

Risk Assessment with Youth and Emerging Adults

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Roadmap

- Risk Recap
- Emerging Adults
- Relevance to Risk
- The YEARSS (Youth and Emerging Adult Risk and Strength System)

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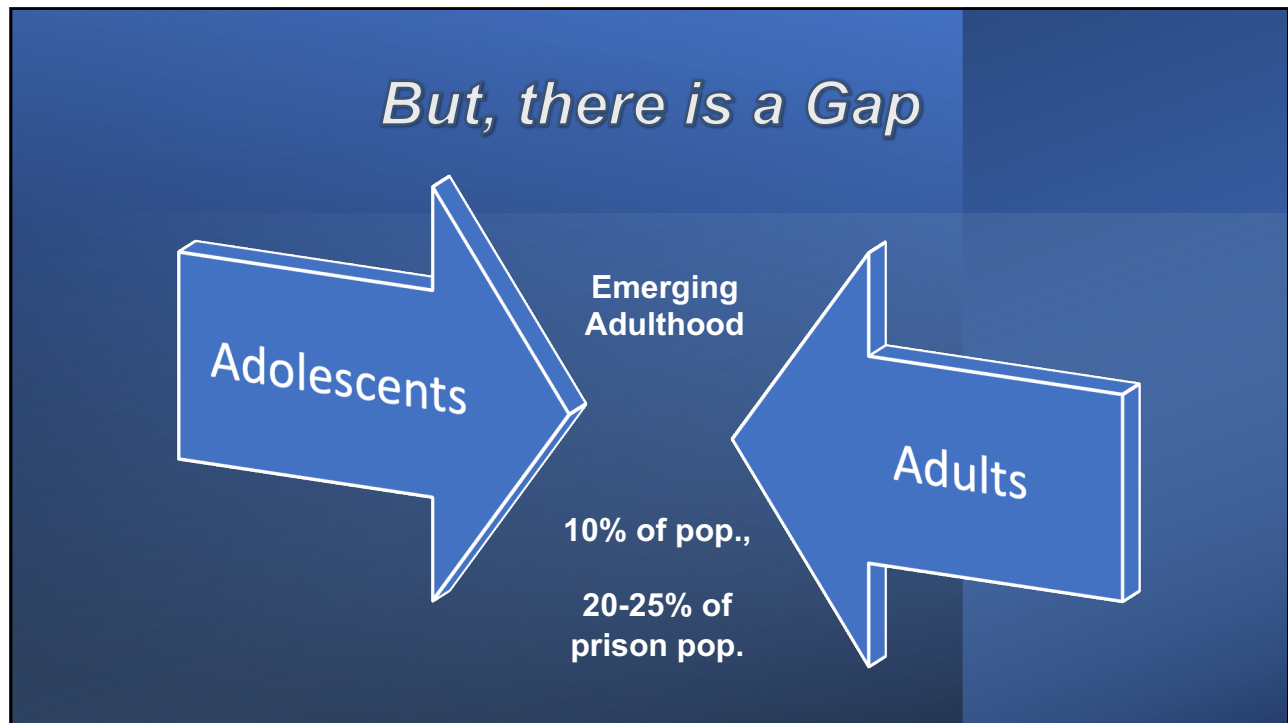
Risk Assessment with Adolescents and with Adults is Well-Established

- Several decades of use and validation
- Established psychometrics
- Use in 40+ countries

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Kids (5-11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EARL-20• Behavior Checklists (CBCL)
Adolescents (12-17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAVRY• YLS/CMI
Adults (18+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HCR-20 V3• LS/CMI

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Focus on Emerging Adulthood

One of the most distinctive developmental phases

- What is this?
- Developmental period 18-25/30
- Many differences from mid- and older-adulthood
- Impacts crime, violence and ***should*** impact risk assessment

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Why the Delay?

(Arnett 2000; Nelson 2021)

- Delayed onset of marriage and kids
 - Kids before marriage
- Increased need for higher education
- “Nothing is normative, demographically” (Arnett, 2000)
 - Good deal of heterogeneity
- When do you “feel like” an adult?
 - Was it the morning of your 18th birthday?

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When Do You Feel Like an Adult?

- It is NOT...
 - Finishing your education
 - Getting married
 - Having kids
- Rather, it is...
 - Accepting responsibility for oneself
 - Making independent decisions
 - Becoming financially independent
- Third decade of life – what is it for?
What does it afford, or offer?
 - For some → last chance to have fun before “growing up”
 - For others → laying groundwork for career, family

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The Opportunities!

- Freedom and exploration
- Money
- Your own place
- Pair-bonding
- Peak performance in some realms (athletics; fluid intelligence)



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Consider also, however

- Societal expectations and the clash between
 - Freedom and forming family
 - Exploration and commitment (to people, places, paths)
 - A taste of money...and the real cost of living
 - “Relational reorganization” – the role of mom and dad (the second real period of individuation)

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Flounder or Flourish?

(What happens in the 20s does not stay in the 20s...)

- “An opportunity for great growth *or* for great failure” (Nelson, 2021, p. 181).
 - Probably more so than any other developmental period because of the combination of immaturity + adult consequences
- A period to focus on the self.

But, to...

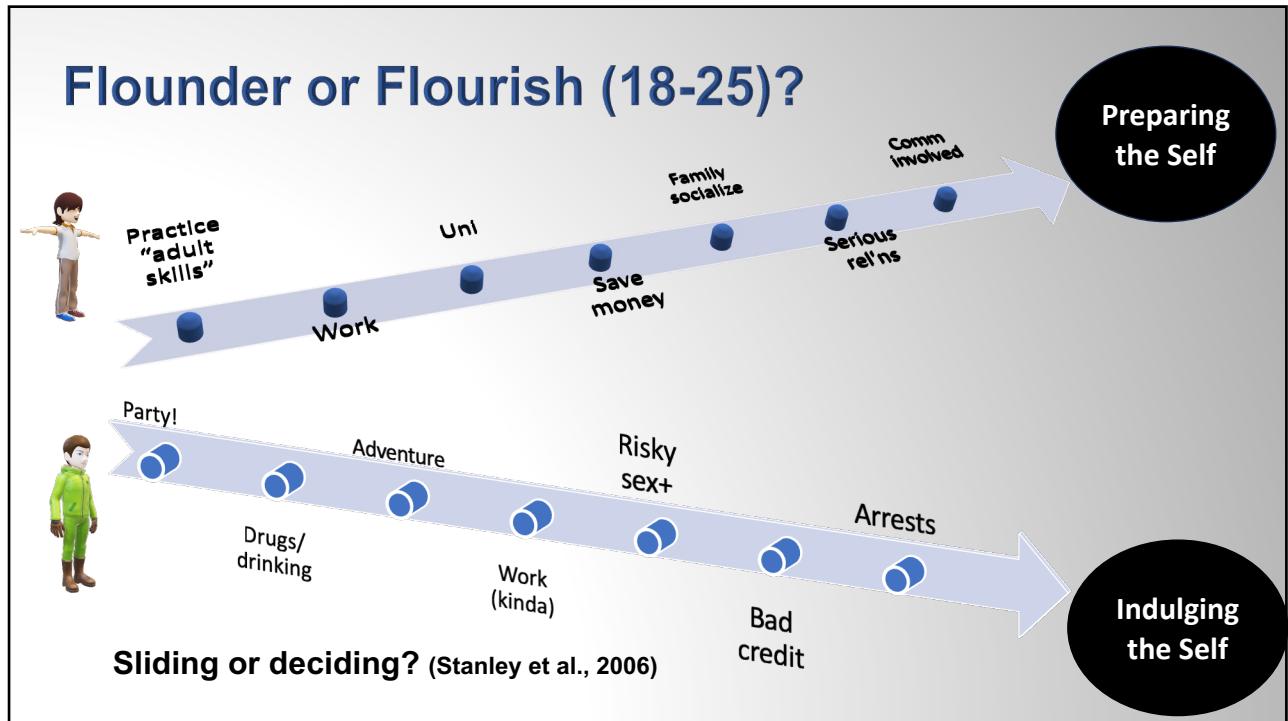
 - Indulge the self?
 - Prepare the self?
 - Where on the continuum between indulgence and preparation (0-100)? When does one preclude the other?

