not take part in the crime, because it does not exist as a moral option for her at all. The other two girls see crime as an option, because their norms and values allow it; one does not even consider the action, but steals out of habit, because she has done it so many times before. The other girl tried stealing once before without being caught, and she is now facing an inner choice that involves her moral standards: Should I do it again or not? In this case, she gets carried away and chooses to be in on the theft.

In terms of prevention, it would be important that the girls be caught in the act and that the parents be involved as soon as possible, e.g. by the SSP and/or the police making a house call. The purpose of such a call is partly to involve the parents and make them take responsibility, and partly to see which role models the young person has at home.



Perception-choice

The choice process is the formation of an intention to act in a particular way, and is what links a person to his/her actions.

Perception is the information we get from our senses, which connects a person to his/her setting and circumstances.

The perception-choice process is therefore crucial to understanding a person's actions.

P.-O. WIKSTRÖM, 2011

When people act out of habit, they basically respond to signals from the social settings. That is, they have obtained, or can obtain, recognition for committing rule violations or crimes.

Situational Action Theory recognizes that rationality may play a role in the management of human action. However, there are good reasons to believe that many criminal acts are committed out of habit rather than being the result of rational deliberation, and the same goes for human actions (Chapters 2 and 3).

In fact, the idea of habitual choices may be particularly relevant for the explanation of chronic crimes, as habituation suggests stability of the interaction between individuals and the environments they encounter, leading to lasting behavioural patterns, which may well involve repeated offenses.



Even in settings that are not criminal as such, rule violation may become a habit that spreads from there. P.-O. Wikström mentions an example with a number of illegally parked cars in Great Britain, where he lives and works. The cars are parked close to one another, and only the disabled bays are free. The special thing about these parked cars is that many belong to police officers. He sees it as a colourful example of setting and circumstances having a spill-over effect on people who know better. Once one person has parked illegally without consequences, others will soon follow suit. The same applies to graffiti and garbage: If tags have been made or paper and cigarette butts discarded, more people will take part in it. Although people are able to act on their own, the setting and circumstances will have an effect on people's actions.

Causes of the causes

”We do not need to know why the rain is falling to keep dry under an umbrella.” This comment was made in response to P-O Wikström’s writings on crime prevention and causes of crime. The metaphor describes crime like rain and the umbrella like crime prevention.

It is true that we do not need to know why it is raining, to know how we avoid getting wet. The cause of the rain is not the direct reason why we get wet. The rain is the cause, and getting wet is the effect of the cause. Using an umbrella is a possible way to prevent the rain from making us wet. It is precisely because the author of the comment knows that rain will make you wet that he can prevent getting wet by using an umbrella.

However, using an umbrella does not change the rain. The umbrella is just a common means of preventing wet outerwear. The question of what causes the rain is in this case a question of the causes of the cause rather than a question about the reason why we get wet (that it is raining).

The point of the comment is that it is not necessary to know the cause of the cause to prevent something; however, the most effective way to prevent soaked clothing would be to influence the cause of the rain, so that it would never rain again (of course no one has an interest in the total absence of rain, but this example is a useful illustration). Then there would no longer be a need for umbrellas, raincoats or other means of protection against rain.

Returning to the subject of crime prevention, a far more effective and long-term crime prevention strategy would be to uncover the fundamental causes of crime; that is, the causes of the causes, rather than addressing the immediate causes.

One reason why it is sometimes very difficult to be successful or effective when it comes to preventing offenses is that people who work with crime prevention know way too little about the real reasons why people commit crime. There are actually a number of factors (like the rain in the metaphor above) that are seen as common reasons for rule violation, but which are in fact symptoms of crime. There is often great focus on how to work together for preventive purposes, while there is only little focus on what to do and why, based on the root causes of crime.

Good intentions do not necessarily lead to good results. The lack of effect is primarily due to the many factors that have been identified as significant in determining whether people will become criminals. Often these factors merely represent something else. The list of reasons why people end up in crime is almost limitless, and it may seem that all car thieves have unemployed parents, but that does not mean that all unemployed parents have children who are car thieves.

The example is a bizarre fallacy, but this is exactly what emphasizes the point: the factors that are proclaimed as reasons for crime are factors that may often occur, but they are certainly not the same as a cause of crime.

P-O Wikström gives another example of such fallacies when he points out that a barometer can indeed predict the weather. But that does not mean that the weather would change, even if you destroyed every barometer in the world.

So predictions as to who will become criminals will not change the fact that some people grow up to become lawbreakers. The prediction is just an observation.

Prediction, causation and prevention

In relation to crime prevention, it is therefore extremely important to understand the difference between prediction, cause and prevention.

The illustration below shows the various questions you may ask to distinguish whether something is a prediction, a cause or a preventive measure.

To achieve effective crime prevention, you have to ask why and in which way the specific prevention method is believed to work and the basis on which it is concluded that it will have an effect.





According to P.-O. Wikström, the main objective of crime prevention must be to devise, develop, implement and test the effectiveness of strategies and interventions aimed at:

- 1) Promoting people’s perception of criminal acts (or specific criminal acts) as an unacceptable behaviour
- 2) Strengthening people’s ability to withstand external pressure to break behavioural rules
- 3) Strengthening behavioural standards within the setting, relating to both legal rules and deterrent effects
- 4) Reducing people’s contact with existing criminal environments and areas.

The above four aims basically deal with limits, consistency, accountability and willingness to take risks as well as setting and circumstances.

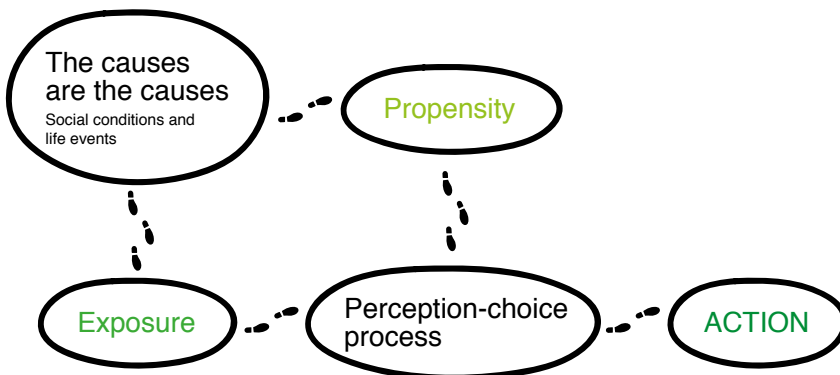
E.g., I know of a young man who was studying on a state educational grant. When he returned to live with his parents for a short period of time, he immediately made sure to inform the authorities so that he could not be accused of social benefit fraud. Although his mother suggested that he wait until the first of the month, so he had some extra money, he refused, because he did not want to risk being accused of social benefit fraud, which could have consequences for his future business opportunities.

Another young man said no to good payment for writing the exam paper for two fellow students. The question is: what makes a young debt-ridden student say no to quick money? It was just a tiny bit of cheating that would probably never be discovered. The young man’s answer to this question was that he could foresee the possible long-term consequences. He had a few goals for his future, which made him hold back. He was not willing to take the chance because he could see the huge consequences for his future plans if the fraud was discovered. His own accountability and ethics came into play. He also realized that his future colleagues would not possess the adequate occupational capacity if they had obtained their education with money.

A third example: when the Vejle police meet a young person in the company of other people who are smoking hash, this young person will receive a house call by the SSP, even if this young person did not possess or smoke any hash. The SSP visit the homes of young people because we know there is a clear connection between the local environment and its effects on the young people in terms of action. In this way, we make both the adolescent and his/her parents aware that there is a high risk of being affected by the environment to commit offenses. In other words, the adolescent is in the process of connecting with a new environment and thus also disconnecting with the "ordinary setting".

P-O Wikström would like to challenge our perception of the causes of crime and make us recognize that, as a society, we need to be more scientific when it comes to reasons why some people break the rules and laws set up by society. He wants to make it clear that there is a difference between the causes of crime and the causes of the causes.

Below P.-O. Wikström adds the causes of the causes to the PEA theory model:



If there are no causes or ways to influence people, prevention is impossible. If we believe in crime prevention, we must believe in crime causation. If we believe in crime prevention, we should make every effort to expand our knowledge of the causes of crime.

P.-O. WIKSTRÖM, 2007

There is a long list of commonly perceived justifiable reasons for some people to commit crime: being a child of a single parent, poverty, boy, puberty, immigrant parents, unemployed parents, resident in socially disadvantaged areas, boredom, social exclusion, egoism, addiction, neglect, greed, cognitively impaired, split family, violent computer games, low intelligence, child abuse, low serotonin level, suspicious friends, materialistic setting, bad temper, mentally deranged, morally flawed, excitement and entertainment.

The list is long and can be made much longer without much effort and there are, of course, different opinions as to what matters the most when it comes to triggers for crime or factors that would remove crime, if you prevented such factors or compensated for them.

However, the long list does NOT contain reasons for becoming a criminal. It contains only markers that can tell you something about the criminal or criminal setting, but the list does not tell anything about the causes of crime.

As P-O Wikström argues, no one is downloading music or movies without paying, breaking into cars, burning a school down or blowing up a plane because they are 15 years old, because they are boys, have immigrant parents or live in a ghetto. Just as no one destroys a fence, beats up their children or pollutes a lake with toxic chemicals because they have many siblings, little education or a mother who smoked during pregnancy.

It is clear that all predictions as to who is at risk of ending up in crime are not insignificant when it comes to crime prevention, but it is important not to confuse these predictions with causes of crime. If the concepts are mixed up, some kind of "pick-and-mix" preventive measure will arise, which originates in one big cocktail of undocumented assumptions, and the result is often a waste of both time and resources.

P-O Wikström recounts a situation in which a number of cooperating crime prevention agencies could not agree on the causes of the crime that they were to prevent. For this reason, a suggestion was submitted: they would take a vote on the main causes of crime. While the idea of establishing the causes of crime in a democratic manner is quite fascinating, Wikström suggests that the method hardly provides a solid foundation for prevention strategies.

SAT – a brief summary

According to SAT, a person's criminal tendencies depend mainly on the morals and formation of the individual, and on the strength of these fundamental values. People differ in relation to how important it is to comply with the words of the law and not commit rule violations

While people's morals are the basic personal factor relevant to their criminal tendencies, their ability to exercise self-control is also important if they are encouraged from outside to break a moral rule that they themselves believe in.

A person's ability to exercise self-control depends on the extent to which he/she masters the discipline, but it is also influenced by instantaneous personal factors such as alcohol intoxication, drugs or high levels of stress or strong emotions.

All in all, a person's criminal tendencies can be seen as the result of the interaction between his or her morals and ability to exercise self-control.

Settings and circumstances that in one way or another encourage criminal acts may be regarded as criminogenic settings – i.e., a crime-inducing environment.

The moral influences of the setting on an action will always depend on the way we perceive the moral context. In other words, this means that it is always the perception of the individual who lets the morals of the setting, or lack of same, play a role in their actions. Thus, the perception of the individual has an impact on the way the setting affects them.

A young man, who got straight A's for his carpentry exam, had previously been part of a hash environment. He told us that the morals and values that prevailed in that setting had been of paramount importance to him and all that he believed in. The setting kept him thinking that it was ok to smoke hash and drop out of school. He stayed within a closed environment characterized by hash and sporadic schooling, and the circle was not broken until he began training as a woodworking artisan and started to take his education seriously. Today, he realizes that it was important that there was an adult, a mentor, who opened his eyes to other values and attitudes.

Situational Action Theory claims that human actions, such as criminal acts, are the result of a perception-choice process initiated and controlled by the causal interaction between (criminal) tendencies and (criminogenic) exposure. We will always see the choices we have, based on the reality we know, and our actions will mirror these.

Situational Action Theory further claims that, fundamentally, there are two types of choice processes: the habitual choice process or the rational deliberation process. Whether a person forms an intent to commit a criminal act will depend on the outcome of his considerations.

The factors that influence a person's perception of scope for action and choice processes – i.e., this person's propensity and exposure – are the factors that are causally relevant to the person's actions.

The long haul

P-O Wikström's research supports the assertion that the very best form of crime prevention in the long term is to influence the moral education and cognitive development of children and adolescents. This is carried out through key social institutions such as family and school.

The most important arena for influencing children is in their homes, where they live with one or more primary caregivers. However, if for one reason or another such homes surrender to the task of giving the children healthy relationships, high morals and good basic values, the school has a huge influence on the formation of children and adolescents into people and citizens.

At a primary and lower secondary school in Vejle, the older pupils asked for guidelines and rules. They could not accept the low level of requirements when it came to general behaviour. The "treatment" of the oldest pupils was in sharp contrast to the many requirements and strict rules they remembered from their early school years. A teacher was asked: Why are adults so indifferent to us? It is as if we can do whatever we want. In this way the young people expressed that they lacked guidelines and did not know what was expected of them, and they interpreted it as indifference.



We no longer reward good behaviour in school, but the idea is not completely stupid, because it signals that it is a priority.

Per-Olof Wikström

If you allow pupils to be late for class and to sit with their feet up on the table, it will become a habit, P-O Wikström says. At intervals of about one year, he goes to Sweden to give lectures, and he has observed how the students have introduced new habits during his lectures. Some sit with their feet up, wear caps and use their cell phones during class. This shows a slip in social behaviour.

When asked about the connection between good social behaviour and crime prevention, the answer is clear: it can be seen as training in following rules and thus implicitly, laws. As mentioned previously, crime starts small. Social training has to do with respect for others and is also about empathy.

According to P-O Wikström, it is the long haul that makes a real difference. Initially, it is the families, but if they are dysfunctional, it is the institutions, the schools and the adults meeting the young people every day, who are the constant

and persistent reminder of how the rules are and how to comply. And they can provide vulnerable children and adolescents with a stable, healthy and respectful relationship.

Good cooperation on crime prevention includes identifying which tasks each institution can take up and organising the efforts accordingly.

P.-O. Wikström, 2011

By expanding cooperation during the transition from day care and kindergarten to primary school, and between schools and youth clubs, e.g., by involving youth club workers at school, it becomes clear to students as well as parents that both cooperation and a common approach are in place. It will be easier for the children to manage and to focus on acquiring new skills, if they "recognize" the guidelines and appropriate habits they were taught in day care or kindergarten, when meeting similar requirements and expectations in school. It will also be easier for child care workers and teachers to elaborate on what the children already know. In practice, cooperation between the various care and education units, such as coordination of dates for events in school and the after-school care service, may send the message to parents and students that "we are working together".

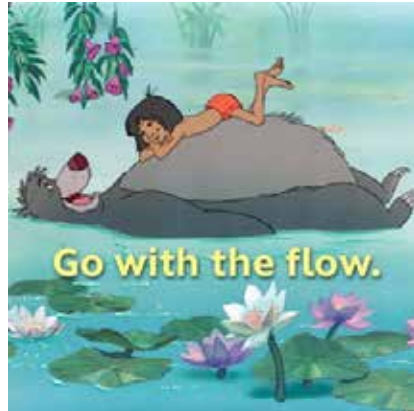
As Professor Wikström points out, the police do not play the leading role in crime prevention. Schools cooperating with the police may have a major preventive effect, however. The police gain an insight into the main priorities of the various schools and clubs and when, e.g., vandalism takes place on the school grounds, the police are able to ask the students if anyone has seen anything. This shows the children that the situation is being taken seriously and will therefore have a preventive effect.

Baloo and Mowgli

Situational action theory highlights the importance of relationships between young people and adults from whom they can learn moral rules and the ability to exercise self-control. These adults can be seen as mentors, and may be parents, youth club workers, school teachers or other good adult relationships. There is a very strong link between children and adolescents who end up in crime and the lack of adult contact, support and guidance.

A mentor is an experienced person who, through counselling, sparring, guidance, coaching and feedback, shares his experience and skills to support the development of the mentee. The strong personal relationship between mentor and mentee enables the mentor to work with the adolescent's morals and formation, self-control and the environment in which he/she lives.

In Greek mythology, Mentor was a friend and adviser to the hero Odysseus. When Odysseus took off for the Trojan War, he left his son Telemachus in the custody of Mentor, and Mentor had to take over the father's role and obligations. Just as Baloo becomes Mowgli's mentor, so he can survive in the jungle.



Do activities prevent crime?

The Vejle Police organised a running project for vulnerable adolescents estimated to be at risk of ending up in crime or abuse. The young people were invited to go running together with police officers. The purpose of this project was to get the adolescents to change their behaviour.

P-O Wikström points out that when young people run together with the police, it does not have a preventative function as such, and neither does participating in football, swimming or other recreational activities. In general, it is widely accepted that more leisure facilities prevent crime, but there is little evidence that leisure activities in themselves prevent crime. Individuals from criminal environments tend to infiltrate places where it is possible to recruit new members or henchmen. Leisure activities may well be one of the arenas in which young people get acquainted with criminal individuals for the first time. One of the findings of the large British study in Peterborough is that a criminal environment fosters more crime. Therefore, it is important to prevent them from appearing and absorbing new members.

One example was a programme of car racing for (former) criminals in Great Britain. Over time the participants started stealing more cars because they had become interested in racing. Likewise boxing as a leisure activity does not always have a positive impact on socially disadvantaged young people. In a Swedish budo club (self-defence), the young criminals practiced just enough to make themselves even more dangerous, and then skipped practicing and dropped the club.

In this way, they connected with club members of an "exposed environment", which affects whether they disconnect from the "ordinary setting".

The kind of leisure activity may be relevant. As P-O Wikström points out, crime might be more effectively prevented if, rather than lifting weight, inmates were to play chess. The preventive effect of a leisure activity, such as running with the police, occurs when the clear framework, objectives and action plans are based on teaching young people to create and be in good relationships that are persistent and friendly, based on high morals and healthy values. The adult must be a mentor and coach and lead by example, i.e., teach the adolescents what creates a good relationship, what is right and what is wrong, what a healthy environment is as well as how to obtain an improved level of self-control.

