

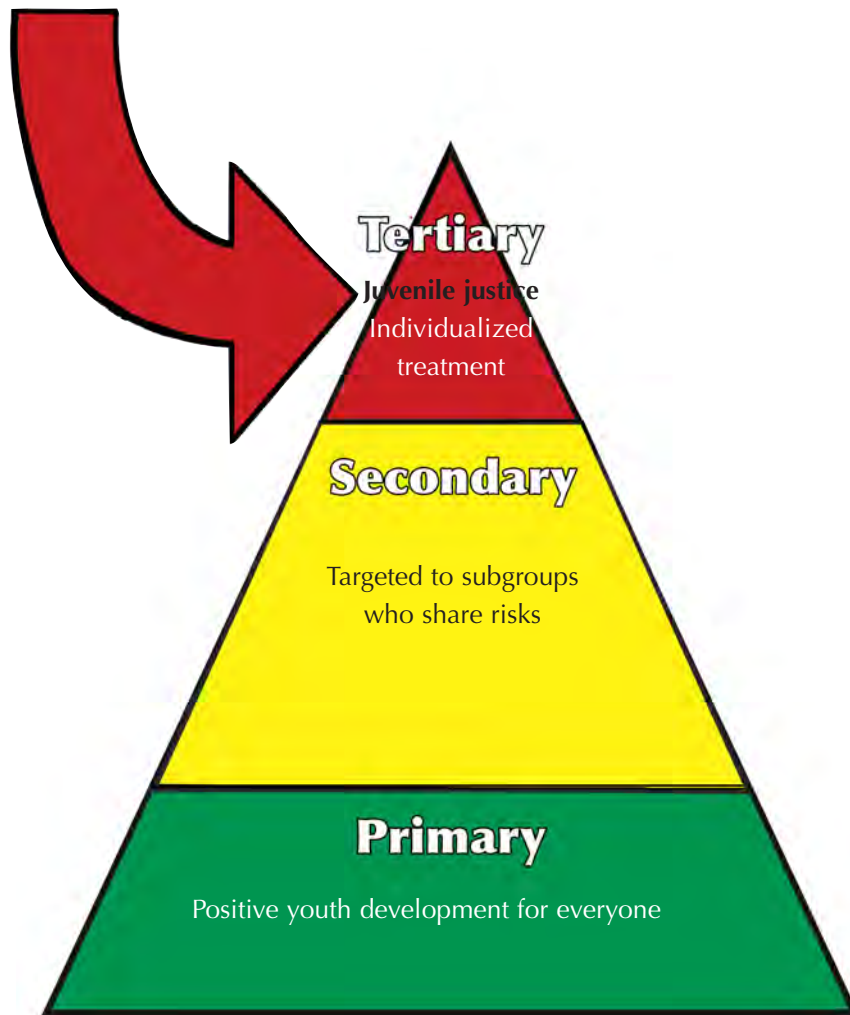
RIPPLE EFFECTS
Software to *positively* change behavior



Uses in Juvenile Justice Settings

Three tiered intervention

The fields of education, health and public safety all increasingly rely on a model of three tiered intervention: primary for universal promotion of positive behavior, good health and school success; secondary for targeted risk reduction, and tertiary for individualized intervention after school failure, injury, illness, or anti-social behavior have begun to occur. Ripple Effects software-based, training program is effective for all three levels of intervention. Use of programs for primary and secondary prevention are addressed in separate guides. This guide **focuses on a specialized area of tertiary intervention, that which happens within juvenile justice settings.**



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Prison proofing - a prevention goal

Ripple Effects model of skill-based prevention to “prison proof” young people is based on research analyses that Ripple Effects CEO Alice Ray conducted in the early 1980s when she was the first Executive Director of Committee for Children. After years of working to prevent child exploitation, especially sexual abuse, and fulfilling a goal to get materials to prevent that exploitation in many of the country’s schools, she asked **“What would it take for the next generation of kids not to become perpetrators?”** How could they be “prison proofed?”

Her analysis of the research showed that, after stripping off factors not under personal control (ethnicity, class, gender, media influence), **people who hurt others were often missing one or more components of seven core abilities:** self-understanding, empathy, impulse control, management of emotions, assertiveness, decision-making, and connection to community.* Over the next two decades, meta-analyses of hundreds of new studies scientifically confirmed that anti-social behavior was indeed correlated with these factors, which could be broadly grouped into *personal characteristics* and *social relations*.