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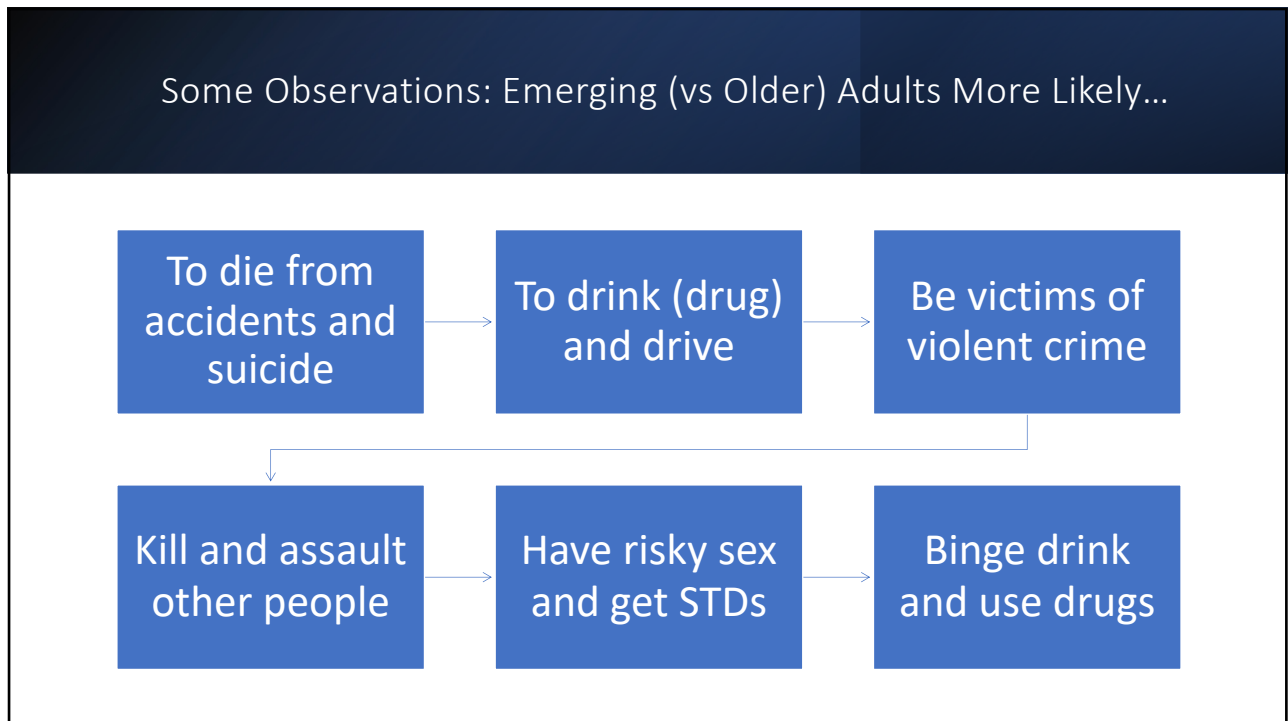
Then vs Now (Nelson, 2021)

were not the same in past centuries. Young people would turn 18 or 19 and either get married, start a job, or go into the military. In other words, they would enter situations in which there was structure and other people to, as it were, help contain the underdeveloped brain from making too many huge mistakes. Now, within the context of the distinct features of today’s emerging adulthood, young people are spending most of their 20s single, with complete autonomy, and with little structure to guide their behaviors and choices. In sum, the features of emerging adulthood today afford different options both for good and for ill than in the past.