In practice, this means setting up rules and sticking to them. There should be rules for when the adolescent must show up and common rules for co-existence that everyone must adhere to. Problems should be addressed, whenever limits are exceeded, e.g., it is important to speak kindly to each other; do not say fuck or demean each other. It can be difficult for a teacher to convince students to speak properly to each other when everyone can hear his/her colleague in the classroom next door cursing and swearing.



The right approach must be to have a common policy and common rules for what you can or cannot do, for what good behaviour is and which clear rules must be observed at home, at school, in clubs and organisations or within a group of colleagues. There should be a policy and common rules that the adults support, so that the children and adolescents perceive that the adults around them are pulling in the same direction, agree and are consistent, without everything turning into something like military training. It is important to give young people the best prerequisites for building the life they want and having the options you get from being able to tackle yourself and the outside world without constantly ending up in conflicts.

A deeper understanding

With his theories and practical examples, P.-O. Wikström has inspired new and different ways of looking at crime prevention. We are therefore in the process of turning theories into practice within the SSP cooperation in the municipality of Vejle. The central theory, Situational Action Theory, revolves around the choices people make based on knowledge as well as external influences. In many cases, it is a matter of unconscious choices made out of habit, and I do believe that greater awareness will lead to different and better choices.

To get a deeper understanding of the mechanisms at play when a child or an adolescent makes a decision that leads to crime, I have joined forces with two psychologists who are both experts in their own field.

Anne Dorthe Hasholt represents cognitive psychology, while Rune Kappel's knowledge and approach forms the basis for the chapter on self-control. Rune Kappel knows what the adults around the vulnerable children and adolescents can do to help the ones who are constantly the centre of attention because their behaviour creates problems for themselves and their surroundings. It may be difficult to understand the consequences of choices that lead to inappropriate actions when your head is boiling, your feelings are taking control, and your level of self-control is low.

Rune Kappel is in line with P.-O. Wikström's thesis that people are basically rule-driven rather than selfish, when he provides his estimate as to why young people in lower secondary school demand more rules and guidelines. Kappel also has an answer to the question why children and adolescents enhance their feeling of well-being when practicing self-control.

Chapter 3.

Self-control

To prevent crime, it is crucial to investigate what may prevent all children and adolescents from ending up as criminals. It is important to work out what it takes for children in the danger zone to keep away from crime. As professionals, we can learn from the answers and expand our shared competences across areas of responsibility.

P.-O. Wikström highlights morality, manners and relationships as basic reasons for opting out of crime as a scope for action. However, he also mentions self-control as a main part of the moral filter that stops an otherwise possible criminal behaviour.



Just as morality and manners are founded during the first year of a person's life, early training in self-control is a cornerstone in the work with children and adolescents. Children can exercise self-control at a very early age, long before they need the ability to enforce any moral standards. The very first training happens by itself: The little new-born child, who is hungry and crying, experiences something close to fear of death while waiting for food. Throughout the first year, most children experience that their needs are met, and over time they can therefore wait for the food without breaking down. A three-year-old child begins to understand that something is mine and something is yours, and it can listen to a book being read. Later on, the child learns to share, sit still, postpone his/her own needs and take part in games with rules. It learns the importance of rules in, e.g., football and to play games, do homework, and meet agreements.

These skills can be trained in many different ways, and it is vital for a person's options later in life that self-control is strengthened through training. The way parents raise their child is of paramount importance to that child's formation of self-control from a very early age. Day care and schools, clubs and associations are the next arenas that are of great importance to the training of children's self-control.

What is meant by self-control?

Rune Kappel, MSc Psychology, has great insight into the concept of self-control, and he gladly shares his scientific knowledge and experience on the subject, so that professionals and other interested parties are able to make the right priorities when working with children and adolescents. It becomes clear that self-control is a quality that can be learned, trained and used – both appropriately and inappropriately.

Self-control gives us the ability to take independent and targeted actions (executive functions). Self-control is fundamental to several other functions like work memory, long-term planning, attention management and complicated problem solving.

Self-control is a brain-enabled ability that we all possess and which we all use every day. The ability to exercise self-control makes us hang in there when something is difficult, annoying, hard or scary, for instance because we can see a reward that it is worth waiting for. It may be a sports performance, an education or a school assignment, and it may also be a discussion or conflict, in which you have to restrain yourself in order to reach a solution that will benefit either yourself or others. Great skills in exercising self-control makes it easier to decline many great, unnecessary, dangerous temptations, such as more cake, more gorgeous clothing, more drugs, stolen

goods, cigarettes and great deals on anything from sex to shoes.

To some people, the challenge is that they do not have much self-control because, for one reason or another, they never had the opportunity to train self-control in a beneficial way. However, self-control is definitely an ability that can be strengthened by training it, just as you can train your muscles in your body. Recent research shows that if children have learned self-control before the age of 6, they will manage better for the rest of their lives. It is therefore important that both parents and professionals help children train their self-control. It takes a certain amount of self-control to go to school, to get there on time, to follow along in class, to co-operate with friends, to wait one's turn, to do homework, to comply with rules, and later in life to complete an education, go to work and deal with the many other challenges of life. The Danish primary and lower secondary school today has more freedom, more self-determination, more options and more technology, which places greater demands on the individual child and, not least, the individual child's level of self-control.

Training in self-control involves training in being able to adjust, regulate or control your thoughts and feelings. In other words: being able to choose a different solution from the one you really want to choose or the one you usually choose. It takes self-control to target your behaviour towards other options that are harder on you. However, the message from Rune Kappel is that if we train our self-control, we increase our chances of success in life and of fulfilling more of the hopes, wishes and dreams we have for ourselves.

An educational approach

If you train one type of self-control, other types of self-control will usually also improve, and Rune Kappel underlines that in terms of teaching, it is one of the psychological skills most easily trained. Nevertheless, the concept of self-control is totally ignored within the field of education. According to the psychologist,

the reason may be that the idea of training self-control sounds a little like hard discipline or tough upbringing. Self-control can be trained in many ways, however, and the training does not usually involve activities that are uncomfortable for the children.

Scientists agree that the ability to exercise self-control directly influences how people develop. Studies show that the ability to exercise self-control can be transmitted, i.e., when children train their ability to exercise self-control in one area, they usually change behaviour in other areas as well.

Running at a surplus or running low

Children, adolescents and others who exercise self-control in an appropriate manner will become more balanced in social contexts, leave room for other people and be better at postponing their own needs when necessary or meaningful. They will use less energy on learning new skills and resolving conflicts. It should be seen in a positive light that the students use less effort acquiring knowledge or handling something that, without training in self-control, would drain them of energy completely. Using less energy, the students will have the extra strength to practice more self-control, which in turn enables them to better understand situations that are more complex. The result is a positive spiral.

As an example of this, children with low self-control may find it hard to de-escalate a conflict. They are locked up in their own feelings and stubbornness, and they do not have the self-control it takes to let go, because it takes self-control to let go of rigidity. Although stubbornness originates in some kind of sensibility in the child's world, such strategy hardly ever turns into a happy meeting with the outside world. This results in stress and frustration and may be the beginning of a very negative spiral unless the child receives training in self-control.

A boy in the third grade spoke with his teacher. A little earlier, the male teacher had introduced the students to the concept of self-control. The boy had thought about it and said: Well, I do not come to school with the same amount of energy as others.

The boy had suddenly realized that the chaos in his home where he lived with his mother and stepfather took a toll on his self-control. Therefore, he was running low on self-control already at the beginning of the school day. It was only logical that the boy was often disturbing the class, since he did not start out at the same level of self-control as most of his classmates.



Secondary intelligence?

A high level of self-control often equals a high quality of life and has a significant impact on how our lives develop, Rune Kappel says. There is a lot to suggest that self-control is the most important skill we have in relation to how our lives develop. In certain contexts, self-control may even supersede our intelligence that has otherwise been considered the primary guideline for how much success a person achieves.

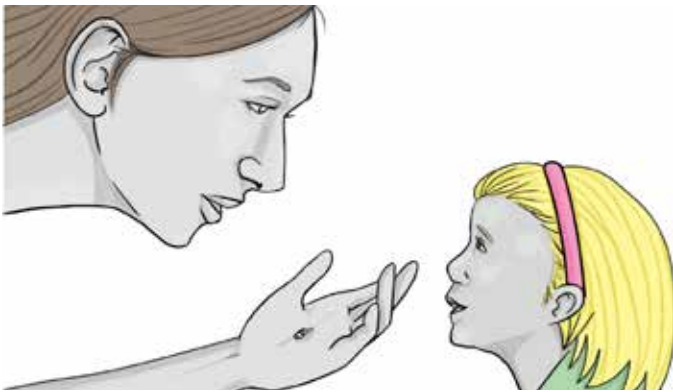
As a society, we may be facing a shift in the general perception of which skills it is best to have in order to do well. Intelligence will always be a good prerequisite for success, but Rune Kappel has noticed that the requirements of school children increasingly involve self-control rather than intelligence.

Previous school generations primarily used their intelligence when solving school assignments, but today it is different.

The ability to adjust

Self-control can be expressed in several ways; Some people call it self-control, self-discipline or self-regulation. Others call it internal control or will power. There may be interpretative reasons for preferring one description to another, and semantically, we often associate the concept of self-control with limitation and the ability to say no to temptations. There is more to self-control than limitations, however, and Rune Kappel therefore defines self-control as "the ability to adjust". This applies to both thoughts and actions.

Self-control is not merely the strength we admire when an overweight person has lost half of his body weight. It is, e.g., an exercise in self-control when the childcare worker in kindergarten plays the quiet game with preschool children. The game prepares them for going to school and forms a basis for being able to control themselves for a period of time, the duration of which they do not always decide themselves.



A childminder trains day-care children in self-control when he/she puts a raisin on top of their small, knuckled hands and asks them to wait eating it until they are told it is OKAY. Praise for doing it right strengthens the exercises and gives the children a desire to continue challenging themselves.

It is a matter of self-control when the day-care children wait in line to use the washbasin and then go find their seats at the dining table. We can see from practical experience that the little ones are quite good at it. It is training in kindness and empathy when they learn to help each other by, e.g., picking up a pacifier dropped by another child.

When the little ones grow older and start nursery school, they find reassurance in being able to recognize some of the things they learned in day-care, and in this way, their development involves fewer conflicts. This makes for a smooth transition, and it becomes easier for the children to take in new information when they are able to concentrate on it.

It is also a matter of self-control when an athletic person flies over the finish line with a new world record, or when a young man turns his back on a fight that could otherwise have stirred up some action. At first sight, it may look as if the one who turns his back on a quick fight is simply making a wise choice. In reality, what is needed to make the wise choice is a high level of self-control, i.e., being able to suppress what you most want to do.

Intelligence provides a person with the ability to understand the consequences of a fight, but without the ability to exercise self-control, intelligent clear thinking would be at a bit of a loss. That is, although the adolescent may well see that it is best to stay out of a fight, there is nothing to stop the fight if there is no self-control.

A link between high intelligence and high self-control has not yet been established. However, both skills have a great impact on the way we manage in terms of the parameters that we consider important when it comes to having a good life. Among other things, Rune Kappel mentions parameters such as life expectancy, job, family, divorce, lifestyle diseases, physical exercise and crime rate. He mentions that even highly gifted children get disturbed because they do not necessarily have a high level of self-control. In school, this applies especially to disruptions such as uncontrolled entertainment in terms of games and interaction on mobile phones, computers, iPads and the like.

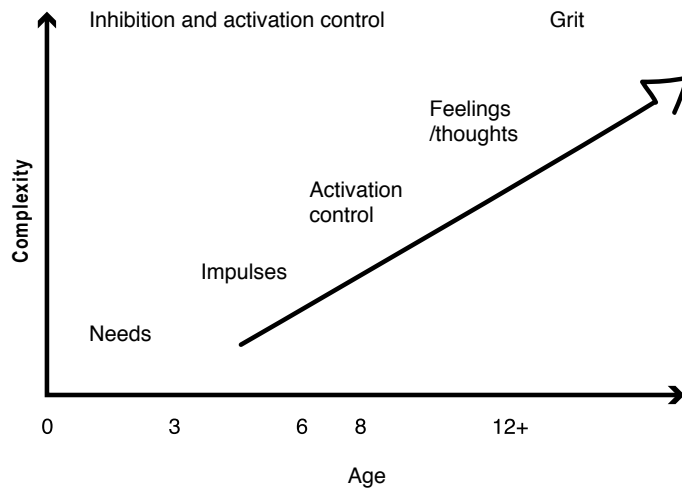
Three kinds of self-control

In general, there are three categories of self-control:

Inhibition control ("I better not"), activation control ("I will") and grit.

When you master inhibition control, you are able to abide by prohibitions. It could be to do as told by your mother and stay away from the lake, or not to taste the cake in the kitchen that smells so nice, not even a little bit. It could also be to wait getting up from your chair until the teacher gives permission, or at an even earlier stage: to stay seated at the dining table until everyone has finished eating.

On a general note, activation control is the ability to do something that you basically do not want to do. For example, to go for a run on returning home from work. You use activation control when, during your education, you go to a lecture that you do not really have the energy for, or when you decide to keep dieting for another week, or when you iron seven shirts on a regular weekday so that you always have a clean shirt to wear. Small children use activation control when they manage to eat food that they do not really want to eat. When they meet an activation control challenge, they develop it – as long as there is a balance between the challenge and what they can do when they try hard.



Studies show that when it comes to self-control, children are more likely to refrain from doing things they have been told not to do than to remain in a situation they find difficult. However, it is exactly when children get frustrated that we have the opportunity to help them train their self-control.

Parents who find it intolerable to watch their children's frustrations and therefore immediately interrupt and lend them a helping hand do not train their children in exercising self-control. It may be a good thing to let children handle various harmless frustrations on their own because this will train their self-control. As long as we make sure these situations are meaningful and take place in a safe environment where the children do not get scared, it is a good thing. In situations where children are told to do meaningless things, things that scare them, or when adults do not behave in a predictable manner, we may see a stress reaction in the child. And this is not a good way to frustrate children. Stressed out children do not develop their self-control.

Self-control must be trained gradually according to age. It is no use putting a two-year-old on a chair and tell the little one that she must not move for the next 10 minutes. This kind of requirement does not match the skills of a two-year-old child.

Grit is the ability to work towards a goal that is far into the future; to complete an education, to be able to plan and maintain activities. This type of self-control is primarily seen in adult life.

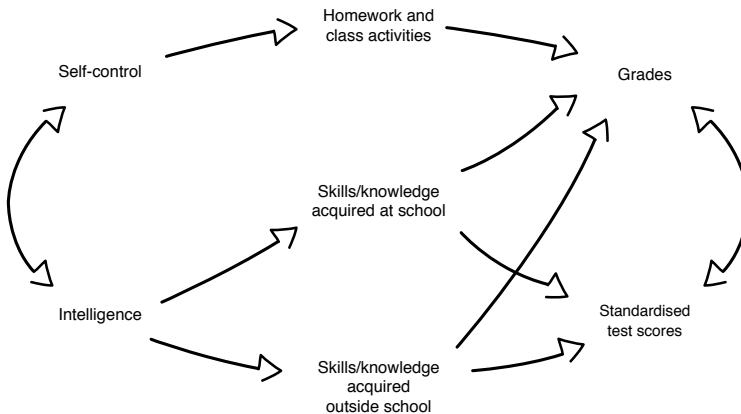
When examining the brain, researchers can see the different areas in the brain to which the various categories of self-control relate. It turns out that you need different skills to exercise the different kinds of self-control.

Rune Kappel stipulates that there are four different types of internal control that enable self-control:

1. Ability to control thoughts (both displacement of thoughts and ability to focus)
2. Ability to control feelings (attempting to suppress feelings, either negative or positive, such as a laughing fit. It is a difficult task because

- it is extremely difficult to change one's mood and feelings, but the strategy may be to distract yourself)
3. Impulse regulation (controlling yourself if you want to hit somebody, make an angry remark or take another cookie, even if you already had one)
 4. Ability to maintain an activity when it is boring or otherwise unpleasant to do (being able to focus or gather resources to solve a task or meet a goal by combining skills such as analytical abilities with precision, speed, time, planning, sustainability)

The following case story focuses on self-control initiatives in a school class. Two boys in the class have a lot of problems and challenges, among other things involving self-control.



Two boys disturbing the class

In a third-grade class, two ten-year-old boys are continuously disturbing their classmates in the classroom. The boys may throw the furniture around or push the furniture or their classmates. If they want attention, they speak loudly, they never raise their hands in class, or they suddenly get up during class and walk around the classroom. Several times a day, the teacher has to take one of them outside the classroom to stop the disturbances. The other pupils then have free reign which in turn leads to disorder in the classroom. Rune Kappel points out that the challenge is to avoid being biased against those who have not been trained in self-control. He is convinced that it would be very wrong to use lack of training in self-control as a stamp to declare some pupils unintelligent or inadequate. Not everyone has had the opportunity to practice or train self-control, and even fewer are aware that the concept exists.



Ability to maintain an activity



Ability to control thoughts



Impulse regulation



Ability to control feelings

When researchers claim that self-control can be trained more easily than intelligence, the explanation is simple: self-control is not limited to the genes in the same way as intelligence. Intelligence is essentially an intellectual property based on genetic disposition and is predominantly stable throughout life, while self-control is predominantly something you learn. Self-control can be compared to a muscle that can be exercised and become stronger. However, self-control skills are not improved by “daily use” only. We can optimize the development of self-control skills by carrying out systematic exercises. In this way, it is in fact possible to catch up with lost training among children and adolescents who are lagging behind in developing their self-control.