If so much injury is connected to the lack of these abilities, it follows that much suffering could be prevented through mastery of them; but only if these abilities could be taught and learned. Many people believed they were innate.

Work in universities and treatment centers showed that, indeed, these abilities could be learned, but too often treatment was coming into play AFTER the injury had occurred. Ray initiated development of the *Second Step* curriculum to begin teaching these skills in childhood BEFORE the cycle of pain and punishment began. Under her direction, Kathy Beland authored that model program, now used in tens of thousands of schools. Many other experts began developing effective models along similar lines. Yet none is effective in every setting, nor with every child.

Next-generation prevention – personalized and tiered

Over the years Alice Ray transferred her attention to a *Third Step*: technology-based prevention resources that could help these evidence-based programs be effective with more children and teens, more of the time. Ripple Effects training software enables personalization to address the specific risk factors each child faces, accommodates differences in how children learn best, and allows for extra training for those who don’t get it the first time. It targets staff as well as youth.

* (Breakdown of the 120+ skill components of these seven characteristics is found on pg.53)

Reducing the harm

Hundreds of thousands of youth, disproportionately poor and of color, have risk factors outside their control (including structural injustice) and/or don't get the primary protection of resilience training, or secondary intervention to address group risk factors, which could protect them against involvement with juvenile justice. They are not pre-emptively "prison proofed." As a result, they have contact with the system. They need intensive, targeted intervention, in the form of tertiary services, to ensure that their contact with juvenile justice restores justice, protects public safety and does not escalate or become chronic.

A continuum of contact

Contact with the juvenile justice system happens along a continuum that includes a range of settings and a range of reasons for contact.

Setting for contact
Street, community
Police Station
Police, D.A., law office
D.A., Juvenile probation, courts
Youth court, drug court, juvenile court
School district detention center
Community service program, Restorative justice programs (meet w/ victims)
Counseling, 12 step group, court schools
Probation office
Residential group homes, half-way houses
State or local juvenile jail ("the hall")
Probation department, Community Based Organizations

Each point on the continuum is an opportunity for early intervening services.

The diversity of settings increases the difficulty of providing a consistent, integrated, restorative intervention to youth whose behavior is causing problems. Ripple Effects software can put a wide range of evidence-based strategies in the hands of staff at any and every point throughout the system, and enable continuity of care throughout the system.

A note about drug courts and youth courts

Drug courts and youth courts are providing positive alternatives to incarceration. They help ease the load on the legal system and frequently "sentence" offenders to the positive requirement of community service. The challenge is they can't and don't provide the skill training, or help with underlying risk factors, which lead to offending in the first place. Mandating offenders to do BOTH individual skill training and restorative community service could increase the effectiveness of these alternative courts even more.

Early intervening services

All or nothing not good options

Because of overwhelmingly crowded conditions at every level of the juvenile justice system, too often the choice is a) ignore the transgression; b) “hook and release,” or c) “lock ‘em up.” None of these options serves either public safety, or the treatment needs of youth offenders.

One strike & you're in

Ripple Effects philosophy is neither “three strikes and you’re out”, nor “because behavior is understandable, you get a free pass.” Our approach is “one offense and you’re in” – in a program of early intervening services to change the offending behavior, address the risk factors that underpin it, and restore relations with the community. This approach works best within a system of graduated consequences, where there is a standardized consequence for every offense.

Criteria for effective, sustainable, early intervening services

Effective, sustainable, early intervening services must meet important criteria. They must:

- ensure fidelity to evidence-based practices (EBP)
- be effective in settings with limited financial and human resources
- allow cultural and site-specific adaptation without loss of fidelity to EBP
- accommodate individual differences in learning and language proficiency
- ensure against disproportionality and discriminatory practices at every stage
- enable accurate monitoring and data management to report to court

Ripple Effects training software program meets these criteria

It can be used across a wide range of juvenile justice settings to provide effective intervention with young people who have had contact with the justice system.

Pre-set scope and sequence enables certification

Pre-set scope and sequences are not needed for effectiveness, but they standardize interventions and enable a report back to the court to show that a young person has completed a particular course of treatment. For details on the certification process, see page 8.

Addressing disproportionality

Serious equity issue

OJJDP has identified disproportionate contact with African American, Native American and Latino youth as a serious equity issue. These youth are disproportionately represented at every level of the juvenile justice system. They are contacted and punished more often, more arbitrarily and more severely than Caucasian counterparts.