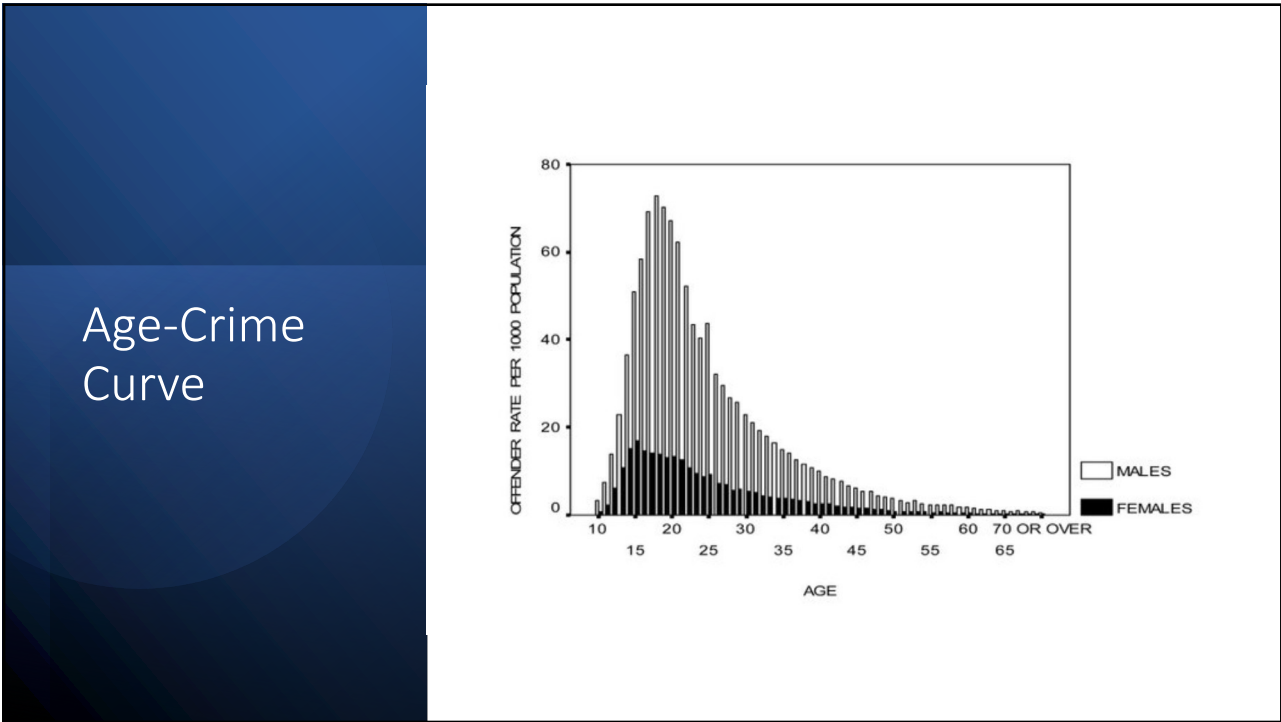
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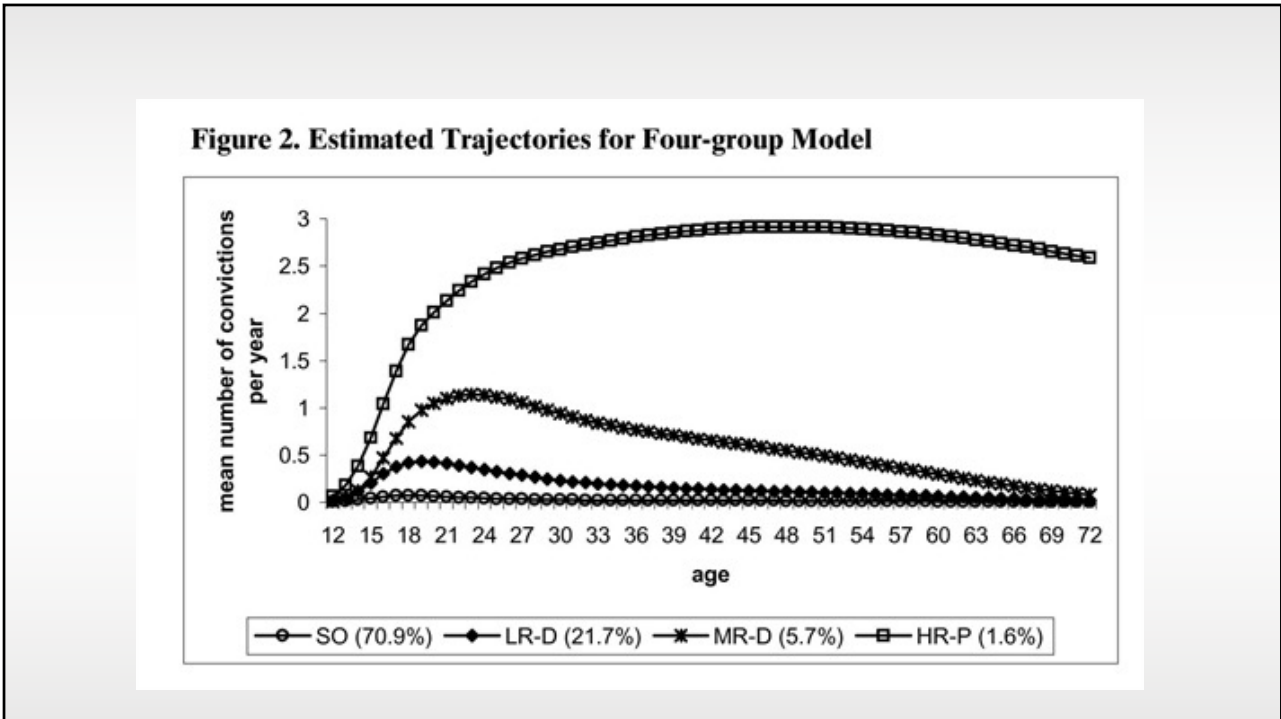
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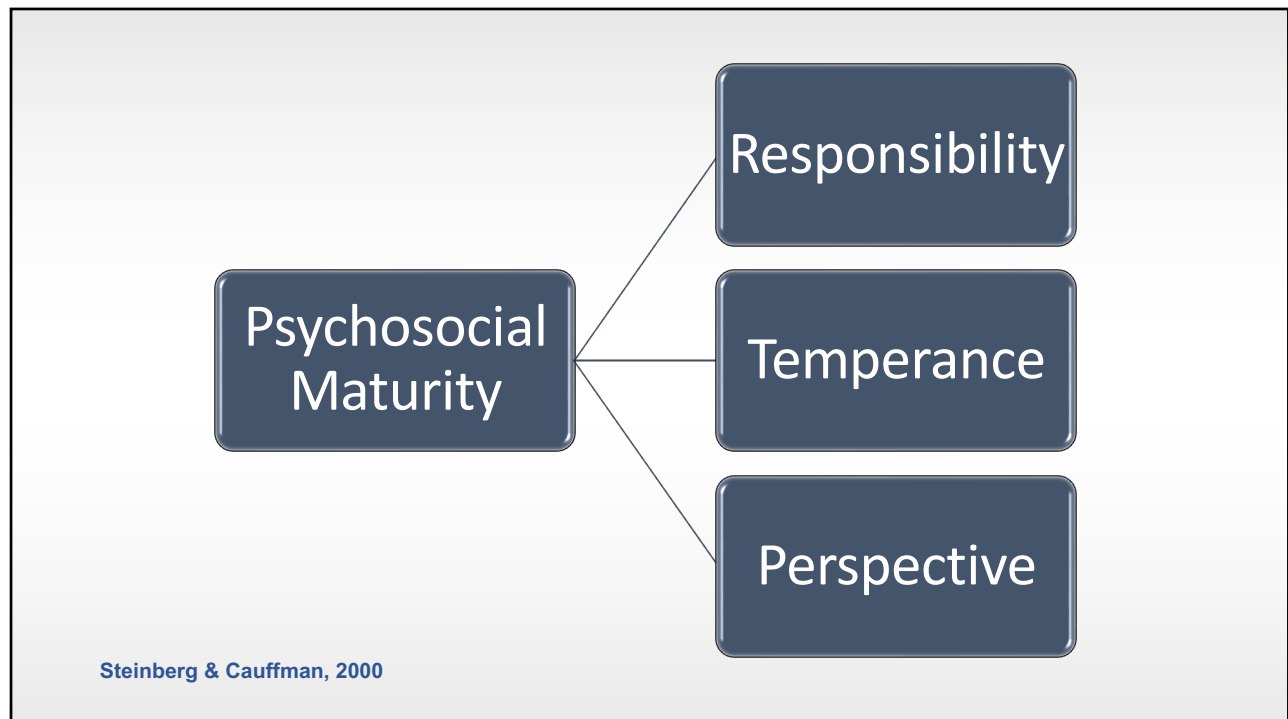
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Why is this?

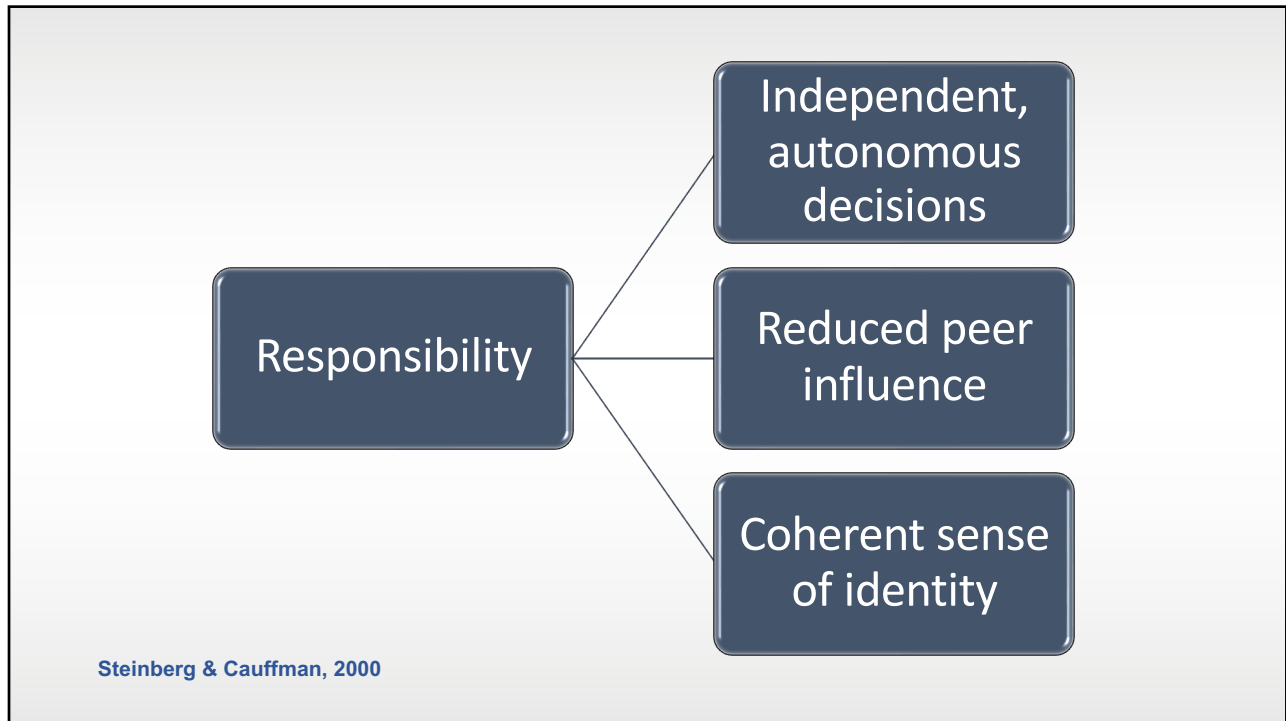
- Developing brain
 - Prefrontal cortex
- Executive functioning
 - Reasoning
 - Impulse control
 - Delay of gratification