The teacher in the class with the two boys disturbing their classmates decides to try self-control training. One boy, boy G, has problems managing his temper when he does not get his way. The adults working with the class describe his temper as going from 0 to 100 in two seconds. Boy G is told to sit still and work on a math assignment on his iPad for 12 minutes. They put him in a room without disturbances and tells him not to look up and not to say anything. If you need help, raise your hand and wait. They also put 10 tokens in front of him and tells him that every time he looks up or says something, the teacher will take a token from the heap. Boy G is told that the task will be completed as

long as he has just one token left on his table when the time is up. The reward is extra time for computer games in the after-school care service.

In the first try, the boy quickly loses two tokens because he looks up. He is not even aware that he is doing it. The teacher calms him down: It does not matter, you still have eight left. That is good; you can do this. Even though the boy did not keep all his tokens, the teacher helped him see that he had solved the task well anyhow. The exercise turned into a positive situation, which he managed to keep improving.

Afterwards, the boy himself found the reasons for his success: He mentioned that the room was quiet, clear information about what to do and what not to do, and of course the fact that he could look forward to a reward. The rules and the gains were clear to him.

The other boy, boy H, took part in the second exercise. The two boys were placed on opposite sides of the table to make the exercise extra challenging. And it worked really well once they started concentrating on the task. At first, one spoke, and the other shushed him, and the boys each lost a token. Both boys looked angrily at the teacher, but then sat down to work, remembering to raise their hands, and they did not lose any more tokens this time around.

It turned out that boy G was, indeed, able to keep his focus, even when he was later moved to a room with others and had to work for longer periods of time. The teacher was also aware of the professional angle: A positive spill-over effect of the training was that boy G did a crazy amount of mathematics.

The whole class started working with rules through games. Simple rules were set up and more rules added when successful. The children helped create the rules and were praised for compliance. This provided a natural opportunity to talk about how compliance with the rules of the game is a good thing, but also how they should take this experience back to the classroom and, later on, take it with them out into the world. The pupils were also asked to act in a play: first, they were to act as themselves and then as a contrasting personality. It was, of course, a way to train them in seeing things from a different angle.

Boy G still has trouble complying with rules in several contexts, but there are fewer conflicts. Previously there might have been two a day, now that number is down to about two in two weeks, and his reactions are not as intense. The teacher wants to continue the training in self-control, because it is a double task in terms of time, boy G's maturity as well as the teacher's own professional skills.

Compared with boy G, boy H is far better at expressing himself verbally about his own development. He may say: Now I will use my self-control to settle down. He is able to do so, despite the fact that he has far greater problems at home than does his classmate.

However, working with self-control training is not just a progressive process. The results are challenged by vacations that keep the boys away from school for longer periods of time. And although they do not have to go back to the starting point after a vacation, it is noticeable that the break from training causes a step backwards. This would also be seen in an athlete, but unlike physical sports training, where you get out of shape quickly, the results of self-control training do not disappear just like that. Once the training has been repeated over time and stored in the body and in the deep memory, it becomes "good habits."

“Choice-ridden” and the importance of breaks

Another important point of the above story is that the one boy indicated that he got better at the task because the rules were clear to him. He knew what he was to do and what was expected of him. In the chapter on breach of rules, a group of pupils from lower secondary school classes called for more rules and for clear frameworks as to how they should behave. Perhaps the adolescents were tired of choices, or maybe they needed clarity as to what was expected of them – at least in a few areas.

By introducing the concept of “choice-ridden”, Rune Kappel may arrive at an answer to the question why adolescents are longing for rules. The phenomenon is part of the problems he encounters when trying to help students return to a functional everyday life. In his experience, the huge amount of choices people face on a daily basis is exhausting. Having to relate to many choices simply puts a strain on our self-control.

This is in line with Professor Wikström’s argument that, for the most part, people are rule-based creatures and want to follow common agreements in order to be part of society and, to various degrees, do not mind being guided by others, in contrast to opting out of the community and society and be driven by pure self-interest and making choices based on selfish motives.

In an attempt to learn more about “choice” versus “non-choice”, for a certain period of time psychology students were told what to do during their breaks.

The conclusion was that, in general, the students were quite relieved not having to decide what to do with their breaks. It was obviously nice to avoid more choices, maybe just for a while. “Real” breaks are a way to recharge your “self-control depot”.

In his work, Rune Kappel has made it clear that a break is not just a break. Imagine three girls talking together during a break. If one of the girls feels that she is not part of the conversation, she will return from the break without having had a rest at all, because she has used all her energy thinking about why the others did not include her in the conversation. Likewise, if you check your mobile phone for status updates during the break and discover that your best friend has lost his job, this would not be conducive to recharging your self-control either. A schoolchild may also be quite frustrated by a game on his iPhone that he cannot complete to his own satisfaction, and he may even get angry or stressed out. Rune Kappel further underlines that if the boys are playing football during the break, half of them will lose.

When Rune Kappel has lectures or gives talks late in the day, he can see if the students or participants are exhausted. They are not able to listen any longer, but this is not because they have become less intelligent or have lost their sense of hearing! It is just that their “self-control depots” are running out of energy. Consequently, he takes responsibility away from them by deciding that they all have to turn off their mobile phones and close their eyes for ten minutes. He makes it legitimate for the participants to take a break, even at the beginning of class. Everyone will profit from the fact that he takes responsibility as a teacher: He does not waste his time teaching students or participants who do not really listen at all. In addition, the short rest at the start of class will quite possibly result in a greater learning achievement by the end.

Habits are autopilot actions

Repeatedly performed actions eventually become something to which you hardly pay any attention. Such actions become automated and are stored as habits in both body and mind. This can be utilized to create good habits, because by automating the actions, you remove the discussion (especially the inner discussion) of whether or not to do something.

It is often the inner/outer discussion of one or the other decision that takes a toll. When you avoid such a discussion because you have already made a decision, less self-control will be withdrawn from the depot. The surplus amount of self-control can then be used in other situations.

Appropriate habits will also help a person gain more self-control because the actions that are automated require less self-control, or that is what research suggests.

However, even if actions have been automated, when a person is under pressure, old habits may reappear. For example, if you come home to a ransacked apartment, you may not remember to put your keys in the usual spot, because you are more focused on contacting the police and checking what has been stolen. Or maybe you have tried rearranging the contents of the kitchen cabinets, and then, on a busy day, you open the kitchen cabinet where things used to be.

Old habits may also appear during a quarrel, when it can be very difficult to control your language, which may get more and more ugly. Rune Kappel refers to the hypothesis that both unconscious and conscious self-control is activated during a conflict. Unconscious self-control may prevent violent action because not hitting others is an integral part of your upbringing, but conscious self-control is also under pressure and may make your language harder. Either way your brain will be under great pressure and this is clearly exhausting because you will often be very tired after a conflict.

Rune Kappel mentions conflicts as one of the major strains on self-control. It does not take a big quarrel, but may simply be one of the small everyday irritations that persistently drain us from self-control.

A "self-control depot"

Imagine that a car was to draw energy for all functions from the same tank. That gasoline was used for power, heat and motion as well as for coolant, oil and sprinkler fluid - all from the same tank. Figuratively speaking, that is what it is like with self-control.

Studies show that all types of self-control originate from the same "depot", and because you use the same "self-control depot" every day for the whole range of challenges and tasks, it is important to make sure the depot is re-filled because there is no reserve tank.

Re-filling the "self-control depot" can, once again, be compared to a muscle; once it has been used, it must have time to rest and recover, otherwise it will be overworked and collapse.

A flat battery

We cannot feel when our "self-control battery" is running low, but there are certain signs of it happening. An increased general sensibility is usually a sign

that now there is not much self-restraint left. A recognizable example is a child who is with his/her parent in the supermarket in the late afternoon ...

Sometimes it can be difficult to decide who has the most self-control left in the depot.

However, if the “depot” is gradually emptied, which may lie beyond our awareness, it can be re-filled in many ways. Again, this is not necessarily something that we are aware of. Sleep, relaxation, a good laugh, meals and spare time interests are some of the most obvious means. Meditation, hikes and practical tasks that you like to take part in are other ways to recharge your batteries. It is important to be aware that what you do to refill your depot will actually do the job. This may vary from person to person.

A large battery

Habits that strengthen the “self-control depot” may be to go to bed at the same time every night, or to put on your running shoes as soon as you get off work. It may also be to get up and take a shower at the same time every morning, even if you do not have a job to get up to. Your run may become an automated action by repeating it over a period of time. A decision to run every day, e.g., for two weeks, may reduce the inner discussion whether to do it or not. A discussion that, in practice, will only use up energy. After a while, the daily run becomes a habit, you no longer need energy to discuss. Instead, you can concentrate on the positive effect the exercise will have on your body, and thus recharge your batteries. These are just some of the ways you can train your “self-control muscle”.

However, before the teacher, the youth club worker, the health visitor, the childcare worker or the social worker can start training with others, they may have to train their own self-control.

Train your own self-control

If you have many tasks, so you spend a lot of energy remembering what you have to remember, you can help yourself mobilize more self-control. Make sure that if it takes only a few minutes to fix something, then do it right away, so you can scratch it from your internal list. If the task is more comprehensive, then write it down on a list. In this way your brain can let go of the task and you can concentrate on what you are doing.

If you know that you have a very long workday in front of you, care for yourself by having rewards ready during the day or plan to have good things waiting for you when you are done. It will keep up your motivation.

Do you dare start by setting time limits for when you check your mail or have your mobile phone turned on? This challenge can really press an adult, but it could be only for an hour a day to begin with. Do you dare turn off your phone while you say goodbye to your child in the institution or while you are out shopping for dinner? In this way, you will start exercising control of your feelings.

You can also take another line, e.g., switch hands for knife and fork when you eat, or write with the opposite hand of what you usually do. If you write just three lines every day, it will train both your thoughts as well as activation-control and grit.

When you make a conscious choice to frustrate yourself and slowly learn to control it, you gradually gain more self-control.



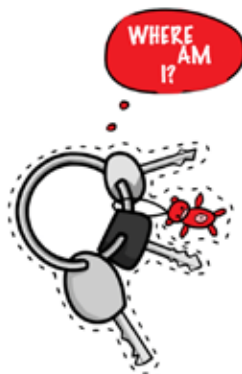
Rune Kappel mentions a particularly difficult example, viz. to stand on a chair for five minutes a day. Just stand there. For some people, meditation will be an equally difficult exercise, but both exercises are effective, so start small, so you can keep up motivation and allow yourself to gain a sense of achievement.

Self-control exercises must be activities that you do not do every day, so it is no use turning the daily dishes into self-control exercises. Unless, of course, you put the brush in the other hand.

Where are my keys?

If, for example, you are late getting out of the door one morning, because you spent time looking for your keys, you have already used part of your self-control, and you will have less self-control for the rest of that day. If, instead, you are the type who always keeps your keys in the same place so you do not have to worry about their whereabouts, then you will get out of the door on time, avoid overheating or panic and have a larger amount of self-control for the rest of the day.

Compare your mood when you get out of the door on time with when you are delayed because you were looking for something. What difference would it make, if you show up at work and have to start the day by scolding someone?



Take off your shoes

At a school in Vejle, the adults were quite tired of the floors being filthy dirty with mud and snow all through the winter. It was a big job repeatedly having to tell the pupils that they had to remember to take off their shoes. There was constant scolding all day long. “We did nothing but kill children”, as one teacher graphically describes it.

At the time when the new working hour agreement for primary and lower secondary schools came into effect, and the staff had an earlier start in the morning, the group of teachers and childcare workers agreed that since they were at school already at 7:45 a.m., they would make a reception committee at all school entrances.

There they were, saying good morning to each child, while at the same time asking them to take off their shoes. It worked incredibly well, and getting hold of the few kids who managed to get in with their shoes on was a doable task.

The results were far less scolding, greater level of self-control among the adults, quieter children and cleaner floors.

“Now things have been automated,” a teacher concluded, thinking that the task of welcoming the kids at the entrances could soon be replaced by a cardboard figure by the door. No concrete bids were made as to who the cardboard figure was to resemble.

Hanging up your jacket

Knowledge about automated actions is useful when you are working in a classroom as a professional. A simple example is to train the children in hanging up their jackets, so it becomes a habit and thus something they do not have to think about at all. That way, neither the children nor you will have to use energy on discussing whether the jackets should be on the coat stands or not. This process initially requires energy, but look at it as an investment.

With a tidy classroom, there is time to focus on important things and there will likely be less scolding and a more positive atmosphere.

A participant in the “Who Conducts the Orchestra”-programme asked what a clean classroom had to do with crime prevention. Rune Kappel answered that it was about distractions.

The fewer the visual disturbances in a room in which children have to concentrate on learning, the better they will be able to exercise self-control and concentrate on the tasks. Thus, there will be room for more self-control training, which plays a key role in crime prevention.

The example of hanging up your jacket may bear resemblance to the experience of being at a railway station or an airport, waiting to go somewhere: You are excited, you must concentrate on finding the right departures, and you are extra aware of keeping track of luggage, travel companions and travel information. At the same time, a myriad of strangers are all walking in opposite directions. It is perfectly understandable that all these impressions and disturbances result in both body and brain running on injury time. If no other people were at the airport, there would be fewer things to concentrate on and it would be easier and faster to find the right counters and entrances. Or you would discover that you had come at the wrong time. This would seriously draw on your self-control reserves!

Tidy classrooms are not the same as saying that pupils should preferably sit in an entirely spartan classroom without decorations or colours, but a messy classroom creates unrest and challenges your self-control.

Say it out loud

The simplest way to increase the level of self-control in children and adolescents is to tell them about self-control and the importance it has for themselves and for their surroundings. When you are working with self-control, tell the kids what it is all about. When the concept is said out loud and it is clear that self-control is what you train or practice, the pupils will be better at using it – for the simple reason that they become aware of the existence of self-control.

Training children in self-control

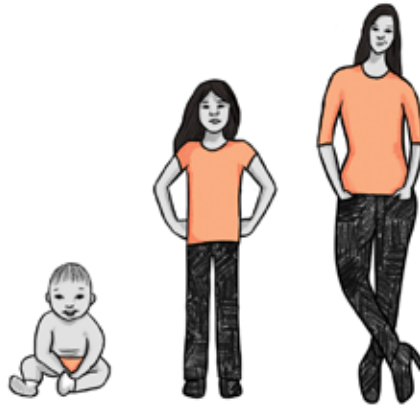
Rune Kappel teaches professionals about self-control and shows them how they can increase the level of self-control in children and adolescents by means of training. However, Rune Kappel makes sure to include a lot of breaks, and thus his teaching is a practical lesson in how it works when your self-control is only challenged during concentrated, limited periods of time, and self-control levels are boosted during the actual teaching: the pace is fast, nobody is falling asleep, the frequent breaks outside the room create energy in the same way as the breaks provided when the teacher occasionally shows a video clip in which there is something to laugh at.

One school teacher made the pupils in his class test their own self-control. The teacher asked them to draw circles on a piece of paper until they could not do it anymore. After 10 minutes, the first pupils wanted to give up, but the teacher encouraged them to go on for a little longer. Not until after 15 minutes, some of the pupils could not draw anymore. Others could continue for the rest of the class. In this way, the teacher and the pupils got a sense of both their own and of the class's total self-control levels. Subsequently, the class worked on the importance of self-control and how to train the three forms of self-control.

There are many ways to train schoolchildren in self-control. The exercises themselves are mostly simple, but as already mentioned, it is all about self-control, and this poses certain challenges. The benefits of investing time in self-control training are better concentration, more actual teaching time and fewer conflicts.

In the classroom, you can improve children's self-control by challenging them to concentrate. To do this, you must know the children and they must have some confidence in you. To make the children feel safe and want to participate in the challenges, it is also a good idea to explain in detail what you want to achieve and how.

The first exercise, training impulse regulation and control, is best practiced with a single child at first:



1. Ask the child to sit down and read in a book for 10 minutes. The activity may also be to play with Lego blocks, as long as it is an activity that is possible for the child to endure. Tell the child that it cannot look at you during the next 10 minutes. If it is a doable challenge, add that the child is not to ask you anything. Or cannot look out of the window. The requirements should begin at a low level and then be adjusted over time.

Put 10 tokens, matches or game pieces in a place where you can both see them, and tell the child that every time he looks at you or asks you something during the 10 minutes, you will remove a token from the stack.

Perhaps you should tell the child that as long as there is just one token left by the end of the exercise, then everything is fine.

You can adjust the success criteria or the time frame, depending on your knowledge of the child and how he handles the challenge. You may also be quiet in the beginning and gradually make it harder for the child to adhere to the "rules" by moving or creating other distractions.

It is okay if there are no tokens left the first time you do the exercise. However, if the child never has any tokens left, it will be a negative experience for him, and he will probably want to withdraw from the exercise. So it must be possible for the child to achieve success within a reasonable period of time.

The child can save up all tokens left in the pile after 10 minutes and spend them on a reward, i.e., every time the pupil completes the exercise and has one or more tokens left, these are placed in a savings pile. You can promise the child that when there are 50 tokens in the pile, he will receive a reward. The reward should be something that the child would like. Will a cheap toy suffice, or will it take a comic book, an hour's computer game, or should you go pick apples or go down to the kitchen to bake a cake while you are talking, just the two of you?

The second exercise may involve one or more children and is training in impulse regulation:

2. You probably know the game of guessing what is in the box. Make holes for children's hands in one or more boxes, and put things into the boxes that cannot be seen from the outside. The things may feel yucky so the children want to pull their hands out when they touch them. It could be a blob of jelly, a rubber glove

filled with water, a brick covered with sandpaper, a patch of moss, a chestnut in its prickly pod, a mashed banana or a homemade fantasy monster with fluffy fur and prickly legs.