Starts with discipline patterns in school

Long before they have contact with Juvenile Justice, these children are disproportionately represented in school discipline settings. They are over-represented in office referrals, suspensions, expulsions, and corporal punishment. There is a strong relationship between racial disparities in school discipline and juvenile incarceration. So the first step to reducing disproportionate contact with juvenile justice is to reduce disproportionate discipline at school.

Causes in teacher and student behavior, in various contexts of risk

No scientific evidence shows disproportionate discipline to be purely the result of racial discrimination. Neither does evidence completely explain it in terms of other risk factors, such as family structure, or neighborhood violence. Strong evidence supports the position that it's the result of a dynamic interplay between lowered expectations and uneven discipline enforcement on the part of some school staff, and multiple student risk factors, some inside and some outside of their control.

Cultural competence for teachers

Lack of cultural competence and other risk factors for staff can be addressed privately, without shame or blame, through the *Ripple Effects Coach for Staff* training software.

Multiple student risk factors require differentiated response

Each young person needs to address the behavior that is creating a problem and the unique combination of personal risk factors that has led to poor decisions. They need to develop offsetting protective factors, especially social-emotional competencies. Suggested interventions for students who have problematic behavior that has not reached the level of crime can be found in another Ripple Effects print guide: *Individual Treatment Plans*.

Transform anger into activism

If we expect young people not to act out when they are angry and not to anesthetize their pain with drugs or alcohol, we need to give them the tools to solve problems constructively, including the means to confront injustice and create social change. That's why Ripple Effects software includes confronting injustice as a "life skill" for democracy.

Addressing individual risk and protection

Risk factors – which are most predictive?

Over the last two decades hundreds of new studies and sophisticated new tools for analysis have enabled us to further refine understanding of the numerous risk factors in multiple domains, which are correlated with juvenile anti-social and delinquent behavior. After controlling for socio-economic status, gender and race/ethnicity, five risk factors at age 10 are most predictive of anti-social and delinquent behavior at age 16:

- prior aggressive and anti-social behavior (usually identifiable by age 7)
- personal characteristics (deficits in attention, emotional regulation, problem solving)
- deficits in social relations
- family factors (parental warmth, discipline style and family functioning)
- school behavior (academic performance, school participation, adjustment)

Most effective Interventions

Researchers have identified numerous effective interventions to address risk factors and have correlated the most effective approaches with the most predictive risk factors. They all work with some kids some of the time, none work with everyone, all of the time.

- behavioral approaches (behavior shaping and reinforcing)
- cognitive approaches (cognitive restructuring, managing feelings)
- social skill training (interpersonal skills, perspective taking, assertiveness, conflict management)
- counseling (individual and family; BUT group sessions are not proven effective)
- parent skill training

Matching exact risk to best intervention – as difficult as making bone marrow match

The challenge is to match the most effective strategies, to the most predictive risk factors, for a particular child, at the earliest possible time. To expect that each staff person can discern the exact risk factors that most impact each child, and can provide an evidence-based intervention, tailored to how that child learns, in the exact evidence-based method that would best address it, is like expecting that between every child and any staff person is an exact bone marrow match. Yet the need to make that match is urgent. Ripple Effects software makes it more possible.

Diagnostic profiles help

Diagnostic profiles in Ripple Effects Software help identify areas of greatest strength and need. These first-pass screening tools cannot replace the nuanced work of mental health professionals, they can provide a concrete direction for an effective intervention plan. Youth can access the intervention they need, in the way they learn best, without needing to be able to read. Staff can facilitate the match without needing to be experts in the content.

Four steps to change

Often young offenders, especially first offenders, are mandated to serve just a few hours in a detention setting. Many times these detention settings are staffed by people who can't possibly keep current on the huge body of practices that scientific evidence shows can be effective. To maximize the impact of Ripple Effects software in these settings, it's equally important to deal with the immediate offense and with the underlying reasons behind it. Here are four steps to individualize the intervention for each student, within the time constraints you have.

- 1** Start with a strength. These kids have often been labeled as losers. To turn things around they need to change that basic identity. Direct students to the learning style tutorial to see how their preferred way of learning - whatever it is - can be leveraged for success.
- 2** Assign a topic related to their immediate offense: stealing, assault, vandalism, rape, prostitution, drugs, etc. Each multimedia tutorial automatically leads to training in social-emotional competencies that can help change the behavior. (For more standardized interventions, see Part II for sample scopes and sequences.
- 3** Direct students to seek out what they think is the underlying reason. This is especially important for youth who may have the dual status of victim and offender. Trust their instincts to find what they need. In many cases, after using the program, students will disclose the underlying problem to a trusted adult. Meanwhile, don't hover or over-direct.
- 4** End with building a strength. Have them choose a strength to work on, reached through the "keys" button, or ask them to complete profiles in one of the seven core skills, identified on pages 53-54, to get direction on where to start.