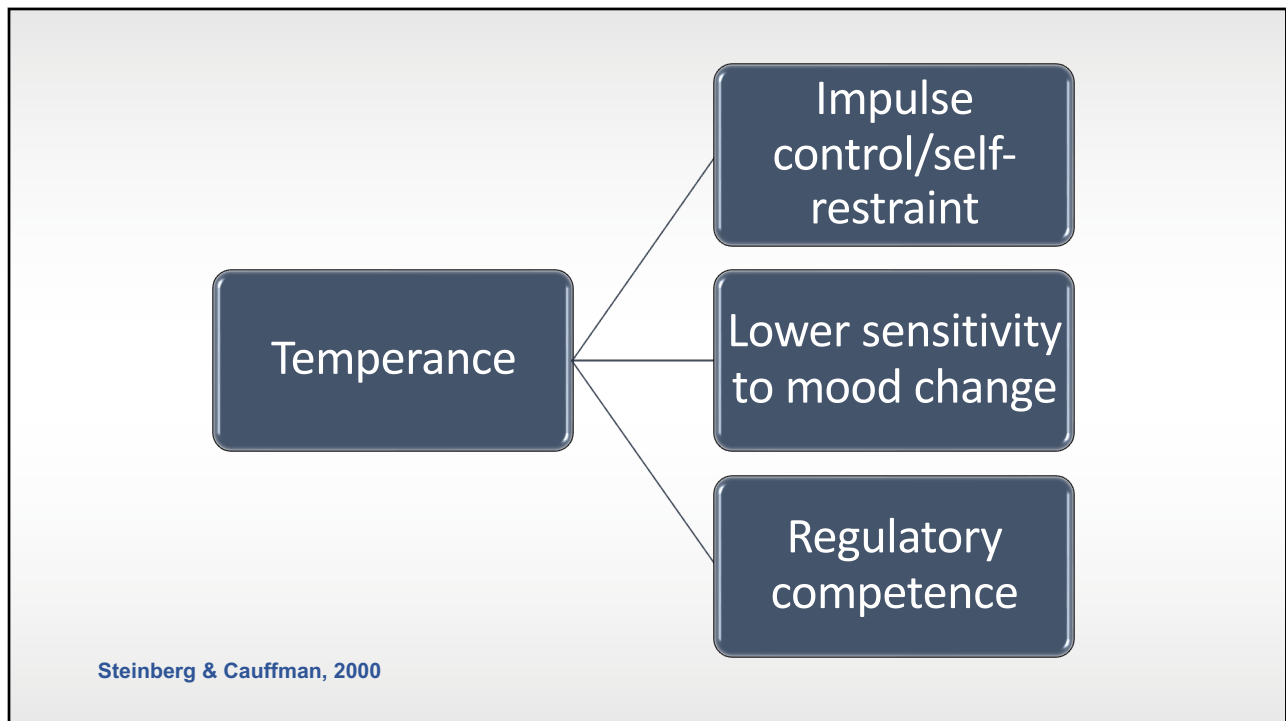
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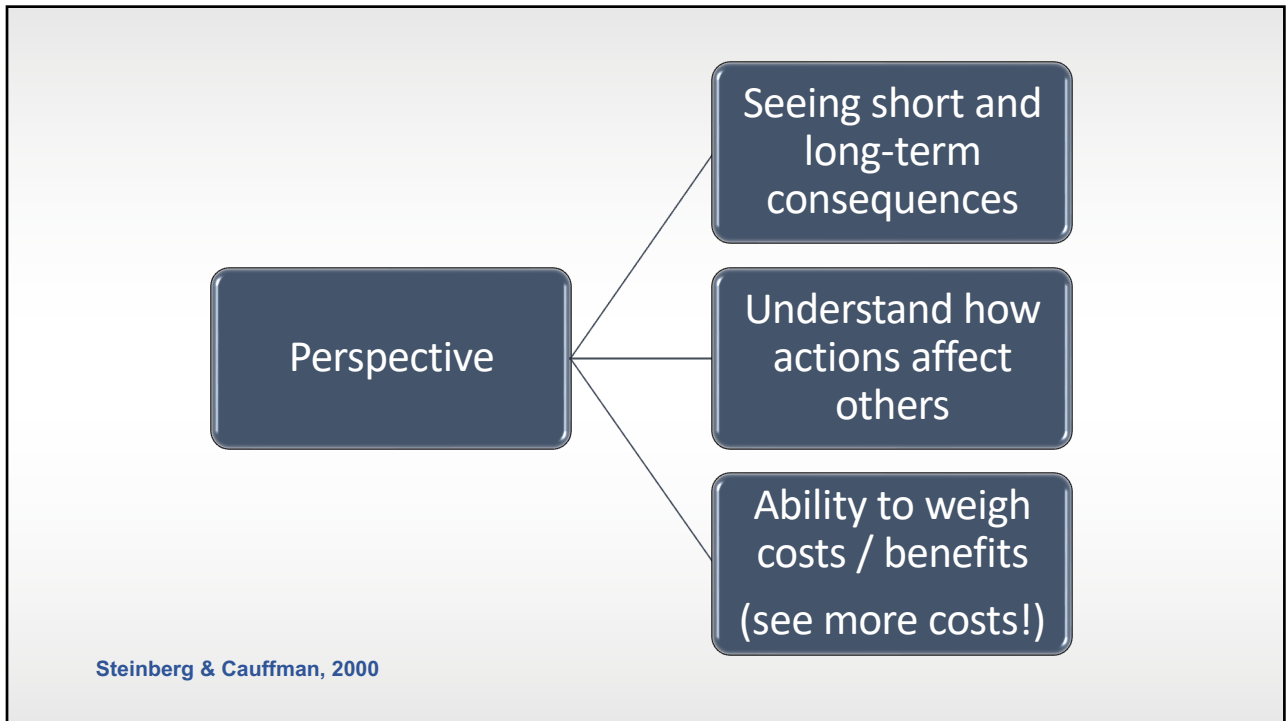
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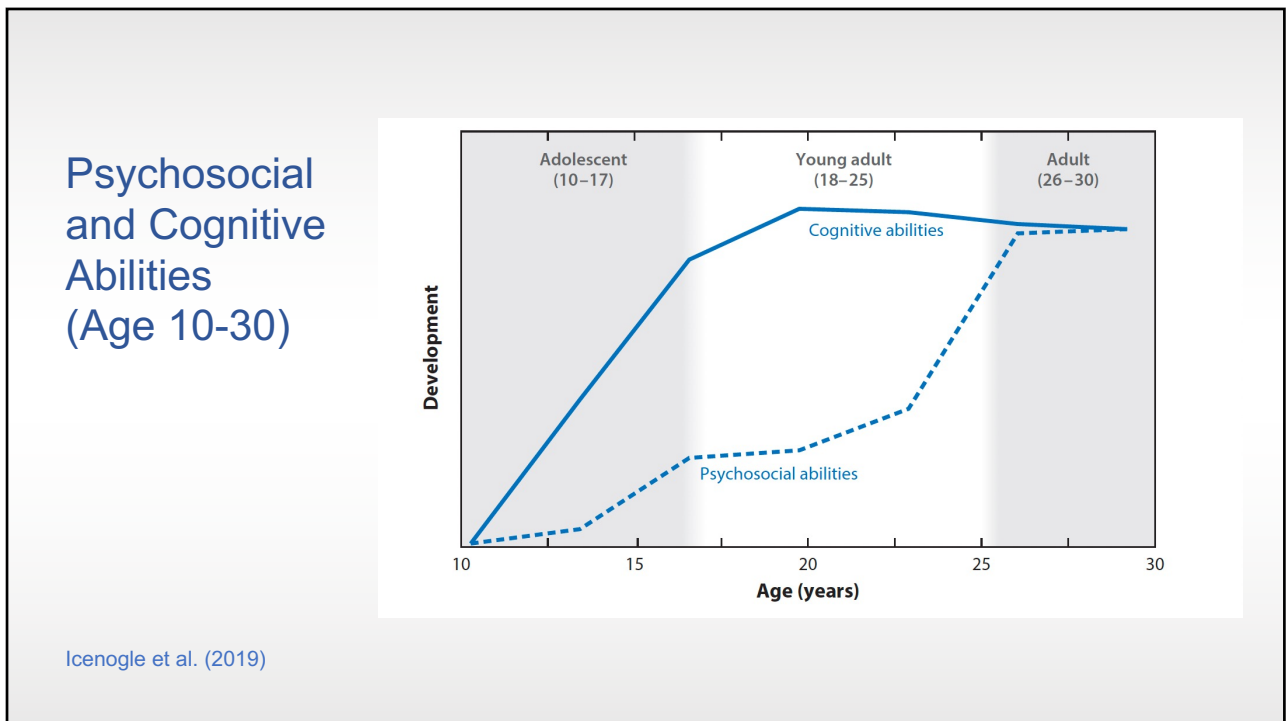
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System Responses