The exercise trains the child's ability to keep doing something that may feel uncomfortable, but which is not necessarily dangerous. It is a tremendous opportunity to have a talk about what the children feel and what they think when they get scared or surprised and want to pull out of the situation. And it will definitely be a lot of fun.

The third exercise is training grit and can easily involve many children at the same time:

3. Give all pupils a large piece of paper and a bunch of crayons. Set a timer at 15, 20, 30 or 40 minutes, depending on your assessment of the children's inner elasticity. The task is to keep drawing during the entire time span. Everyone has the necessary prerequisites for exercising self-control in a safe and familiar framework, the task is harmless, and the task of drawing is usually carried out purely for pleasure. However, when drawing is a must, it quickly gets boring, and again you will have a great opportunity to talk to the pupils about what is hard about the task and why.

The fourth exercise is also well-known and trains impulse regulation, but it may be developed to train activation control as well:

4. Dance freeze will train the child's ability to stop an impulse after playing/dancing while the music is playing. The exercise can be extended by showing the children pictures of special positions for standing still. For example, with both arms in the air or on a leg.

Activation Control



To do something
you do not want to do

Inhibition Control



Not to do something
you really want to do

Grit



Being able to work towards
long-term goals and dreams,
e.g., an education.

Wanting to vs. being able to

In line with the research results forming the basis of Rune Kappel's findings, P.-O. Wikström points out that children have the greatest opportunity to learn about self-control and morale within their own families. The second most important place is school and the child's school class. Therefore, when the family fails, the school has great responsibility and an opportunity to influence the young person to learn self-control.

When it comes to children and adolescents, Rune Kappel emphasizes that it is important for professionals to be able to see the difference between wanting to and being able to. Once again, he sees a potential pitfall if adults or peers are making children and adolescents feel guilty by blaming them for not learning how to control themselves, or do not see when they are trying their best. Below is a story about a young man who tried to exercise self-control in the face of difficult circumstances:

One morning, an SSP employee visited two brothers, aged 13 and 16. The brothers were largely left to take care of themselves as well as the household of the home they shared with their alcoholic father. It had been like that for a long time. The house was dirty and messy, and nobody had made it a solid practice getting up in the morning, making breakfast and getting to school. Before the visit, the SSP employee had been at the bakery, and seeing the fresh bread prompted the youngest brother to immediately wake up his older brother with the outburst: Hurry up, there are bread rolls! The SSP employee had really come to talk to the youngest brother who had not shown up at school for a while, but when he found the older brother at home, he asked him why he was not at school either. The answer was clear: When I get to the school, the teacher starts saying, "Wow, are you here today? We didn't count on that." The young man felt exposed and that he was met with resistance when showing up for class. Going to school and receiving all the negative attention, he used all the energy he had saved up during three days at home, and this further lowered his motivation to stick to the "healthy choice". "If only they knew how much I would have liked to be in school ...". Feeling the pressure at home and having to take control of the household drained him of all energy, and he was demotivated by going to school and meeting a teacher who condemned him. Because of his bad experiences, he slowly disconnected himself from the demands of school and thus also from the "normal society".

Once the adolescent has been disconnected from the school and the system, we – as professionals – are strongly challenged when it comes to getting in touch with the young person and, not least, getting him/her to re-connect with society and society's norms.

Manners before self-control?

Intelligence will lose out if there is no self-control, which is why self-control is an important factor when it comes to crime prevention. Therefore, crime prevention is partly about teaching children self-control and training their ability to exercise self-control so that they are able to apply self-control in similar situations in the future.

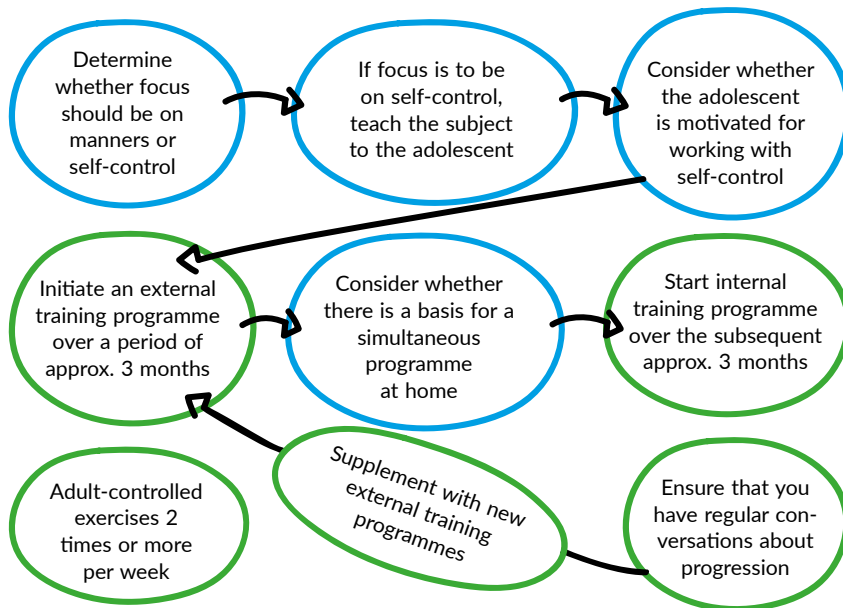
To this, Rune Kappel has a most substantive addition: It is no use starting to train self-control with, e.g., a group of young people who are already engaged

in crime or on their way over the edge. He emphasizes that in such cases self-control training will probably just contribute to even worse behaviour, just as in the example previously given of maladjusted youngsters in a self-defense club.

Your morals, manners, and fundamental values are crucial to what you choose to use your self-control for.

The morality and manners of your immediate surroundings affect whether you are using your self-control to go to school, do your homework, adhere to agreements, control your temper, etc., or whether you are part of a criminal group, in which you use your self-control to perform criminal or radicalized acts.

When it comes to children and adolescents who are at risk of going in the wrong direction, you must start somewhere else, viz., by training their morality and manners or what some people would call basic values. It is essential to consider whether morality and manners need training before self-control.



However, if you train self-control correctly, the individual will more likely be able to see through the consequences and say no when his peers call on him to steal in the kiosk or participate in other criminal activities.

Children learn a great deal of self-control by imitating the ability of others to exercise self-control, and Rune Kappel therefore suggests the possibility of delearning self-control, e.g., if you enter a group that behaves differently and has a different set of morals. The different basic values of the "new" environment will have an influence on your personal set of values. In other words, you adapt, and if there is no strong connection back to the "healthy" environment, you will change and so will your previous convictions. Rune Kappel points out that in such a situation it may be difficult to distinguish between manners and self-control.

However, Rune Kappel believes that once you have trained your self-control within a "good" environment, it is a lasting ability, or at least a very stable one. Still, we may suffer from conditions that make us vulnerable, e.g., being stressed out will cost you a lot of self-control. Therefore, if your life is very stressful, your ability to exercise self-control will not be at its normal level.

Using self-control correctly

When teaching children about self-control and how to exercise self-control, it is very important to stress that there is a right and a wrong way to use your self-control. What it comes down to is morality and manners or what some people prefer to call basic values.

When a child is unbearably stubborn and uses all his energy to stand firm, keeps a conflict going or even refuses to admit that he is not right, the child exhibits low self-control and it takes good interaction between manners and self-control to let go of this stubbornness.

In most contexts, the interaction between inappropriate basic values and low self-control also represents inappropriate social behaviour and a waste of energy, and it is therefore the responsibility of the adults to teach their children or pupils how to use self-control for the benefit of themselves and their surroundings.

Otherwise, it may get out of hand and, in exceptional cases, end up being reversed, as in an example mentioned by Rune Kappel: An anorexic must use his self-control to eat.

The parents, or the adults closest to the child, play a major role when working with self-control. Children look to their parents and the immediate environment, and therefore, parents' support, home exercises or simple interest will help support the child's work with self-control and lead to faster results. It is the beginning of a positive spiral as long as the "depot" is not drained during training because it is not refilled along the way, or because the ambition is to cope with all challenges in one go. The keywords are cooperation and focus on one area at a time. That is not something you can complete in a week. It may well last for six months or more because the process has to be incorporated in the unconscious mind and become a good habit.

Teaching children and adolescents about self-control is a very powerful weapon when it comes to crime prevention. The reason for this is that they have the opportunity to regulate themselves without external control by society and public authorities. Thus, for institutions and the community it takes fewer resources to prevent crime when children and adolescents are able to control themselves – when they can "conduct the orchestra".

However, it is the adults who are close to the children and adolescents who must ensure that they have a promising start. It is therefore essential that we gain knowledge of what is going on in the mind and get a deeper understanding of what forms our morality and manners and thus the mechanisms that initiate actions and reactions in both vulnerable and well-established children and adolescents. In the next chapter, the knowledge of psychologist Anne Dorthe Hasholt forms the background for an introduction to the unconscious layers that form a person's behaviour and personality when focusing on cognitive psychological thinking.

Chapter 4.

Cognitive psychology

P.-O. Wikström believes that it is possible to fully explain criminal actions by looking at the interaction between a person and his/her daily environment, and that a person's basic values are formed through these surroundings. It is important to understand that we are part of a social interaction and that people act in response to their surroundings.



The environment and the surroundings in which we grow up are important for our morality, manners and basic values. It is therefore important that we distinguish between the causes of criminal acts and the causes of the causes of criminal acts.

We need to understand how the environment we grow up in, the people we interact with, our physical surroundings and the activities we take part in affect whether or not we develop criminal tendencies.

In other words, an analysis of social dynamics contributes to explaining why certain people and environments can be expected to make people comply with or violate certain behavioural rules.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a central concept in cognitive theory and is about what the individual thinks he is capable of mastering and not about what he is actually capable of doing.

Self-efficacy regulates the way an individual functions through cognitive, motivational, affective and selective processes, and it therefore affects the individual's ability to change.

Most action strategies are constructions of thought, and such constructions control the actions of the individual. The belief in own competences thus affects

the way the individual constructs and imagines future situations. The higher the belief in own abilities, the higher the goals set by the individual.

In this way, an individual's self-efficacy decisively affects which opportunities the individual has, the choices that the individual ends up making, and ultimately who the individual becomes as a person.

Thus, the individual must trust that he is able to perform an act and then believe that the outcome of this action corresponds to what the individual wishes to achieve.

Building resilient self-efficacy requires personal experience that it is possible to overcome obstacles through sustained efforts. If the individual is convinced that he has what it takes to be successful, he will quickly regain faith, despite defeat.

Cognition means thinking or acknowledgement

In close cooperation with psychologist Anne Dorthe Hasholt, I will now try to guide you through cognitive theory. Along the way, I will try to explain why the cognitive approach is so important if we are to understand why and what creates criminal actions, and how we can prevent these actions from happening.

Cognition means thinking or acknowledgement and is about what you do with all the sensory impressions you get from yourself as well as from the world around you. Cognitive thinking is based on the dynamics and coherence between thinking and behaviour, and which are reflected in all kinds of situations. The way you think is crucial to how you assess and experience yourself in a given situation.

Example: Close your eyes and imagine that you are walking down the hallway at work. Here you meet a colleague whom you know well, but he walks right past you without greeting you. Now, what do you think? For example, if you are thinking: what happened, did I do something wrong, is he angry with me? Then you will feel threatened, afraid, angry, get a stomach ache or have many thoughts that will cause an inner worry and concern. However, if you think: he is having a bad day, then you will not experience anxiety, and your behaviour will be unaffected. Through cognitive awareness, we are able to get an understanding of why we act and react, as we do, in specific situations.

As humans, we tend to notice the situation we are in as well as our reactions to it. At the same time, we are poorly trained in noticing the thoughts and interpretations that spontaneously occur in our minds, and which actually contain the key to understanding our behaviour.

Through cognitive theory and awareness, we are able to make practical use of the dynamics between thoughts, feelings, body and behaviour as well as of the cognitive personality model that gives us structure and an opportunity to understand our own and others' psychological assumptions about life and the world.

Case:

Peter is in the 6th grade and, over the years, he has developed a pattern within his school class. When something is bothering Peter, or he feels pressed by the teacher or the other pupils, he reacts by overthrowing his chair, kicking things in the room and shouting whore at the teacher or the other pupils and rushing out of the classroom. This pattern repeats itself quite often, and the teachers feel powerless. They often have a talk with the pupil and his parents, but there is no development and the scene continues to repeat itself.

To break this pattern, you will have to figure out what causes Peter to act as he does; what thoughts and feelings create this kind of behaviour.



“

The basic idea in cognitive therapy is that our reactions to what happens are strongly influenced by the way we consider what is happening.

Anne Dorthe Hasholt (2014)

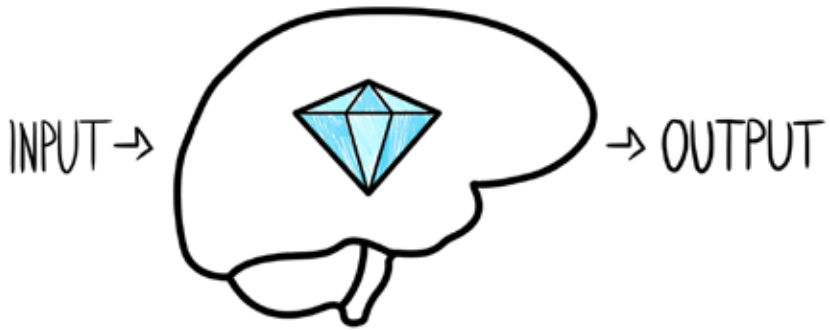
By talking about what we think (based on a cognitive analysis model – “inner communication”), we are therefore able to discover the thoughts and beliefs that largely determine our emotional response to various events.

Your thoughts affect your feelings. People who have had different experiences through life will react differently, so only by examining each individual view of the matter, you are able to understand why people react as they do, and in some cases suffer from their experiences.

The cognitive method basically involves taking a step back and evaluating your thoughts; In cognitive therapy this is done by cognitive analysis and restructuring.

The cognitive method is based on the basic model, the “diamond”, which shows us how our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and behaviour interact with one another.

Cognitions are about what happens in the brain when you get input from the outside. If you see the brain as a box, which receives input from the outside, then what comes out of the other end will be your interpretation of what you have experienced.



The main focus of cognitive thinking is that there will always be more than one way of looking at things, and the art is to find the most appropriate response. It is crucial for optimal behaviour that what we think is consistent with reality.

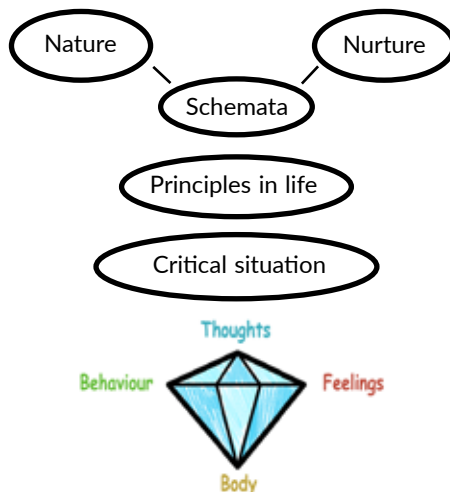
When we are under psychological stress, distortions occur and we tend to make blanket assessments and mistakes, because we introduce a consistent train of negative thoughts. It is therefore central to us as humans that we learn to evaluate our thoughts so that we act on facts and not on preconceived notions. The more pressure you feel, the more resources you use, and the more you draw on your automatic instincts.

The way you experience brain input – how you receive, interpret, and act on input – depends on your basic preconditions, including nature, nurture and experience. I will try to explain this in the table below.

The cognitive approach is always about reducing stress and suffering, thus extending the possibilities for active action and increasing the opportunities to change behaviour.

Schemata

This model provides a simplified picture of how your personality is shaped:



Nature is a part of the “basic recipe” of a human being. How the basic recipe unfolds depends on nurture. Together, nature and nurture form schemata. Schemata is our personal basic recipe, or in other words, our personality’s DNA.

The earlier an imbalanced schemata is formed, the harder it is to change (see also Wikström’s indication of “causes of the causes”).

Schemata is formed partly by the DNA we have received biologically from our parents, including psychological robustness, and partly the environment we grow up in; formation of relationships during our early years, structures, rules, frameworks, terms, experiences, role, importance (I am worth spending time on), rhetoric, parenting or lack of same, violence, abuse, etc.



Our principles in life are rooted in schemata. They form the basic values on which we build our behaviour, thoughts, feelings and actions. I.e., we are a product of a basic recipe, and the environment we live in is crucial to our views and actions.

As described by Anne Dorthe Hasholt:

”If you make two cakes, baking one just right and the other too much, it will affect the taste. The same happens when a person grows up in a challenging environment vs. a stimulating environment.”

Our principles in life influence how we cope in critical situations. Our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour depend on our basic recipe and the environment in which we grew up. You could say that it is the survival strategy we have developed based on nature and nurture.

Principles in life or basic assumptions are our wisdom in life. It is the overall knowledge of how to behave and relate to different situations in life. Your principles in life may be about ethics, morals and religion or about ordinary, good behaviour and etiquette.

Principles in life may be deduced from automatic thoughts. Such thoughts may reflect a generally critical attitude or negative assessments. They may also be thoughts that reflect fear and vigilance.

If a child grows up in a family in which there is a lack of good relations between parent and child, where no one cares for the child’s upbringing and no one teaches the child self-control or creates a predictable environment, such

child will likely develop attitude problems as well as problems adapting to his surroundings.