For maximum impact

Require compliance; don't just invite participation. Make sure students understand that when they chose to break the law, they chose a set of consequences that now includes using - and succeeding at - this program.

Avoid reliance on group effort to address private risk factors

Individual counseling has been shown to be effective in reducing anti-social behavior in children and adolescents, but group counseling has NOT. A vibrant, even insightful discussion is NOT usually correlated with behavior change. Proven techniques, like cognitive behavioral training, are. Research on Ripple Effects student software shows that, at least with teens, students who use the program without adult mediation of content have better social and academic outcomes than those who have adult mediation.

Facilitation - easiest way or more structured

For each topic allow about 15 minutes. A 45-minute session generally allows three topics. A module made up of multiple topics can be spread out or compressed to fit a range of time constraints. For instance, with 15 minutes per day, for two weeks, teachers could cover a ten-topic module. A probation officer or counselor could address those same topics in a two and a half hour continuous session. A case manager might cover them in five, 30 minute sessions over a semester.

Choose a mode of facilitation

“Sessions” can consist of a group assignment with discussion, or the assignment of individual topic(s) to each student without discussion, or discussion after completion. They can be completed whenever and wherever a student has access to a computer where the software is installed. Alternately, you can closely direct a personal session. Sessions can also consist of a combination of independent exploration and directed discussion.

Respect student privacy

Again and again we have seen that students are more open to the program when they can explore it privately.

Do not over direct; DO require completion of interactive elements

There is no right or wrong way for a student to complete a particular topic. They do not need to use each available button or proceed from left to right. However, each student needs to complete the interactive “Got It,” “Inside Your Mind” and “Profile” elements for every topic assigned. Monitor completion of the assigned topics by checking the student “Scorecard.” See your user manual for complete directions.

Maintain a positive approach

Whether in counseling, discipline or remedial settings, whenever possible, start and end with a strength.

Note: The proposed treatment plans have been developed with real world users in real world settings, with input from child psychiatrists, special education experts, school nurses, psychologists, teachers, parents, administrators and disciplinarians. Nonetheless, they are offered as suggested approaches, not required curriculum. They need to be interpreted and adapted to meet the needs of youth in your unique circumstance.

Certified Diversion Program

Ripple Effects offers structured, skill building diversion programs for misdemeanors or petty offenses. They include *Certified Reports of Completion* to the Court.

How to enroll

To enroll in the certificate program, diversion candidates must go to www.rippleeffects.com/diversion and signup. They may complete the program at any community-based organization with which Ripple Effects has an agreement.

Course certificates issued upon receipt of proof of completion

Course Completion Certificates are available from Ripple Effects and can be processed within two business days after receiving proof of completion of the assigned tutorials. If any of the assigned tutorials have not been completed, the certificate will not be issued. Proof of completion can be in the form of the original print out of the student "Scorecard", mailed to Ripple Effects offices; **no faxes**. Certificates are processed on business days only (Monday through Friday; no weekends or national holidays).

Ripple Effects Behavior Training Course completion certificates will be **mailed directly to the court or officer of the court. They cannot be faxed to the student or the court.** Ripple Effects must follow the requirements set forth by your court regarding where and to whom to mail the certificate of completion. Allow 2-5 days for the mailed certificate to arrive at the court. (See Appendix page 37 for sample Certificate of Completion.)

Who qualifies

Ripple Effects will only issue a completion certificate for a court that we have a formal agreement with, unless the youth provides us with written documentation from the court that gives permission for that person to complete Ripple Effects computer-based, Behavior Training Course to dispose of their case.

Confidentiality requirements = computer-based but not Internet-delivered -- for now

Extraordinary measures must be taken to protect the confidentiality of juvenile records, especially when they may later be expunged. It is still all too possible to breach security over the Internet. By keeping all official court records with the agencies mandated to protect them, and monitoring only the completion of program course work, we maximize both services and security for youth.

Ripple Effects philosophy: one strike and you're in

Ripple Effects philosophy is not three strikes and you're out, but one offense and you're "in"