Given that ~10% of the population is 18-25 but represent 20-25% of most prison populations...

Young Adults in
Juvenile Facilities

Young Adults
Processed under
Juvenile Laws

Young Adults in
Separate Units

Young Adults in
Dedicated
Facilities

For example: Norway, Canada, US, UK (and Scotland), Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Lithuania, Croatia, Northern Ireland, Estonia, Australia

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All of this
should matter
for risk
assessment,
shouldn't it?

- What risk factors?
- Risk formulation?
- Treatment and risk management?

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Risk Assessment Field:
Still in its Adolescence?

- Hasn't yet caught up with science and systems
- Can't merely combine SAVRY and HCR-20 V3 to fully address emerging adults

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YEARSS (Beta Version)

Authors: Douglas, Guy, & Hart
Translator (Norsk): Ottesen

 <p>HELSE BERGEN Haukeland universitetssjukehus</p>	<p>Worksheet for YEARSS Youth and Emerging Adult Risk and Strength System <i>A developmentally informed adaptation of HCR-20^{v3}</i> AUTHORS: Kevin S. Douglas, Laura S. Guy, Stephen D. Hart TRANSLATOR: Øyvind Heen Ottesen</p>
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Step 1: Gather Relevant Information

Identifying Information

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YEARSS

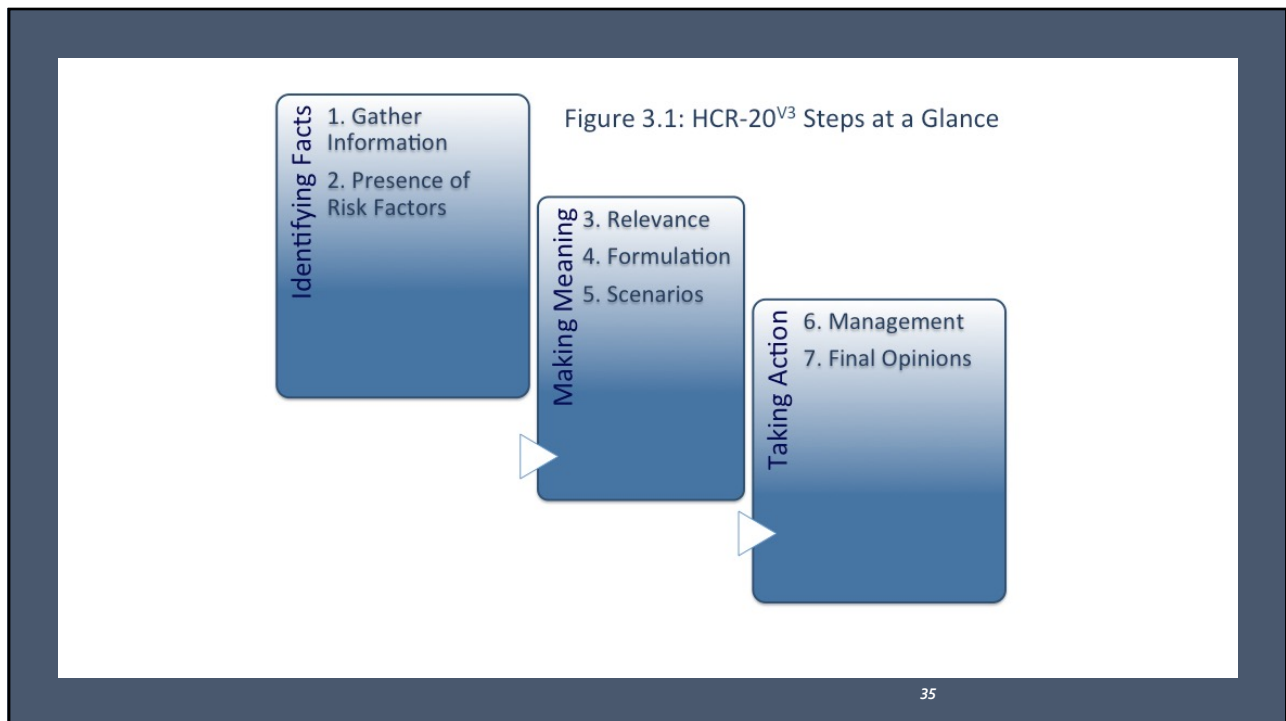
Youth and Emerging Adult Risk and Strength System

A developmentally-
informed adaptation of
the HCR-20 V3

(Douglas, Guy, & Hart, 2026)

- SPJ Instrument (beta stage)
- 12-25
- Informed by theory and science of emerging adulthood
- Risks and Strengths
- Settings: mental health; correctional; forensic; child protection; police; (workplace; terrorism)