The cognitive schemata founded during our upbringing will permeate our lives with a personal truth about ourselves, other people, and life itself. Schemata constitutes hypotheses, theories or inner maps that lead us through life. Schemata is believed to be formed throughout our lives, but most intensively during childhood.

Schemata is like a template or pre-defined truth and can be expressed in few words. The template may be, e.g., “I am stupid”, “I am impractical”, “I am a loser”, “the others must feel secure” or “the others are right, I am wrong”.

Schemata serves as a filter for our experiences through which the multi-faceted reality is filtered, and the experiences are adapted to our already existing narrow perceptions.

If schemata is distorted and negative, the result may be unfortunate. The process becomes self-affirming – the negative basic perception is confirmed and constantly nourished by the fact that information from outside is only “allowed in” if corresponding with the pre-existing schemata.

Principles of concern

Our automatic thoughts are closely linked to our principles in life. If our basic principles in life are based on acceptance, they will bring about an automatic train of thoughts. If they are based on control or performance, there will be other patterns.

The three examples below show principles of concern and the possible accompanying train of thoughts:

Acceptance principle:

It is necessary that others take care of me → I am vulnerable → Other people are stronger than me → The world is dangerous → I cannot be alone → I need others to help me.

The consequence of this train of thought is that acceptance from others mean a lot. I become vulnerable in life, if I depend on others and cannot be alone. I meet the world with: it is important that others understand me – I am not good enough – the world is challenging – others are critical.

Control principle:

I am the one who decides → I know better → others are not in control → the world is chaotic → I am the only one who ensures that nothing dangerous happens → I cannot stand others telling me what to do → I know better.

The consequence of this train of thoughts may be: I cannot ask for help – I am weak – others are strong – the world is unsafe, I need to keep others at a distance, I can only trust myself.

Performance principle:

I am what I do → if I cannot do this, I am not good enough → am I good enough → can I be here.

Consequently, the world is demanding. I have to perform to be good enough; I take on the tasks; I am vulnerable; if I do not perform, I am nothing.



The various levels of thought are connected and may be derived from each other. A person's schemata affects the way in which his principles in life are designed, and these principles affect his daily automatic thoughts.

In cognitive behavioural therapy, the first phase focuses on automated, easily accessible cognitions, after which you move on to identifying and processing the more basic and less accessible levels within a person's processes of thought.

Automatic thoughts

Automatic thoughts are fast, spontaneous ideas or images. They are often fragmented, they are superficial, and sometimes they are far from well-structured sentences. They may rather be described as exclamations:

"Hungry now!", "oh", "don't bother", "embarrassing", "help".

You may also have an inner dialogue with yourself, talking and reaching conclusions. You may formulate requirements, push yourself or be critical:

"Pull yourself together, it is not getting any better just lying here," "Things are ok, everything will be fine", "He doesn't like me", etc.

Many people tend to think in pictures rather than in words. It is like constantly watching a movie in your head. The scenarios are different; positive or negative. The movie is running in the same way as thoughts, except in pictures.

"Men are disturbed, not by things, but by the principles and notions which they form concerning things."

The slave Epictetus

An individual is often less aware of his principles in life than of his automatic thoughts and inner monologues.



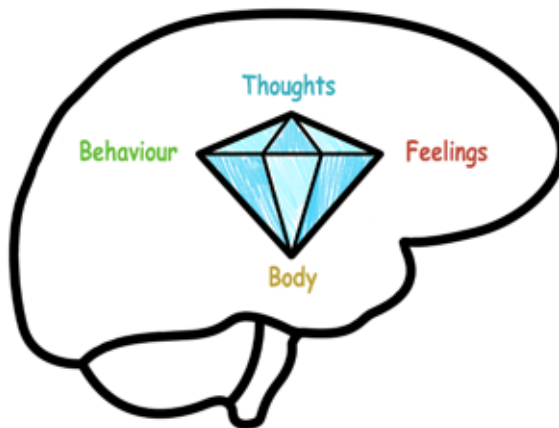
What controls us?

As previously mentioned, cognitive methods are basically about stepping back and evaluating your thoughts through a cognitive analysis that allows you to notice how your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and behaviour interact with each other.

Most often, your thoughts are set as a starting point. I will try to explain how our cognitions work by referring to Anne Dorthe Hasholt's model of "the cognitive diamond".

Thoughts:

When something happens to you, when you walk in the door and meet new people, or when others approach you, it will always generate a thought in you. This thought may be conscious so you know what you are thinking, but it may also be an unconscious thought that goes through your head.





Feelings:

Your thoughts will affect you. Pleasant thoughts will give you positive feelings, e.g. joy. Unpleasant or troubled thoughts will give you negative feelings, e.g. anger or anxiety.

Cognitive theory operates with six basic feelings:

- Anger
- Grief
- Anxiety
- Disgust
- Surprise
- Joy

Body:

Many people find it difficult to put their feelings into words, but they easily feel the bodily sensation associated with the feeling.

Positive feelings provide energy and power – or make us relax. Negative feelings, on the other hand, will have an adverse effect on the body, e.g. in the form of nausea, stomach-ache, sweaty hands, chest tightness, throat tightness, drained energy, etc.

Behaviour:

What we think and the accompanying feelings and their impact on the body also interact with our behaviour in a concrete situation.

Appropriate thoughts, positive feelings and pleasant bodily sensations often provide an appropriate behaviour. While in the opposite case, the result will often be more inappropriate behaviour.

We can all end up in both virtuous and vicious circles

The cognitive model illustrates that our thoughts in a particular situation is crucial for how we feel and how we act.

Difficult situations will always affect our:

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Body
- Behaviour



The cognitive approach teaches you that there is always more than one way to look at things. The inner and outer context is relative, but it is up to you to interpret it. "It is your call. You decide how to party."

Anne Dorthe Hasholt (Outline, 2014)

Emotionally compromised young people

When working with crime prevention, we meet many young people who have been let down for many years. Consequently, their principles in life and their values, and thus their morals and education, are characterized by lack of empathy. They are emotionally compromised, and their basic perception of their position and potentials makes them slowly disconnect from the normal society and turns on their autopilot principles in life.

Children and adolescents who grow up in socially disadvantaged, stressful environments will usually feel a pressure in terms of energy, or their "ram depots" will be exhausted. They will therefore always tend to be on the alert. Their perception of and approach to the world will consequently be influenced by this.

Anne Dorthe Hasholt explains that when we are emotionally compromised, our normal information processing skills tend to be flawed because we introduce a consistently negative view into our thinking.

As already mentioned, the way we experience the world and the way we act in it will depend on our schemata.



Basic insight into cognitive thinking for everyone who works professionally with children, adolescents and parents helps qualifying our work and creating a cultural change in our professional work. With this basic knowledge, we can help reduce excessive emotional reactions and self-suppressing behaviour as well as reduce distorted thoughts and underlying assumptions.

Below, I will describe how you can perform a cognitive analysis.

Cognitive analysis

When a person feels discomfort, it is important to define the core of the problem and its importance and thus, which thoughts and feelings to include.

To locate the core of the problem, a cognitive analysis can convey an image of what happened at the exact time when the person had a feeling of discomfort. The analysis focuses on the four areas – thoughts, emotions, body and behaviour – in order to increase the person’s awareness of what is in play.

Below is an example with a boy in grade four:

Pete is in grade 4. His reactions in class are very violent, he overturns tables, kicks bags, beats up other kids, and on a daily basis the teacher ends up taking Pete outside the classroom, where he speaks to him and tells him to apologize to the other pupils.

As time goes on, the teacher gradually burns out, the pupils complain to their parents, and Pete starts to cut class.

In this case, the teacher used a cognitive analysis model to uncover what triggers the boy and causes him to act in such an inappropriate manner.

The cognitive-behavioural model:



Antecedent situation	Thoughts	Feelings and sensations	Behaviour	Consequences
Questions about the actual situation	Questions about the thoughts that arose in the situation	Questions about feelings and body sensations that arose in the situation	Questions about the behaviour triggered by feelings, body sensations, and thoughts	Questions about the consequences for the person and his surroundings in relation to the wishes of that person

The cognitive-behavioural model makes it possible to restructure a person’s thoughts and actions. Through conversation, the person gets an opportunity to

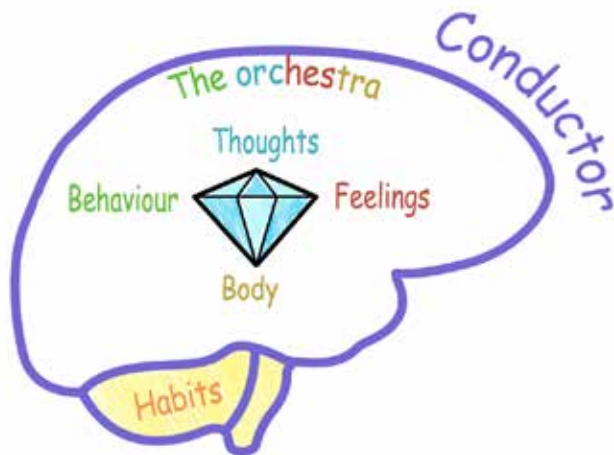
become aware of the actual problem in the same way as when you look through a magnifying glass and suddenly see things that you could not see before. This visibility enables restructuring and makes it possible to talk to the person about his desired position next time he ends up in a similar situation and which other possible actions the person can see and what is needed to get help.

”You must ask questions as a track dog searches for a bone, and then pursue the track until you find the bone,” Anne Dorthe Hasholt says.

It is not easy to change habits and behaviours built up over many years, but it is possible if you use the right methods.

It is fundamentally important that professionals working with children and adolescents have knowledge of the cognitive functions of the brain, so that, as professionals, we can observe and understand what is at play for a child/ adolescent, and address the problem before the pupil drops out of school, etc.

Anne Dorthe Hasholt’s illustration below shows that the ”conductor” sits at the frontal lobes, being guided by our principles in life and basic values. The conductor conducts the orchestra consisting of our thoughts, feelings, behaviour and body.



Our brain stem is influenced by both nature and nurture, which is of great importance to our habits and patterns of response.

If the conductor is good, he has good contact with the orchestra and vice versa, and therefore external input and experiences will be balanced. Should an imbalance arise, the conductor will quickly get things back in proper balance.

When we experience an imbalance between the conductor and the orchestra, it is often because our values and basic principles in life are brought into play. E.g., imagine you are arriving at a party and nobody is welcoming you or talking to you. How will you react? What you think, feel, sense, and your actions are closely related to your basic principles in life. How people experience this and how they deal with it is very different from one person to another.

Imagine a class of 24 pupils. Each of these young people will have their own personal schemata and their own principles in life, and thus various individual conditions for being part of the class. All of these pupils must accept each other's differences, which requires a level playing field. So who/what is "conducting the class orchestra"? The well-being and behaviour of the pupils are greatly affected by the rules of the game, the self-control of the pupils and the control of the class in general. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the teacher takes charge of the class.

The passion system

We are all controlled by anxiety, and what ignites our threat system is that we are basically afraid of being excluded rather than included. As human beings, we have a basic need to be accepted and to belong. If that does not happen, our threat system is activated.

We must be able to respond to danger as it is an important part of us and can protect us when, e.g., a vehicle drives out right in front of us, a house goes up in flames, etc. However, our threat system may also turn out to be inappropriate. We may for instance experience anxiety when we are at a meeting and things are not going as planned. We may be afraid that we will not succeed. Our "processor" is overheating, and we risk ending up with a train of thoughts characterized by anxiety, also known as "the red system", which will in turn affect our actions.

Cognitive theory speaks of a red and a green system:



The red system is the threat system, which is characterized by danger. If your threat system was constantly activated throughout your childhood, it is the threat system that characterizes your train of thoughts and behaviour. Your brain thinks primarily of combat, flight, anxiety and anger which triggers adrenaline and cortisone, creates unrest and stress and may cause depression and anxiety.

The green system is the drive and motivation to want something and the need to achieve results. Here dopamine is triggered, which promotes the feeling of happiness, joy, and emotional strength.

We all experience both psychological states, but if anxiety takes over control, our unconscious approach to and the way we meet the world will be characterized by such trains of thought as "it will not work out", "what lies behind what she just said", "what will it entail," "I am preparing for the worst case scenario".

However, if your thoughts are controlled by motivation and joy, you will meet the outside world with: "It'll probably work out," "I'll do it easily", "we'll figure it out".

Positive feelings, "the green system", provide energy and power, or make us relax.

On the other hand, negative feelings, "the red system", will have an adverse effect on your body, e.g., in the form of nausea, stomach aches, sweaty hands, drained energy levels, excessive thoughts, etc.

What we are thinking, the accompanying feelings, and the subsequent impact on the body, also interact with our behaviour in a particular situation. Appropriate thoughts, positive feelings and pleasant bodily sensations will often provide appropriate behaviour while, in the opposite case, the result will often be more inappropriate behaviour.

If your train of thoughts tend to be characterized by anxiety, when you are to meet new people, you will be on the alert and your thoughts and energy will concentrate on wondering whether you are good enough or say the right things, whether someone will talk to you, etc. If, on the other hand, you are really good with people, you will radiate positive energy and think positive thoughts about the others, etc.

The cognitive model illustrates that what we think in a particular situation is crucial for our well-being and how we act.

It can be concluded that cognitive methods can remedy inappropriate behaviour patterns, but in recent years, there has been increased focus on mindfulness and its importance for our well-being and resilience to anxiety and stress.

Below, I will briefly outline the potentials of mindfulness. I include mindfulness in this chapter because research is now far advanced and provides knowledge of how training of mindfulness allows us to take part in changing the brain's functions and cognition and thus to work on improving our own mental health.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is about developing the ability to relax, let go and find peace, and thus becoming aware of yourself and finding out how you are doing.

Through mindfulness, you learn to disconnect from problematic automated thoughts and find more constructive trains of thought.

Mindfulness focuses on awareness. You become aware of what emerges from thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, and learn to accept things as they are, but you can learn to meet things in a more accommodating way.

Unlike other living creatures, people are able to be physically present while having their thoughts elsewhere. E.g., a child who comes from a family with alcohol problems, violence, mental health issues, etc. may well be physically present in school, but the child's thoughts may be focusing on how things will work out later today. This means that the child is constantly in a stressful situation. Mindfulness can be used to bring thoughts and physical presence



together, thus creating calm in chaos so the child can be present in school, even when things are not optimal at home.

Another example is children who are bullied. They find that wherever they are, their thoughts are constantly focusing on those who bully them, and they cannot find peace, whether in school, at home or with others. Their thoughts constantly revolve around the subject, and it creates stress and anxiety.

Mindfulness can help you being present in the present without condemning the present, e.g., when you are being bullied, when you are too busy or when you are pressured. In such situations, we often tend to condemn others, the situation itself, the surroundings, etc. Mindfulness can provide the peace and quiet needed to get body and mind together, and through this presence you will feel that there is always a train of thought telling you how right or wrong you are, if you have pains anywhere, what to do, etc.

Recent research shows that people who practice mindfulness are able to endure pain or pressure for a longer period of time than people who do not. Research also indicates that mindfulness improves concentration, focus, memory, calmness, presence, body awareness, self-awareness and the ability to learn.

Mindfulness enables you to create new trains of thought, thus providing you with greater resilience, well-being and emotional balance in everyday life. This is exactly what we want for the particularly vulnerable children and adolescents we encounter in our crime prevention work.

In the Danish DR1 news broadcast "21 Søndag", Mr Richard Davidson, who is a leading neuroscientist, said: "There is no doubt that that kind of activity is changing the brain. It can help the kids a lot. These methods can calm the autonomic nervous system."

More information on mindfulness can be found in Richard J. Davidson's book "The Emotional Life of Your Brain".

Anne Dorthe Hasholt, who is responsible for the cognitive theory and method module of the "Who Conducts the Orchestra"-programme, teaches mindfulness as well (see also page 100).

Chapter 5.

The GrowthModel – The road to good conversation

In the first three chapters, focus was on Situational Action Theory, supplemented by theories on self-control and the cognitive system. In this chapter, I will focus on methods that will make the total interdisciplinary “orchestra” play together.

Like an orchestra, interdisciplinary cooperation consists of many professionals who are unique to each their “instrument”, but if it is to sound good, we will have to “conduct the orchestra” – the big question being: who conducts the orchestra during interdisciplinary cooperation?

When working with children and adolescents, professionals have a large number of important models, including many analytical models. However, in order to apply such analyses and to carry out interdisciplinary cooperation when working with children and adolescents, we need to focus on our dialogues.

The dialogue models presented in this chapter provide us with methods that create a structure and a framework for the conversation ensuring that, in Marianne Grøn­bæk’s words, we create space for:

*”the right conversations
about the right things
at the right time
with the right people”*

If everyone knows the framework, the method and the theme of the dialogue, a certain confidence is created, which is crucial when working with children, adolescents and families.

The children, adolescents and families we encounter are often particularly vulnerable and face huge, unresolved conflicts. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we, as interdisciplinary partners, can remain grounded and be the basic pillars of the dialogue and thus “conduct the orchestra”.

If we are able to maintain our groundedness and be the basic pillars of the dialogue, our professionalism becomes much clearer, and we can see each other’s professional skills, strengths, thoughts and ideas. It creates a shared responsibility for and insight in the task.

This chapter focuses on The GrowthModel, a dialogue model that helps to create multidisciplinary professionalization and thus enables us to cooperate across professions. In this way, the common challenge will be a common project, and the model thus provides a common boost to the task, for which everyone across the board takes responsibility.

The GrowthModel was developed in practice by Marianne Grøn­bæk. This dialogue model creates a clear framework for conversations, including the challenging ones, and all participants, including parents, children and adolescents, take active part in the dialogues. This has been described in more detail in the books *VækstModellen – Vejen til den gode samtale* (The Growth-

Model – The road to good conversation) and VækstModellen – Vejen til dialogbaseret ledelse (The GrowthModel – The road to dialogue-based management) co-authored by Marianne Grønbæk (see also page 101).