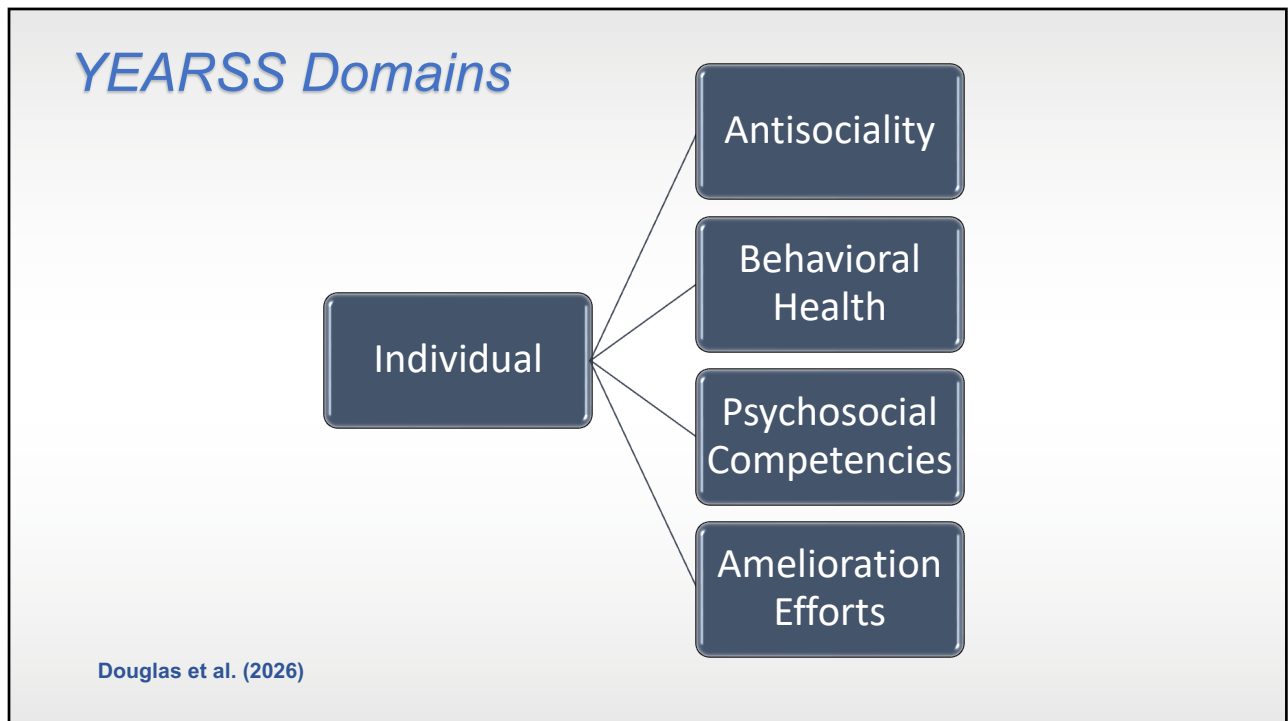
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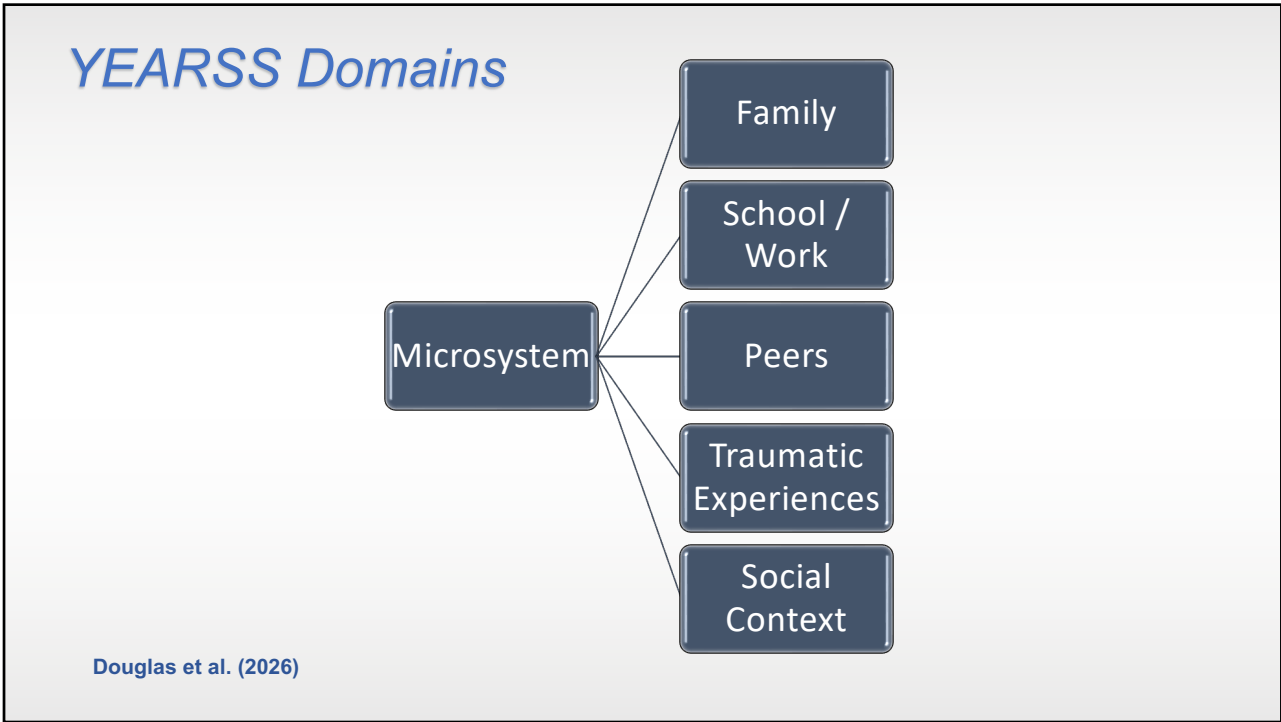
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Steps 2 & 3: Determine the Presence and Relevance of Risks and Strengths in the Individual and Microsystem Domains	
Individual Factors: Problems With...	Coding
<i>Antisociality Risk Factors</i>	
A1. Violent Behavior a. <i>As a Child (12 and under)</i> b. <i>As an Adolescent (13-17)</i> c. <i>As an Emerging Adult (18 and over)</i>	Presence: Past <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Y Presence: Recent <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Y Relevance <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> H
A2. Other Antisocial Behavior a. <i>As a Child (12 and under)</i> b. <i>As an Adolescent (13-17)</i> c. <i>As an Emerging Adult (18 and over)</i>	Presence: Past <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Y Presence: Recent