We focus on:

- everyone having a voice
- things that are going well
- things that we want to change
- actions that cause change
- agreements that will turn desired changes into reality for the conversation participants

The dialogue visualises everything, and this creates great clarity and commitment. The GrowthModel is action-oriented and focuses on people as co-developers in a future-oriented process, which creates the desired development.

The GrowthModel is based on an appreciative mindset and builds on the view of human life that all people have the necessary resources – it is therefore up to us to look for and focus on these resources. According to Marianne Grønbæk, it is important to recognize that:

- appreciation paves the road to understanding and conversation
- there will always be something that works/goes well
- when we talk about the things, we are good at, we grow
- what we focus on creates our reality
- language creates our actions
- the way we ask is crucial to the conversation

Positioning Theory



Positioning Theory, another dialogue model, was developed by Marianne Grønbæk and David Campbell from the UK. The dialogues of The GrowthModel are based on the ideas of Positioning Theory.

In dialogues between children, adolescents, families and professionals, we often meet prejudices, biases and interpretations that disrupt the conversations and, at best, make them almost indifferent. Of course, such conversations will not result

in the desired changes. In order to understand and thus handle the conversations and become co-creators of the desired changes, it is necessary to understand the “positions” that both others and yourself take for granted.

Positioning Theory assumes that we all speak from and to a position. The actual understanding of Positioning Theory creates the basis for dialogues and opens up for an understanding of when and why some dialogues go well, while others go down the tubes, and more importantly: why they create or perhaps directly prevent the desired changes. When we interpret, we speak from our own position. If we become genuinely interested in the other person’s position and the thoughts behind his positions, an understanding will be created, which in turn forms the basis of a new consciousness, a new behaviour and new actions by both parties.

Positioning Theory draws on an understanding of one’s own give and take of positions and on the fact that change starts with oneself.

Professionalization of interdisciplinary cooperation

Professionalization of interdisciplinary cooperation means going from no rules for dialogues and methods at interdisciplinary meetings to applying common methods and theories for dialogues of developing conversations. The positions and dialogues of a meeting are not person-specific and person-controlled, but there is to be a clear framework specifying which position and dialogue must take place at the meeting.

You can say that The GrowthModel and Positioning Theory make up the game board and game rules for the dialogue, no matter the context, your convictions or professionalism. In the same way as the traffic laws ensure that we all have the same rules for driving in traffic, the roads making up the game board.

If you do not comply with the rules of the game, it can go terribly wrong. This also happens in interdisciplinary cooperation. It calls for joint courses in dialogue models and methods, making up the playing field that leads us safely to our goal.

The clear models of The GrowthModel and Positioning Theory free everyone at the meeting to be able to focus on the professional content, as the method includes the framework that guides you through the dialogue, provides space for everyone, and creates predictability in that everyone has an opportunity to contribute exactly what they see as important in the dialogue.

Try making the following considerations about the interdisciplinary meetings you attend:

- What common dialogue tools do you use at meetings?
- What position do you take at meetings?
- What position do you give others at meetings?
- How conscious are you of your own position at the meeting, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of this position?

I will now describe The GrowthModel and provide an example from a meeting conducted by The GrowthModel.

The five suns of The GrowthModel

The model as a whole can be seen as an agenda, in which each sun provides the framework for an item on the agenda:



Good questions to ask in circle 1:

- What is going well?
- What else is going well?
- Any other positive comments in this sun?

Good questions to ask in circle 2:

- Which challenges do each of you face?
- How is it a challenge?
- If it is a problem, then what is the challenge?

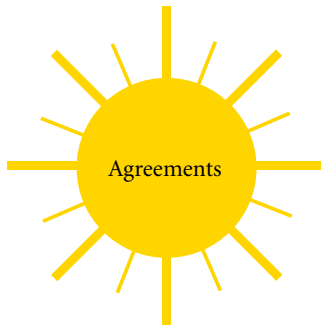


Good questions to ask in circle 3:

- Which possibilities do you see?
- How is this a possibility?
- What could make the possibility more concrete?

Good questions to ask in circle 4:

- Which agreement(s) do each of you want to make?
- Which agreements will be good for each of you to make?
- What are the consequences of making this agreement?



Good questions to ask in circle 5:

- What part of this conversation was the best for each of you?

Write a summary of the agreements and distribute it among all meeting participants. Photos of whiteboards, flipcharts, etc. may be sent to everyone.

At the meeting, we are openly highlighting what the meeting is about. Therefore, all circles are written on the flipchart. This means that everyone can see what is written down, everyone participates in the same conversation, and we are talking about the same thing.

The GrowthModel ensures visible contribution by all participants. For this reason, each meeting participant has his own magic marker colour. Either each individual writes himself, or one person writes for everybody. This means that everyone can see their own as well as other participants' statements, everyone feels co-responsible for the meeting, and everyone participates in the conversation.

A chairperson is appointed to ensure adherence to the timetable so that all five items are discussed.

The chairperson draws circle 1 on a flip chart, thus initiating the process. The meeting continues with suns 2, 3 and 4.

Every time a sun has been completed, it is posted on the wall. The meeting ends with sun 5, with all cards listing the best, the most important or the nicest part of the meeting today. Also here, all the statements are written on the flip chart.

Sun 5 reveals the successes of the conversation and the gains of each participant, and it happens that it is something completely different from what you expected. At the same time, everyone gets to tell what he or she got out of it, even when saying the same as one of the other participants.

"Good advice is only good for the person giving it."

Marianne Grønbaek

The process continues after the meeting in the sense that the participants are to implement what has been agreed. Thus, a new meeting, if any, is a follow-up to the previous meeting.

Conversations

A conversation can be seen as a process that depends both on the persons participating in the process and on the agenda for the conversation.

With its circles, The GrowthModel is clearly visible on the agenda. At the same time, the structure of the model invites all participants to take active part in the conversation.

The process of conversations based on The GrowthModel can be seen as a positive upward spiral, with the goal of the conversation being explicit, the process appreciative and the agreed actions clear.

Thus, people are engaged in the conversation about their own problems and solutions.

"When talking about our problems and failures, we talk about behaviour we wish to depart from. When talking about our successes, we talk about behaviour and competencies we wish to promote."

Marianne Grønbaek, 2010

The GrowthModel in practice – an example

As previously mentioned, I have many years of experience participating in interdisciplinary meetings about particularly vulnerable children and families.

In the following, I will give an example of an interdisciplinary meeting about a young person before we had been trained in The GrowthModel, and subsequently an example of a meeting based on The GrowthModel.

The meeting was about a 14-year-old boy who had started smoking cannabis and had sold a stolen phone online to raise money for hash. His mother and father were divorced. At first, the boy lived with his father; the rules being very strict, but now he was living with his mother, who had difficulty setting boundaries and making rules.

In addition to the parents and the boy, the meeting involved the boy's teachers, youth club worker, SSP employee, social counsellor and family counsellor. Everyone had prepared for the meeting and had the best intentions for the course of the meeting (like an orchestra in which everyone plays his own instrument perfectly).

Everyone was well aware that the dialogue between the parents did not work optimally, and that they highly disagreed on the boy's upbringing and where he should live.

The SSP employee started the meeting by establishing why the meeting had been called. It did not take very long before the father got angry and accused the mother of being too weak in the upbringing of their son. The mother started crying. Someone tried to calm down the father, while someone else found a Kleenex for the mother. The boy got up and left the room. By the end of the meeting, the boy's situation had been presented, but no agreements were made and a new meeting had to be convened.

The challenge of this meeting was the fact that we all react differently in different situations. If we do not have a common method for conducting a conversation, while at the same time the conversation is marked by great personal challenges, then uncertainty arises as to who is responsible for the task, who puts out possible fires, who helps out, etc. (like musicians each playing their own instrument without having agreed what they are playing or who is conducting).

Everyone did their best, but after the meeting, they were all frustrated, because they did not solve the boy's challenges and the conversation did not progress satisfactorily.

The following is the example of an interdisciplinary meeting in which all participants had been trained in The GrowthModel:

This example concerned a 15-year-old boy who carried a sentence that made him subject to the measures of the municipality until the age of 18. The boy was highly addicted to cannabis and was frequently absent from school. The boy felt stuck in the system and completely shut himself down at meetings concerning his future. He felt as though he was being treated as a big problem and that no one listened to him. For this reason, I invited him, his mother, the family department, his teachers, the SSP, the youth club and the police to a meeting in which I intended to use The GrowthModel, which was known to all the professionals.

At the start of the meeting, the boy was very closed and reserved as usual. However, as the participants wrote down a lot of positive things about him in the first circle of *The GrowthModel*, the boy opened up to them. He joined the conversation, smiled and laughed. When we continued with the second layer of *The GrowthModel*, I decided that only the boy was to list what he thought were his challenges and dreams. I made this choice with the goal that the boy himself should uncover his main challenge. This worked out well with a little help, and the boy concluded that the most important thing for him was to stop smoking both cannabis and cigarettes, that his parents, who were divorced, spoke properly to each other and that he could do something together with his father just like they used to.

The boy wrote down his inner feelings and his thoughts as to the reason for his malfunction and this made a great impression on his parents. The fact that it was the boy himself who wrote down his challenges rather than outsiders, who could only assume what was wrong, really had impact.

When we reached Circle 3 listing possibilities, the boy's mother wrote that they could make more clear agreements for the way they interacted with the boy so that this was not constantly up for discussion, and she further suggested that the parents should work on the way they talked to each other.

The father said that he would give higher priority to being present when he was together with his son, spending time with him when he was there, and that they could start fishing again.

The SSP employee said he could facilitate contact to an abuse counsellor so that he could get out of his abuse.

In Circle 4, we made clear agreements as to what each person should do.

The meeting ended with Circle 5: "Best of today?"

The parents:

- *The visual process is really good.*
- *It is nice to establish what works well.*
- *It made a strong impression that our son was the one to put forward what he sees as his major challenges.*
- *This is the first time that we have experienced a useful outcome of a meeting.*

The teacher:

- *Everything becomes visible – we are not just talking, we are making agreements and we are honest.*

The boy:

- *It was great to narrow down the challenge; for me to be able to come up with what I thought was the actual challenge.*
- *And that my parents heard what I had to say and actually showed that they were affected by it.*

The child care worker:

- *It is good that the model is divided into circles. It makes it simple and clear.*

- *We complemented each other well, and helped each other putting it into words.*

The SSP-employee:

- *It was great that the meeting kind of moved something for everyone and made a big difference for the boy and his family. And that we were all heard and contributed the best we could.*

Interdisciplinary evaluation of The GrowthModel using the model as method

What do interdisciplinary participants in the programme “Who Conducts the Orchestra” say about the use of The GrowthModel? I asked some participants to evaluate The GrowthModel as a method for interdisciplinary cooperation. The statements below show what the health visitor, teachers, child care workers, social counsellors, SSP employees, psychologists, family counsellors and the police came up with based on The GrowthModel.

Positive statements:



- The GrowthModel focuses on everyone taking active part in the meeting
- Focus on positive aspects
- The GrowthModel is a concrete tool
- Everyone is entitled to his own position
- Focus on agreements and responsibilities
- The GrowthModel opens up alternative options
- The GrowthModel makes the family and the child co-owners of the problem
- You cannot change others, only yourself
- Creates self-esteem and self-confidence
- Follow-up on agreements is important
- Focus on recognition, but with a view to challenges
- Everyone has joint responsibility for dialogues and agreements
- Everyone has his own truth
- Provides tools and agenda for the conversation
- Better help for children and parents
- Notes that when someone says something, it makes sense to them
- There are several truths
- Everyone has a voice
- Meeting structure
- The child is not the problem, but the child has a problem
- When we start with the positive aspects, we will be open to hearing about challenges
- By staying with the problem, we have the opportunity to think in possibilities

What are the challenges?

- Creating a common culture in which everyone uses the model
- Creating time for the process
- Using The GrowthModel where it makes the best possible sense
- Holding on to new methods
- Creating cultural changes by understanding one another
- Being aware of the effects of using the method
- Holding on to new methods
- Applying The GrowthModel in practice
- Being positive when meeting all sorts of problems



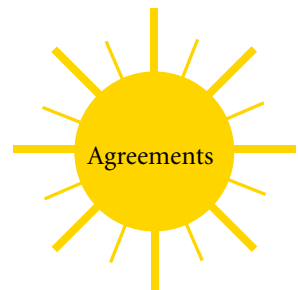
Opportunities based on challenges:

- Clarifying the goal
- Describing how it makes a difference for the child/family
- Making a joint decision within the Department for Children and Youth Affairs that we use The Growth Model at all interdisciplinary meetings dealing with children and young people
- Prioritizing time to apply The GrowthModel at interdisciplinary meetings
- Making The GrowthModel visible – posters, placemats, laminated A4 sheets with The GrowthModel



Agreements based on challenges:

- Discussing the wish to use of The GrowthModel as a method at all interdisciplinary meetings concerning children and young people with the leaders of the Department for Children and Youth Affairs
- Describing how The GrowthModel makes a difference for the child/family
- Printing posters and materials with The GrowthModel and making them available to everyone



Best of today:

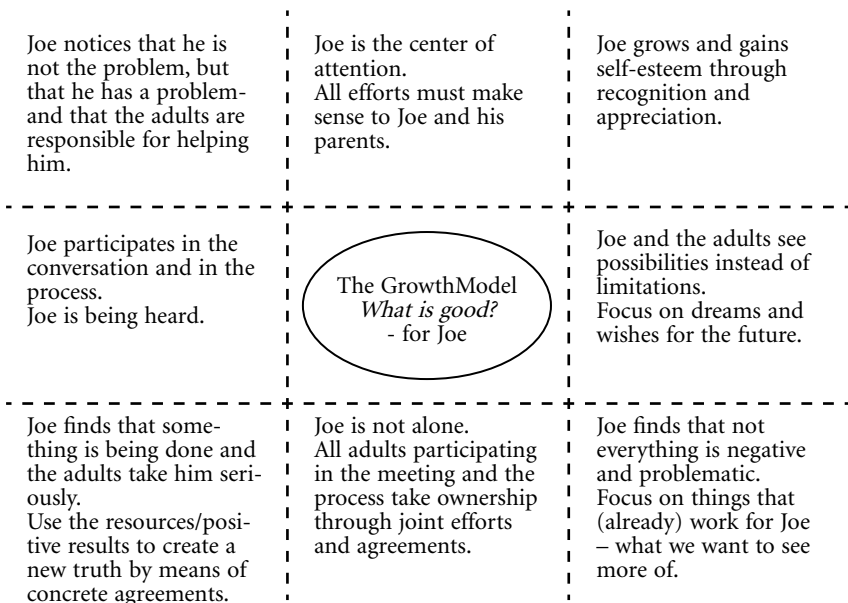
- That we talked to each other about what we want to achieve using The GrowthModel
- That we have agreed how to proceed
- That we talked about the pros and cons of The GrowthModel
- That we know what each other is thinking about The GrowthModel
- That it is great to work with The GrowthModel



When the boss asks: "The GrowthModel – What does it mean to Joe?"

The above provides an insight into the potential value of The GrowthModel when used at interdisciplinary meetings. It is, however, equally important what using The GrowthModel as a method means to the child/adolescent/citizen. This was described as follows by a participant in the Who Conducts the Orchestra programme:

After Marianne Grøn­bæk's introduction to The GrowthModel on the first day of the course, I was very excited and left the classroom with my homework for the next day. I was to reflect on the good aspects of the first day with The GrowthModel. On the way out, I met the head of the Family and Prevention Department and told him that I was attending a course and that it was extremely good. He asked me which course I was taking, and I told him that it was "Who Conducts the Orchestra". He said he had heard good things about it from other participants in the municipality of Vejle. "Yes, and I will be SO competent after completing the course," I said and smiled, after which he asked, "It sounds really good, but is it also good for Joe?" (Joe = the child/adolescent/citizen).



The conversation made me reflect on today's lecture – seen from a different perspective, since everything is ultimately about what difference it makes for Joe and all the other children when we – as employees – improve our skills. My assignment therefore focused on the question "What is good for Joe?" – based on The GrowthModel being used as a professional tool.

The GrowthModel and Positions can be used in most contexts requiring a controlled form of dialogue. The models may be used for conflict management, for development, for clarification – yes, for virtually anything involving dialogues between people, and my experience is that it works. When we use The GrowthModel and Positions in dialogues, we have a conductor who is able to "conduct the orchestra".

Chapter 6.

The art of knowing just how little we need!

What is the silver thread running through the theories and methods described in this book, and how to apply them in practice?

The essence of Situational Action Theory is that the decisive factor as to whether or not an individual commits a crime is his relationships, personal morality and ability to exercise self-control. If a person has good relationships, high morals and great self-control, then that person will not commit crime, no matter where he or she is. Thus, that person is resistant to momentary criminogenic influences of settings. On the other hand, a person lacking good relationships with family and friends, and having low personal morality and low self-control is very vulnerable to momentary influences of criminogenic settings – and is at high risk of committing crimes if he or she is in an environment that encourages criminal acts.

The theory suggests that crime prevention should start as early as possible in both family and school, focusing on increasing children and adolescents' relationships, personal morality and ability to exercise self-control. Morality and self-control are developed in relation to adults – and in the interaction with peers. For this reason it is important to notice children who do not have a parent-child relationship that can teach them morality and self-control. Next to the family, P.-O. Wikström points to the school as the most important arena for learning self-control and developing personal morality.

We can use situational action theory to carry out a basic analysis of children's well-being and need for initiatives across professional skills; to understand where there is a need and if particular initiatives are needed.

Recently, I met a police officer with whom I have good working connections. He gladly reported that a new study showed that most people who ended up in prison had grown up in homes with alcoholic parents. Focus is therefore on the risk factor of growing up in an alcoholic home and not on why it is a risk or what we can do about it.

It made me think about situational action theory in relation to a child growing up in a home with alcoholic parents. Would these parents be able to create good relationships with their child, would they be able to provide the child with high morals and good manners, would they be able to teach the child self-control, and would such an environment be a good environment for a child to grow up in?

The answer must be no – a child who grows up under such conditions, in such an environment, will be particularly vulnerable, and the child's emergency alert level will be very high and thus affect the child's ability to develop optimally.

Most of the young people we work with under the auspices of SSP, who are involved in crime, abuse, radicalisation, graffiti, violence or vandalism, come from homes with a lack of parent-child relations, lack of parenting, morality and manners and a lack of self-control practice. The environment in which they have grown up is characterized by abandonment and lack of care.

P.-O. Wikström's research indicates that children who commit crime before the age of 12 are the most vulnerable and will in general continue this path, unless special initiatives are launched.

A lot of people working in the public sector come across these children and adolescents: the health visitor from the day the child is born, and later on the daycare worker/centre and kindergarten, the school, the after school care services/club, the family counsellors and sometimes the police. We all work with these children and adolescents and their families, and we also meet for interdisciplinary meetings with various action plans, but what is the success rate of all these initiatives?

Could the adolescent have avoided a life of crime?

Do we overlook just how little we need to do? Would we be able to initiate better preventive measures, create more well-being and avoid school dropouts if everyone working within health care, day care, school, family counselling, etc. until the adolescents leave lower secondary school were to use P.-O. Wikström's four core initiatives as a common method/analysis for describing the child's well-being and risk?

- Relations
- Morality/manners
- Self-control
- Settings

Would initiatives based on such an analysis be better, cheaper and work better for the individual child and the individual family?

I believe that if we all apply Situational Action Theory, we would be able to see early childhood signals that may have very negative impact on the child's future life and living conditions, and thus we could start up early preventive measures. It does not take long to destroy a small child's viable competences, but you can spend a lifetime rebuilding those skills without success once the child's preconditions have been destroyed.

By starting the work with particularly vulnerable children, adolescents and their families as early as possible, based on our knowledge of Situational Action Theory, self-control, cognitive theories, The GrowthModel and professionalization of interdisciplinary cooperation as described in this book, I believe that we can prevent a lot of young people from ending up in crime.

With the overall knowledge presented in this book, I believe we can become better at utilizing the large amount of social capital inherent in parenting groups, children's groups and not least in the school. During the ten years that all Danish children and adolescents attend primary and lower secondary school, the well-being and unity of the class have a decisive influence on their preconditions for learning. Strong demands are placed on teachers, parents and students to see and exploit the social capital of the class, and a strong focus must be placed on creating a culture in which everyone takes care of each other and which is based on "diversity being a strength, not a curse", as Marianne Grønbæk usually says.

As professionals, we must always see and act when students start disconnecting from the system, and thus from society – and not just seeing it, but, through our knowledge and interdisciplinary cooperation, we must help the child, the adolescent and the parents back on track.

How the orchestra plays to the beat

Self-control and cognitive psychology are the good “soloists” forming part of Situational Action Theory orchestra, which is conducted by The GrowthModel. By using The GrowthModel as the conductor of the interdisciplinary orchestra, we do not just get skilled soloists, but a whole orchestra playing together.

With this “orchestra” of theories and methods, we will be able to scan the individual child’s conditions of life at a very early stage. In this way we will become more aware of what we, as professionals, can offer vulnerable children and adolescents and thus prevent that they end up in crime and abuse.

The Health Visitor Services in Denmark visit approx. 99% of all families with new-borns. The health visitors are therefore the first professionals to see the families and observe the relationships that exist between parents and children – family patterns in relation to upbringing and morality, the parents’ own self-control, and the parent’s demands on and expectations of the child’s self-control. At home visits the health visitor can observe the environment in which the child is growing up. They can also initiate a dialogue with the family about what is important in a child’s life and why.



This is not new knowledge as such. What is new is that we systematically apply evidence-based theories from the start when the child is born until he or she leaves primary school, and also that all professionals who meet the child throughout his or her upbringing use the same theories and methods.

The table below can be used for the health visitor’s first visit, and later when the child is starting in daycare and school. The form can also be used in dialogues with parents and interdisciplinary partners as a foundation to ensure that the adolescent has the best possible conditions during his/her upbringing.

Name of child: Social security no.:	Observations by professionals:	Parent observations:	Child's own experience (if the child is old enough)
Date:			
Relations			
Morality and manners			
Self-control			
Setting			

When we observe a child who is challenged in one of the above areas, using our knowledge of self-control, cognitive theories and the importance of setting will enable us to come up with early initiatives that we know are of great importance for the individual child's development.

The dialogue is initiated by the health visitor and continues as the silver thread throughout the children's lives in day care and school, where all professionals use their common knowledge to ensure that as many children as possible do well in life.

"Who Conducts the Orchestra" is a common, evidence-based platform for interdisciplinary cooperation that can be used by anyone who works with children and adolescents, regardless of age, and which ensures a fine-mesh net that very few adolescents will fall through.

It has been important to me not merely to disseminate situational action theory, which involve psychological theories such as self-control and cognitive psychology, but also to ensure interdisciplinary education of professionals in the theories and methods of cognitive psychology and self-control as well as to provide a tool such as The GrowthModel that brings the theories into play so we can enjoy the "orchestra".

Applying methods and theories

To conclude this book, I will tie a silver thread between the theories and methods described in this book by means of a case. After describing the case, I will use the various theories and methods in relation to the case.

The GrowthModel can be used, e.g., when working with vulnerable adolescents. It is about how theories and methods are used individually and together, and what the individual theories and methods contribute to a concrete case.

This fictitious case is about an adolescent who faces many difficult challenges, but it could also have been a case about the same girl when she was 1-6 or 10 years old. In that case, nobody knows where she would have ended up.

I hope you will use this case as an inspiration and that you will be open to the theories and methods being used far broader than what I have described here.

Case regarding 15-year-old Amalie (fictitious case)

In connection with a number of crime prevention talks with a group of young girls, who had been shoplifting, sniffing lighter fluid and smoking hash, I met Amalie.

Based on the above information, I convened Amalie and her mother for a crime prevention conversation.

Besides her mother, Amalie brought her aunt to the conversation. The parents were divorced and, according to Amalie, her dad was an alcoholic. The aunt was involved because Amalie had always been able to talk to her, even when everything got to be a little too much.

Amalie didn't look so good, and I contacted her the following day and had a number of conversations with her over the following weeks.

Based on the information provided during our talks, I was seriously concerned about Amalie's development. In the following I will explain my concerns.

Amalie's general condition:

Amalie was thin, her skin almost transparent, and she was biting her finger nails.

Amalie was a heavy smoker, and if she did not smoke, she was picking at her nails or the scabs on her hands.

Amalie was a cutter and she always covered her arms.

Amalie often stayed with people she met or was hanging out with, and there was often drugs, pills and cannabis in the apartments in which she was staying.

Amalie experienced big gaps in her memory and could not differentiate the days.

Amalie expressed that she had a hard time being close to anyone, and if she felt that someone had feelings for her, she just pretended that she considered him an idiot. When Amalie was telling about this, she was affected by emotions, while at the same time she was introverted, quiet and silent. She tried to stay in control by getting angry, scolding everyone and subsequently laughing.

Amalie was pregnant at one time, but she managed to take the morning-after pill and subsequently protecting herself with a birth control implant in her arm.

Schooling and learning conditions:

Amalie told us that she did not go to school very often. She felt excluded from her class, did not have any friends and experienced that the others thought she was strange. "And I don't know what they're doing, and I don't understand what we are supposed to do." Amalie liked talking to the school's Pupil Welfare Officer. "It's as if she understands me a little."

Amalie's mother told us that Amalie did not go to school, she was not able to get her going in the morning. "And I have to go to work, so what am I supposed to do?" Amalie stayed at home until her mother came back from work, and then Amalie would go wherever she wanted. "I don't know where – but she's not at home".

Leisure time and friendships:

Amalie did not have any close friends, but was simply hanging out with adolescents she randomly met, at random places in town. "I usually meet somebody at the station that I can hang out with".

Amalie found that she had no close friends and felt excluded and worthless.

When Amalie was hanging out at the station, she often spoke with a youth club worker. "He seems to like talking to me, and it's nice. He's okay."

Amalie met a guy named Peter who lived by himself. Amalie stayed at his place

quite often and she considered Peter's friends as her own. "Then one of Peter's friends came and gave me a proper hug – it was weird because I didn't know him at all. I don't want them that close."

Amalie did not take part in any leisure activities, but she did spend some time in the youth club. She did not feel understood by the adults, and she often saw them staring at her.

Development and behaviour:

Amalie often dressed in black and dyed her hair purple. She appeared to be rebellious and oppositional, and she showed resistance to authorities such as parents and other adults. However, Amalie did want the contact and she was good at telling about her life, even if she often tried to distance herself from contact by saying "I don't know". Periodically (when she was intoxicated), Amalie seemed shy, nervous and introverted.

To me, Amalie appeared to be a girl with very low self-esteem who felt excluded and lonely.

It appeared to me that, for no apparent reason, Amalie would be introverted and sad the one minute while being outgoing and aggressive the next.

In general, Amalie had a negative perception of herself. She did not feel wanted. She was dissatisfied with her appearance and was unable to make decisions and stick to them. She found it hard to put into words what she wanted for her future and did not have a dream of achieving anything. At a crime prevention talk she indicated something about working with children, but then distanced herself from it – "it doesn't matter".

Family relations:

Amalie did not want to live at home with her mother, as they were fighting all the time. "Mom interferes in my life – it sucks." Amalie found that her mother had given up on her and did not set any limits. "But then suddenly she wants to be my mother again, and I have to be home at ten." Amalie said that she thought her mother was stupid and an idiot, and that she did not have any respect for her. Amalie's mother had a boyfriend who occasionally lived in the apartment. "When he is at home, he tries to discipline me. He gets pissed, pushes me and is violent." Amalie did not want her mother to talk to her in any way. If she did it anyway, Amalie threatened to grab her stuff and leave, never to return.

Amalie did not have any contact with her father. Her father was an alcoholic, and she had not seen him for years. "He lives on Zealand, I think," Amalie said.

Amalie's mother was not able to take care of Amalie and make sure that Amalie showed up for addiction treatment, went to school and had an everyday life with adult attention, guidance and control.

There was also a need for a psychological clarification of Amalie.

Summary

Based on the above, I was deeply concerned about Amalie's development and her potential for conducting a constructive life as a young person and later as an adult.

Amalie was challenged in many ways, and the challenges were on an increase:

- Massive family conflicts and no parental help and support
- Acute impossible housing situation

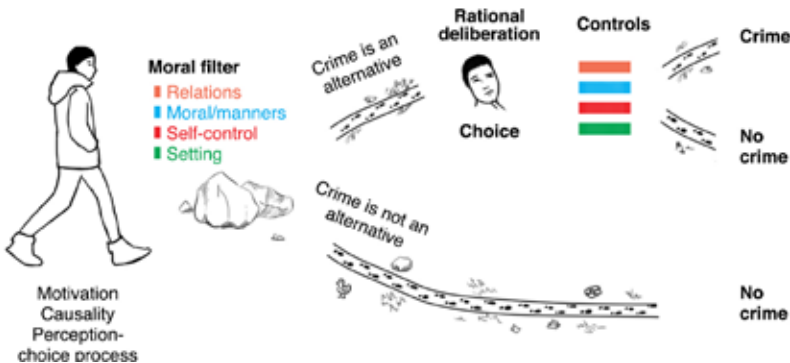
- No hope for the future
- Unprocessed grief
- No schooling
- Massive drug abuse
- Extensive crime problems
- Very low degree of self-protection
- Periodic memory loss

When I asked Amalie what would be the best help for her, she said: “I would like to live in a place with youth care workers that I can talk to. I need help – I know”.

Amalie agreed to a report being prepared.

The report was subsequently reviewed together with Amalie, who confirmed the contents. The report was also reviewed together with Amalie’s mother, who subsequently contacted me and said that the contents were very descriptive of both Amalie and the family’s situation. Amalie disconnected herself from the “normal system”, and her morality and manners were marked by “I do as I see fit, and I live by my own rules”. “I smoke, I drink, I take drugs, I do not go to school”.

Amalie had no contact with her father, and she saw him as an alcoholic. The relationship between Amalie and her mother was very complex and full of conflicts, and there was no continuity in their relationship. Sometimes there were a lot of rules, and sometimes there were no rules, but for the most part there were no rules







The model was prepared on the basis of P.-O. Wikström, 2012

Amalie had good relationships with the pupil welfare officer at the school, with me as an SSP employee and with an outreach youth worker she liked to talk to. In addition, she had her friend Peter, who lived in his own apartment frequently visited by many people.

When it came to the environment in which Amalie was living at the time, i.e., together with her mother and her mother’s boyfriend, there was no adult control, no norms and rules that had to be or were observed.

Her mother was sporadically present and when she was not there, great conflicts arose between Amalie and her mother’s boyfriend. And Amalie did not respect the limits set.

Below is a brief illustration of the whole situation as it appears to me:

Morals/manners		<p>Amalie has disconnected herself from the general norms and rules of society; she does what suits her.</p> <p>Amalie's mother no longer has an impact on Amalie's upbringing and is not able to teach her daughter basic values, morals and manners.</p> <p>Amalie has stayed in various places</p> <p>Smokes cannabis</p> <p>Takes drugs</p> <p>Does not go to school</p> <p>Eats unhealthy food</p> <p>Sleeps whenever it suits her</p> <p>Does not listen to authorities</p>
Relations		<p>SSP-employee</p> <p>Pupil welfare officer</p> <p>Outreach youth worker</p> <p>Group of female friends (theft)</p> <p>Mother on/off</p>
Self-control		<p>Opposition to authorities</p> <p>Abuse</p> <p>Self-injury</p> <p>Suicidal</p> <p>Introverted behaviour</p> <p>Finds it hard to make decisions</p>
Setting		<p>Amalie's parents are divorced.</p> <p>Amalie's mother has sole custody; her father is an alcoholic – according to Amalie.</p> <p>Amalie does not go to school.</p> <p>Periodically, she resides with a boyfriend in an apartment, frequently visited by many young people.</p> <p>Amalie lives in the street a lot, within the criminal environment and in environments of abuse.</p>

Based on the above, it was clear that Amalie was extremely challenged on all four important preconditions, which explained why she did not thrive and why she ended up in crime and abuse.

If you grow up in an environment in which there is a balance between challenges/demands, support and care, there is a fair chance that you will become a balanced human being. In other words: there is a balance between the plusses and minuses in your upbringing (row no. one in the table below).

If children grow up in an environment with no demands or expectations, in which others are doing everything for them, and they do not have to do anything for others, their parents are overprotective, so they do not experience any problems or setbacks, there will be only plusses and thus an imbalance in the children's lives. Such overprotected children do not contribute anything, but only expect to receive (row no. two in the table below).

If you grow up in an environment of very little care and understanding, with very high demands in an atmosphere of conflict, you will meet the world with negative expectations, thrive despite problems and tend not to rely on the world to succeed (row no. three in the table below).

If you grow up in an environment in which there is absolutely no care, the world is not transparent and it is not safe and secure, you will meet the world thinking that no one has good intentions and that there is nowhere where you can feel safe (row no. four in the table below).

1	+	+	-	Secure upbringing with a balance between the parents' demands, criticism and praise.
2	+	+	+	Secure upbringing, but the parents do not make demands and do not criticise, only praise. Overprotected children.
3	+	-	-	Insecure upbringing, characterized by negative parent contact, too many demands and more criticism than praise, as well as many conflicts.
4	-	-	-	Insecure upbringing rendering no positive contact between the child and his parents. The world is not transparent to the child.

Most of Amalie's upbringing was characterised by insecurity, chaos, and negative expectations and relationships, and to her it therefore became par for the course. If she succeeded with something, Amalie would create chaos, as she felt very insecure when she succeeded. When analysing Amalie's approach to and belief in the world based on the description in the table above as well as on her upbringing, relationships, self-control and the environment she was part of, Amalie would be somewhere between rows three and four

The environment and the setting in which Amalie grew up were not healthy and did not develop Amalie's mental robustness. According to Amalie, he had very low self-control and lacked many resources in that area.

In order to create a change in Amalie's situation, we therefore had to focus on the opportunities that existed in her relationships. Who could help develop her morality and behaviour and train her self-control? We needed to investigate whether there were any resources within her own environment. I therefore convened a so-called Article 115 meeting, including all interdisciplinary partners – the police, health services, teachers, youth club workers, social counsellors, psychologists and SSP employees. In addition, Amalie and her mother attended the meeting.

The cognitive-behavioural model

In preparation for the Article 115 meeting, I had a meeting with Amalie. At this meeting, I applied Anne Dorthe Hasholt's cognitive-behavioural model (described on page 67).

I used the cognitive-behavioural model when preparing for the meeting, partly to help Amalie gain a greater insight into her own thoughts and feelings, but also

to give me an insight into Amalie’s biggest current challenges. What were the challenges that caused her to react inappropriately and destructively on a daily basis.