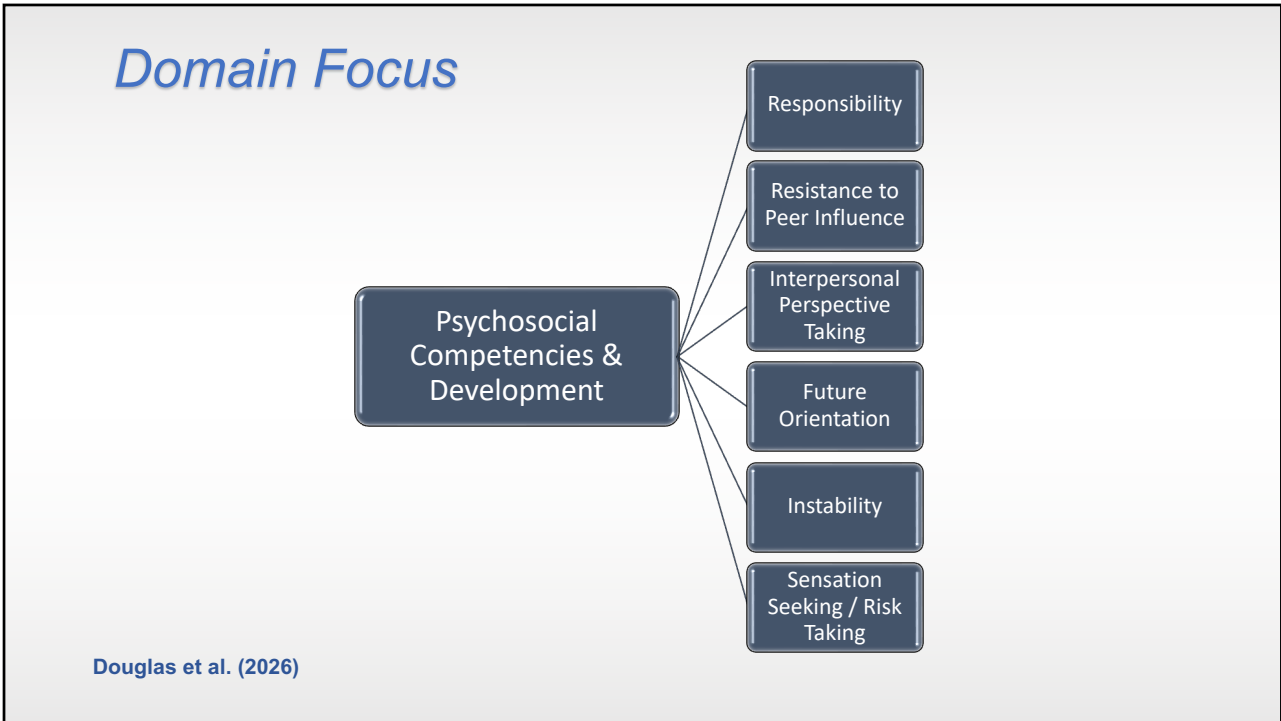
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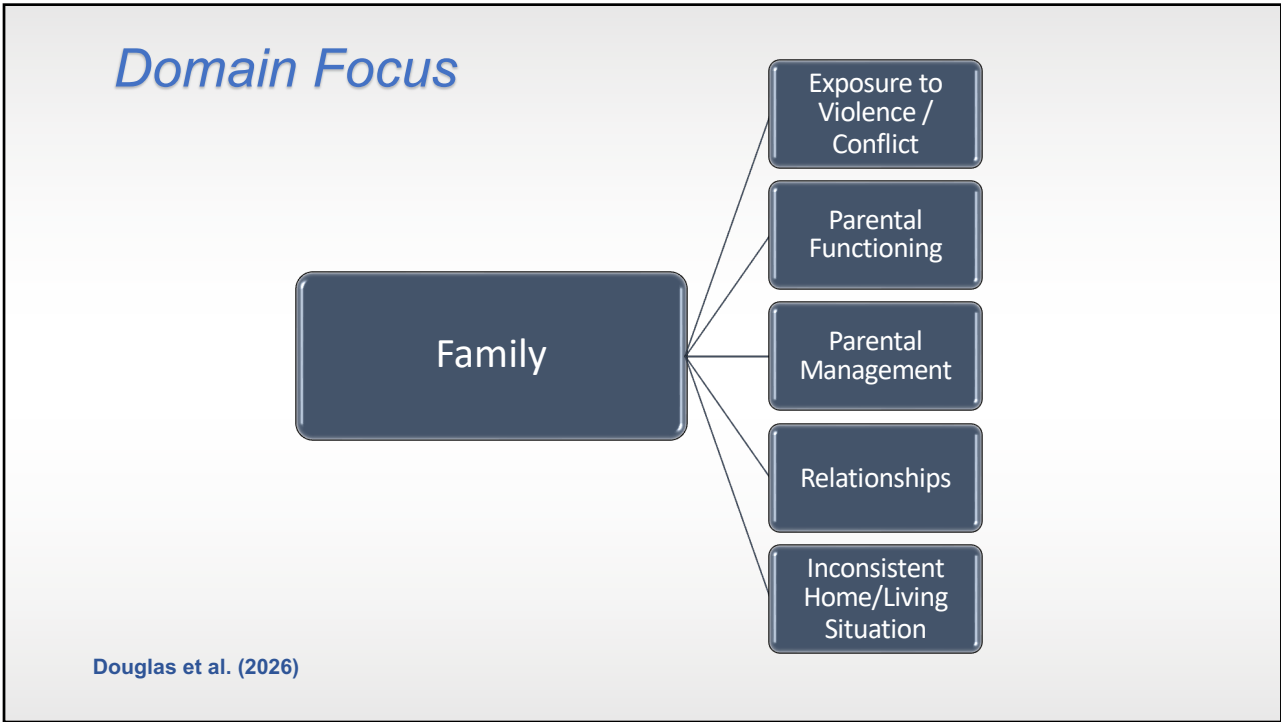
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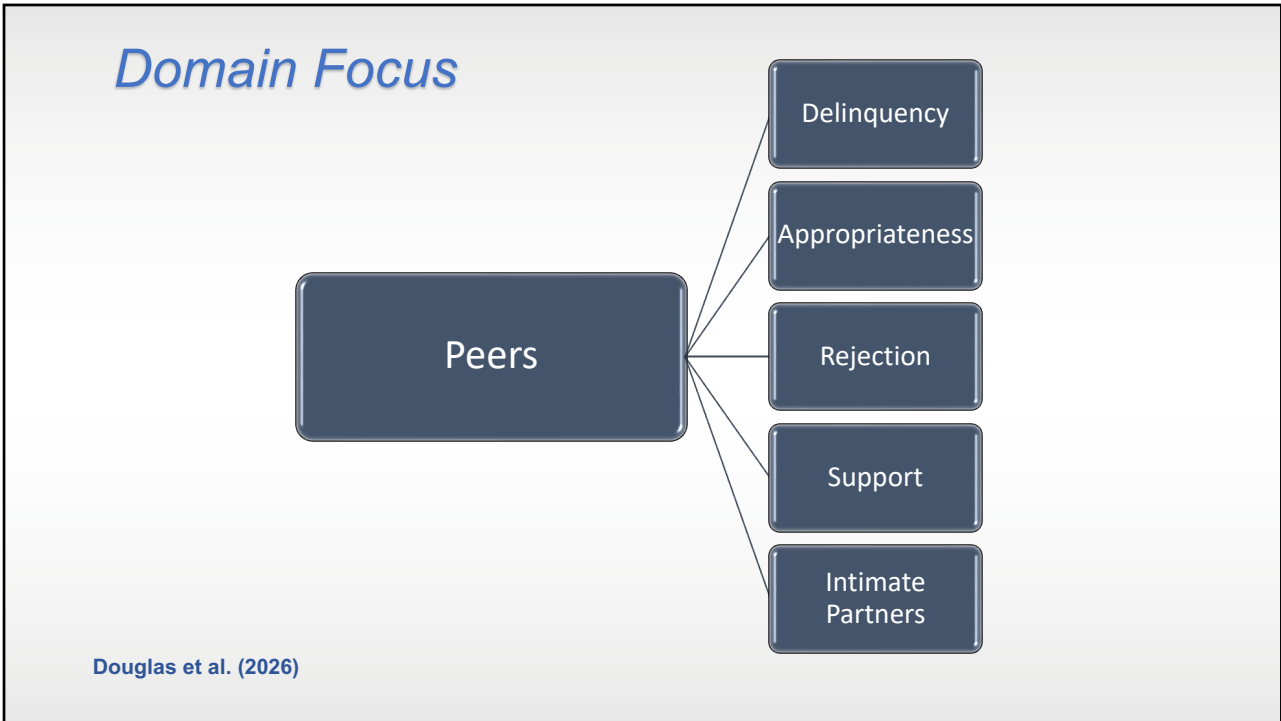
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Domain Focus (from Behavioral Health)

<p>B2. Mental Health / Major Mental Disorder <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Definite</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Provisional</i></p> <p>a. <i>Psychotic Disorders</i></p> <p>b. <i>Major Mood and Anxiety Disorders</i></p> <p>c. <i>Disruptive Behavior Disorders</i></p> <p>d. <i>Neurodevelopmental and Neurocognitive Disorders</i></p> <p>e. <i>Trauma and Stressor Related Disorders</i></p>	<p>Presence: Past <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Y</p> <p>Presence: Recent <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Y</p> <p>Relevance <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> H</p>
<p>B3. Personality Traits <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Definite</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Provisional</i></p> <p>a. <i>Callous-Unemotional</i></p> <p>b. <i>Externalizing / anger</i></p> <p>c. <u><i>Grandiose-manipulative</i></u></p> <p>d. <i>Other</i></p>	<p>Presence: Past <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Y</p> <p>Presence: Recent <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> Y</p> <p>Relevance <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> H</p>

Douglas et al. (2026)

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Strengths: Examples

Psychosocial Competencies & Development <i>Strengths</i>	
<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows maturity, responsibility, good judgment? Shows perseverance, stability? Shows prudence and <u>restraint?</u> Has social competence, good judgment Has hope for the future Does not engage in risky behaviors 	

Douglas et al. (2026)

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Strengths: Examples

Peers Strengths

Consider:

- Prosocial
- Supportive
- High quality *network*
- Resistant to peer influence / peer pressure
- Age-appropriate social relationships
- Age-appropriate intimate relationships

Douglas et al. (2026)

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YEARSS:

Refinement and Testing

- **Systematic Review** (Laake et al., in progress; pre-registered in Prospero)
- Norway / Canada cooperation
- Risk factors specific to emerging adulthood?
- Screened ~18,000 articles to date

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YEARSS:
Refinement
and Testing