<p>Situation</p>	<p>What kind of situation are you facing when your self-control is turned off and you act inappropriately? “It is as if I cannot find out for myself what I need to do, and then I smoke and drink to forget everything, and then everything is better, if you understand. But when I come home, there is nobody, and if there is, and my mother says something, then she is always correcting me, and I totally freak out, she does not understand me. And I don’t want her to interfere”.</p>
<p>Feelings/body</p>	<p>On a scale of 1-10, what do you feel when you lose your self-control and freak out completely? “I get very angry, sad, and frustrated. It hurts so much that I have to cut myself to stand the pain. My throat tightens, I get nausea and my heart pounds”.</p>
<p>Thoughts</p>	<p>When you get angry (10) and upset (8), what thoughts come to mind? “Fuck them, they don’t understand me, I hate them, they don’t want me, they don’t get it at all, I’ll get through it on my own, I’ll go to my friend’s place, and take drugs with him and his friends. Fucking life. I can’t use them for anything”.</p>
<p>Behaviour</p>	<p>What do you do when you get these thoughts and feelings? “Then I shout at my mom, I cut my arm, take off from home, go to my friend’s house, smoke some hash or take other drugs and drink”.</p>
<p>Consequences</p>	<p>What are the consequences for you? “I only get worse and worse. I just smoke and drink more and more, and then I have to take it out on somebody, I want to crush somebody. Something else has to happen ...”</p>

We are only aware of 10% of our thoughts. The other 90% are unconscious thoughts, but the cognitive-behavioural model helps us focus on our thoughts and creates an awareness of the unconscious. Together with Amalie, I reviewed the situation and the consequences of her thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and I had the opportunity to show her the pattern that was going on and the consequences it had for her. It created visibility and initiated a dialogue about the restructuring needed if she was to change something.

Just as a GPS cannot find new routes without an update, we cannot break patterns and habits without restructuring our lives.

In this case, the cognitive-behavioural model was used as a method to motivate Amalie to understand that a change was needed in her life, if she was not to continue the way she was heading. It was important for me to review the cognitive-behavioural model with Amalie before the Article 115 meeting to prepare her for the meeting the best I could.

The GrowthModel

The Article 115 meeting is chaired and managed according to the principles and rules of the GrowthModel, which form the framework for the meeting. This ensures that everyone is heard, that we deal with all opportunities and challenges and that we end up entering concrete agreements at the meeting that will make a difference for Amalie.

In the first circle, everyone writes what they consider successes.

Amalie:

- Talking to the pupil welfare officer and the SSP-employees.
- Being with my friend.
- Talking to the outreach youth worker.

Mother:

- When I get child allowance and we buy clothes together.

Pupil welfare officer:

- That Amalie knows when she is taking too many drugs. Then she asks for help.

SSP-employee:

- Amalie wants help and is quite aware that the way she is heading right now is not going to work.

Youth club worker:

- Amalie wants to tell you how she feels, and she knows she needs help and wants to be helped.

Family counsellor:

- Amalie attends our meetings and Amalie wants help.

The police:

- That Amalie is not charged with any criminal offences.

Health care worker:

- That Amalie wants to talk to the health care services.

It is very important to focus on what works well and start from there. It provides energy and ensures that we build on the existing foundation and not on an imaginary foundation.

In the next circle, it is only Amalie who can say something. This is to ensure that she does not meet too many challenges, and to gain an insight into what she finds to be the greatest challenges.





Amalie:

- That I don't have someone to talk to, and who can help me keep agreements and get to school.
- That I need some new friends.
- That I need to stop smoking and taking drugs.
- That there are no limits at my mom's.

Everyone takes part in the next circle.

At this point they talk about the possibilities they each have, based on the challenges that Amalie has written down and which they have jointly chosen to concentrate on.



Amalie:

- That I move away from home, to a place where there are some adults who can help me.

Mother:

- That Amalie learns to control herself.

SSP-employee:

- That Amalie gets treatment for her abuse.
- That the family has a family counsellor who can work with the mother's awareness of her positions and the importance of the positions she takes as a parent, and what other positions the mother can take to develop her relationship with Amalie.
- That Amalie gets help learning how to control her self-control.

Outreach youth worker:

- That Amalie can always call if she needs it.

Counsellor:

- That the municipality finds a residence for Amalie that offers appropriate education opportunities.

The police:

- The police can act as a mentor for Amalie, so that she can call them if something is going wrong.

Health care:

- That Amalie can see a psychologist
- To ensure that Amalie gets the right diet.

Pupil welfare officer:

- That I am available for a chat, when she needs it.

This circle focuses on agreements that are continued; it is specified who does what, when is it done and by whom.

- The counsellor tries to find a residence for Amalie as soon as possible.
- Amalie's mother agrees to have a family counsellor.
- Amalie enters addiction treatment.

In the final circle, the meeting is evaluated by all participants telling what has been the best for them at the meeting today.

Amalie:

- That I was the only one to say something about challenges.

Mother:

- That something is going to happen in Amalie's case.
- That we were not scolded, but rather received help.

SSP-employee:

- That we have all agreed on a plan

Outreach youth worker:

- That something happens in Amalie's case.

Counsellor:

- That we have a plan together.

Pupil welfare officer:

- That we have all talked about how we can help Amalie.

The police:

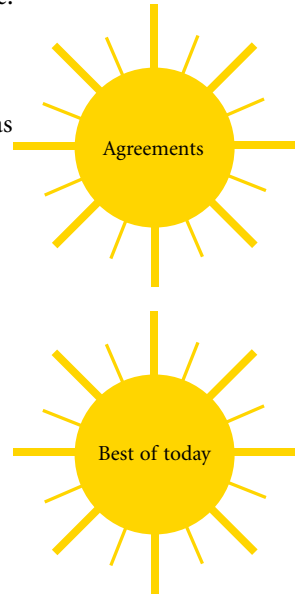
- That a plan has been laid out.

Health care:

- That the meeting was managed so well that we all played a part in reaching a goal with a common plan.

I hope that this case and the analysis of the case will underline the silver thread running through the theories and methods of "Who Conducts the Orchestra". It is also my hope that the case has given you an insight into what the various theories and methods can be used for when working with vulnerable children and young people and how it strengthens interdisciplinary cooperation when these theories and methods are put into use, thus strengthening the efforts to help the individual child/adolescent and his family.

Applying the theories and methods of "Who Conducts the Orchestra" provides a "joint boost" to all the efforts made together with the adolescent, the family and the interdisciplinary partners.



I do not know if it is clear from the case and the analysis of the case, but the methods might as well have been used in any case, whether the child had been 2 years old, 6 years old or had been dealing with other challenges.

Status of "Who Conducts the Orchestra"

At the time of writing, a total of 100 employees across disciplines within the Department for Children and Youth Affairs in the municipality of Vejle have participated in the programme "Who Conducts the Orchestra". As appears from the following section evaluating the programme, the theories and methods taught during the programme are used in several places within the municipality when interdisciplinary meetings are held to help vulnerable children and adolescents. A cultural change is slowly appearing in relation to interdisciplinary cooperation, which has been professionalized through the 17-day programme. Several departments develop new methods based on situational action theory, self-control, cognitive theories and The GrowthModel. The methods are developed to be used for parent-teacher conversations, staff meetings and well-being initiatives in the various classes and the staff groups.

The rhetoric has changed from "the child is the problem" to "the child has a problem". All SSP's Article 115 meetings are based on the theories and methods described in "Who Conducts the Orchestra".

We are collecting all materials that have been developed along the way and plan to create a website with inspirational material from all interdisciplinary departments that have participated in the programme. In addition, we are working with the theories and methods in practice.

Below I will describe what participants in the programme say about using methods and theories from the programme.

Evaluating "Who Conducts the Orchestra"?

In the spring of 2015, when the first group had completed the "Who Conducts the Orchestra"-programme, an evaluation was prepared by Vifin, a knowledge and development centre within the municipality of Vejle (www.vifin.dk) The evaluation was partly based on focus group interviews with participants a few months after they had completed the programme. Some of the evaluation conclusions are presented below. The entire evaluation can be obtained in Danish by contacting Vifin.

The evaluation shows, among other things, that the participants found that they received knowledge and tools that were highly relevant to their work and that help them to be more constructive and targeted in their work. The participants also stressed that being an interdisciplinary group of people was a big gain. They got to know each other as individuals, but they also gained knowledge about each other's professions, work functions and procedures, which broke down prejudices and provided greater awareness that, and when, it may be relevant to involve other professional groups in their work with children and adolescents. Equally important to the participants was the fact that they got a common language, a common approach and common methods. This was perceived as a great advantage for the communication during interdisciplinary cooperation, and it was also clear that using a common method at interdisciplinary

meetings creates a basis for well-structured cooperation and greater focus on professional aspects.

The evaluation also shows that during the few months since completing the programme, the participants had already tested some of the tools in practice.

Several participants had found the opportunity to use The GrowthModel and had experienced that it provides both structure and positive solutions in many situations. Especially when it came to meetings about and with a pupil and his parents, the GrowthModel appeared to be highly applicable. It contributes to the meetings being more constructive, action-oriented and provides ownership to all parties. As an example, a teacher told us about the following experience in relation to the model: "I used it myself during a parent-teacher conversation, at which the mother appeared extremely ready to fight, and the boy was like ... dragging his feet down the hall because he knew what was going to happen. So we turned the scene upside-down by not commenting on his behaviour and underlining all the good things about the boy. The pupil suddenly woke up, and his mother was not able to let out all the things she had planned to defend herself with. Because there was nothing to defend."

The GrowthModel had also been tested with good results at interdisciplinary meetings and for evaluations at class/group level. In relation to interdisciplinary cooperation, it was emphasized that the model ensures that focus will be on cooperation on a common goal based on a common professional starting point. As one of the participants stated, "... we have our personal strengths and weaknesses that we bring into these meetings, and it may well be that we become better equipped professionally – more professional, better professionals.

In addition, our experience with the GrowthModel was that it can help improve cooperation between parties who otherwise do not agree (e.g. divorced parents or in classes with conflicts).

Likewise, positioning is a model that several participants started using personally with the result that situations were perceived as less conflicting. One participant said that awareness of the fact that all parties in a conversation are positioning themselves makes a difference: "It makes a huge difference – also when it comes to how much things provoke me and what it does to me. It is like things have been moved to another level, and I can see it a little more from above and have a better overview of a situation or a conflict.

The participants had also tested the cognitive-behavioural model and several other cognitive methods in practice. The cognitive-behavioural model was often applied for difficult talks with children/adolescents, the experience being that the tool provides a good strategy for the conversation and helps to keep the focus on essential issues. A health care worker described her experience with the method as follows: "As soon as an adolescent starts talking about something that is difficult. It just makes so much sense to focus on a single situation and analyse it, and have the adolescent look at possible models for proceeding with this."

The participants had mainly used Situational Action Theory as background knowledge and as a framework for analysis, but some participants had applied knowledge from the theory directly in the selection of young people for municipal efforts based on important theory parameters. Many of the participants expected that they could use the theory for spotting children and adolescents at risk at an earlier stage. A social counsellor described how he had already used situational

action theory a lot in his work: "... I use it very much in relation to my early work, as our efforts should preferably be started up before things go wrong. So I consider morality and manners a lot when I visit the parents and ask for details. Sometimes this will paint a new picture of the situation."

Finally, some participants had tested elements of self-control, especially in relation to training or paying attention to the child's need for self-control in order to be able to and enjoy being together with others.

What partners say about "Who Conducts the Orchestra"?

Two partners who became part of the pilot project "Who Controls the Orchestra" at an early stage was the police and the health care services. Below are their statements on the value of "Who Controls the Orchestra" in the preventive work.

"For several years now, constructive cooperation has existed between the crime-preventive SSP partnership in Vejle and the local police in Vejle, including expanded cooperation with a large number of stakeholders within the municipality in the field of preventive work: Commerce, housing associations, abuse centres, hospitals, businesses, etc. We have implemented joint activities in connection with sudden incidents throughout the municipality, and at the same time we have developed procedures for our cooperation. Helle and I have often asked each other how to get on with preventive work in Vejle.

Every winter I always knew that by spring, a new generation of kids would finish school. This also applies to kids with troubling behaviour or who would turn to crime. It is weird knowing that the next generation of troublemakers is on the way and we do nothing – although we did not know who these kids are ...

We have a common goal, and with the Who Conducts the Orchestra-programme, I believe that together we can take the next step. By setting in at an earlier stage we can spot the adolescents who are in trouble so that we avoid "sitting around" waiting for the next generation ... I hope that evaluations and statistics will document that Who Conducts the Orchestra will strengthen the preventive measures taken. At present, I have no doubts that cross-sectional cooperation has already been strengthened."

Lars Bo Hansen, Vejle Local Police

"Behaviour and personality are established at the start of a child's life, when early interaction between the child and his parents plays a crucial role in the child's development. Being seen, heard and recognized – and growing up in an environment with loving and caring parents is crucial for a young child to be able to develop into a viable and robust adult.

The health visitor is the only qualified professional who meets the family in their own home, and almost 99% of all Danish families accept such visits during the first year of the child's life. This is an excellent opportunity for professional assessment and for identifying particularly vulnerable families who need support and possible early interdisciplinary initiatives.

The main task of the health visitor is to support and guide parents to master the parenting role and give them a feeling of being "good enough" at parenting throughout the child's childhood, from birth and until the child is leaving school. It is important to prioritize and invest in early prevention and targeted interdisciplinary initiatives for all children – because we know that the individual child needs a good and healthy foundation, as it strengthens the child's resilience in the long run. All professionals in the child's life are responsible for a successful outcome.

Participation in the first targeted interdisciplinary training programme, Who Conducts the Orchestra, has therefore been a priority for the health visitors in the municipality of Vejle. The health visitors completed the programme together with their interdisciplinary

colleagues from the schools, and they all returned thrilled with excitement – partly because of the contents of the programme, with its highly qualified teachers, and partly because the contents were linked to their knowledge of and their work with interdisciplinary perspectives of a vulnerable child. It was very unique!

Previous attempts at establishing a foundation and an interdisciplinary common language for the benefit of our work with children and families in the municipality are no match for the effect and value of this interdisciplinary programme.”

Ulla Dupont, Head of Heath Visitor Services, Vejle Municipality

Teachers at the "Who Conducts the Orchestra"-programme



Per-Olof Wikström

Per-Olof Wikström (PhD, Associate Professor, Stockholm University), FBA, Professor of Ecological and Developmental Criminology at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, and Professorial Fellow of Girton College.

Head of Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (PADS+), a major ESRC-funded research project which aims to advance knowledge of crime causation and prevention.

Per-Olof Wikström's latest publications include:

Breaking Rules. The Social and Situational Dynamics of Young People's Urban Crime. Oxford University Press, 2012 (together with Dietrich Oberwittler, Kyle Treiber & Beth Hardie)

The Explanation of Crime: Contexts, Mechanisms and Development, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (editor together with Robert J. Sampson)

Adolescent Crime: Individual Differences and Lifestyles, Willan Publishing, 2006 (together with David Butterworth)

For further information: www.pads.ac.uk



Rune Kappel

Rune Kappel, MSc Psychology, has dealt with particularly vulnerable families when working as a school psychologist. He is currently employed as Head of Section at Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media, Aarhus University, at the Study Centre for Students with Special Needs.

In addition, Rune offers lectures on intelligence and self-control. He has also written a book on self-control in children and adolescents called *Selvkontrol hos børn og unge*, published by Dansk Psykologisk Forlag.

For further information: <http://www.runekappel.com/>



Anne Dorthe Hasholt

MSc. Psychology and further education in cognitive theory and methods. Among other things, Anne Dorthe Hasholt offers conversation therapy, supervision, mindfulness training and hypnosis. She has many years of experience as a psychologist and great experience with issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and pain.

Anne Dorthe teaches mindfulness at user and trainer level, and offers the cognitive treatment ACT (Accept and Commitment Therapy) and self-esteem training.

For further information: <http://www.midtfynspsykologhus.dk>



Marianne Grønbæk

Senior Consultant and owner of MG Udvikling since 1995.

Member of "The Advisory Board of Connecting Minds Network" (CMN).

Marianne Grønbæk is the co-author of a number of books:
VækstModellen – Vejen til dialogbaseret ledelse (The Growth-

Model – The road to dialogue-based management), Dafolo, 2010 (together with Henrik Pors & David Campbell)

VækstModellen – Vejen til den gode samtale (The GrowthModel – The road to good conversation), Dafolo, 2009 (together with Henrik Pors)

Semantiske Polariteter og Positioner – samtaler i organisationer (Semantic Polarities and Positions – Conversations within Organizations), MG Udvikling, 2006 (together with David Campbell)

Drømmen – fra tanke til handling (The dream – from idea to action), MG Udvikling, 2004 (together with Lene Nørslund & Erling Rasmussen)

For more information: <http://virker.dk/>



Lars Bo Hansen

Superintendent, Patrol Prevention at Vejle Local Police.

Lars Bo Hansen has worked for the police since 1985 and, in recent years, he has entered into close cooperation with SSP Vejle in the area of prevention.

Lars Bo Hansen teaches crime prevention in Vejle at the "Who Conducts the Orchestra"-programme.



Helle Midskov Brynaa

Head of the SSP team in the municipality of Vejle since 2007. Project manager, author and originator of project "Who Conducts the Orchestra".

Helle Midskov Brynaa was educated as a child care worker in 1987 and has subsequently expanded her education with various management courses, many years of practical management experience with consultancy training and experience as a consultant.

She has also completed training in cognitive therapy and is a trained supervisor, coach and project manager, having experience in project management from her own company.

In addition, she lectures and teaches pedagogy and management and has recently taken a Diploma in Criminology.

As Head of the SSP team, she has participated in three major EU projects: ITER, MMT Mainstreaming Mentor Training, Youth Fight for Democracy.

For further information: www.ssp.vejle.dk