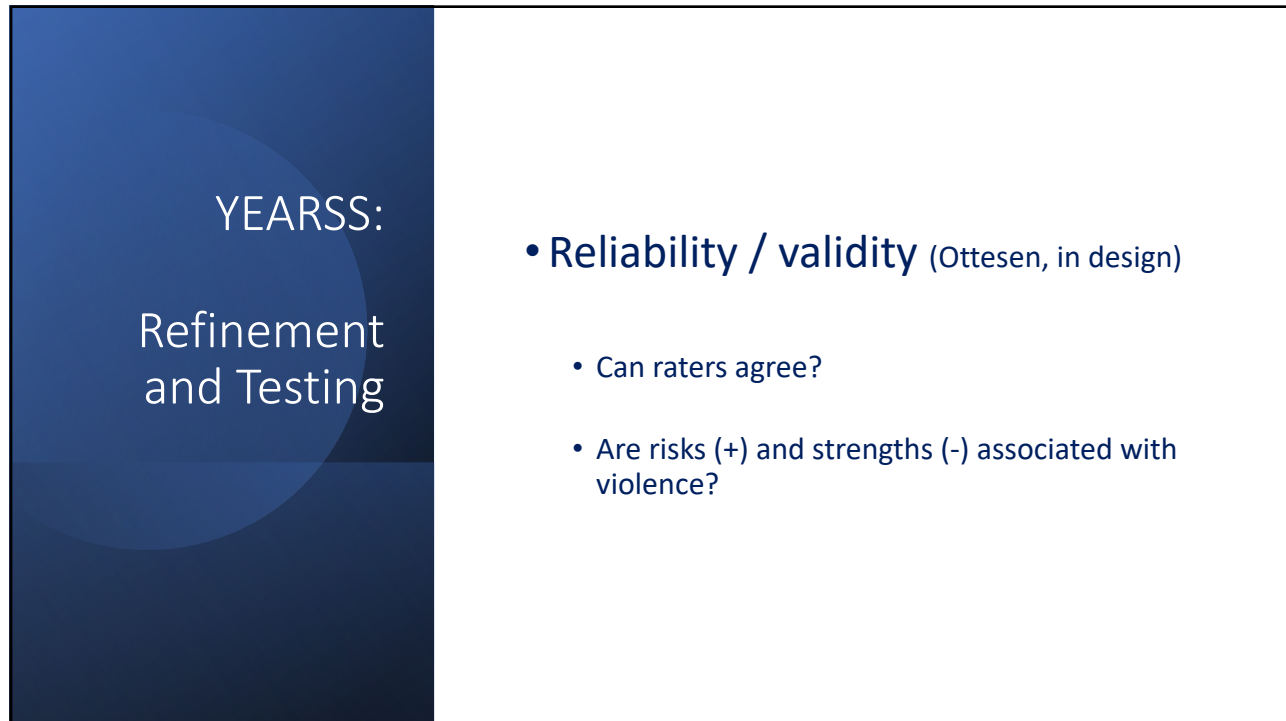
- **Clinician Feedback** (Douglas & Ottesen, Tuesday!)
- Perceived usefulness and comprehensiveness

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YEARSS:
Refinement
and Testing

- **Formulation** (Ottesen, in design)
 - Do the reasons (not the risk factors) for violence differ across developmental periods (youth → emerging adults → adults)?
 - Motivators, disinhibitors, destabilizers
 - In terms of degree? Kind? Frequency?
 - Think: retribution, emotional release, sensation seeking, empathic deficits, “consequential blindness”

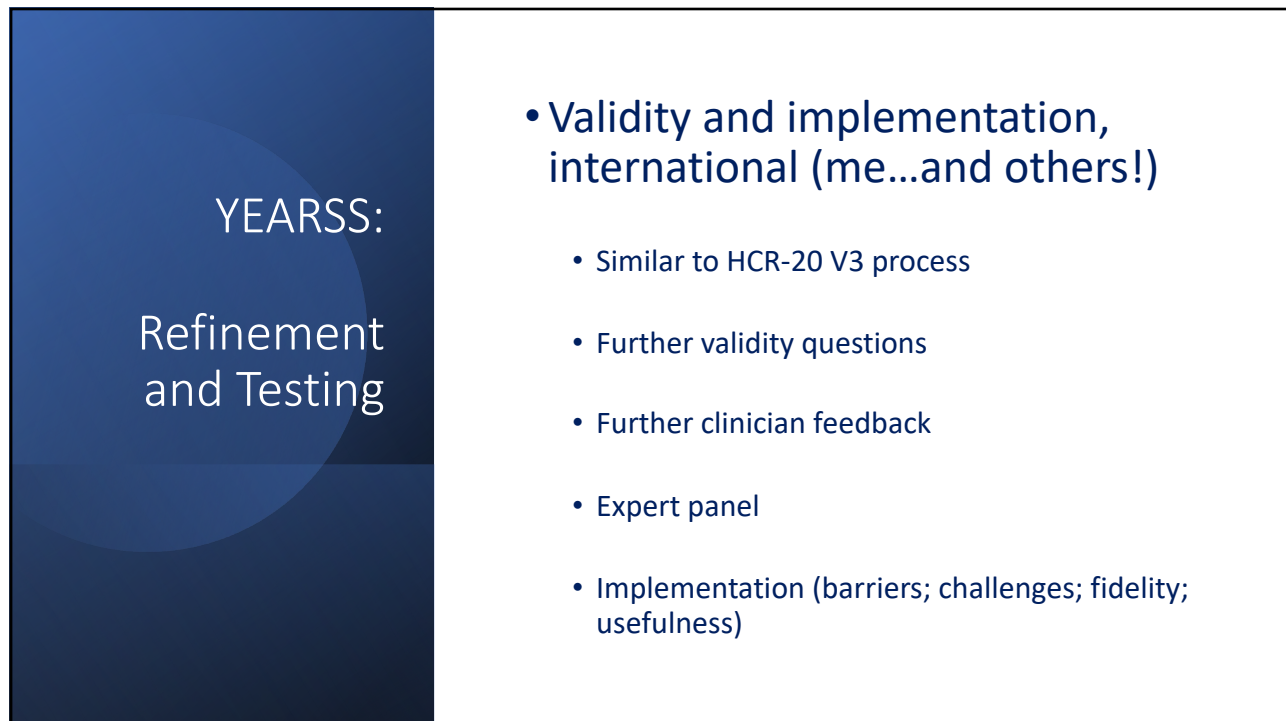
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YEARSS:
Refinement
and Testing

- **Reliability / validity** (Ottesen, in design)
 - Can raters agree?
 - Are risks (+) and strengths (-) associated with violence?

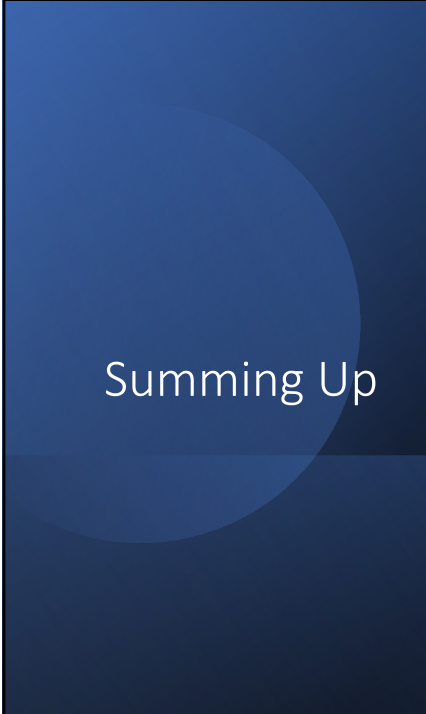
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YEARSS:
Refinement
and Testing

- **Validity and implementation, international (me...and others!)**
 - Similar to HCR-20 V3 process
 - Further validity questions
 - Further clinician feedback
 - Expert panel
 - Implementation (barriers; challenges; fidelity; usefulness)

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Summing Up

- Both adolescence and emerging adulthood are dynamic periods of potential...both of opportunities and risks
- Numerous characteristics on a continuum
- How do we locate young people on the various trajectories?
- The roles of psychosocial maturity, peers and family continue their salience throughout emerging adulthood
- The risk assessment field needs to mature!

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Tusen takk!

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Citations available upon request

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