

Applying the Good Lives Model to Gang Intervention

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PROOF

Abstract

The Good Lives Model (GLM) is a strengths-based approach to offender rehabilitation, which has demonstrated success across multiple offending typologies at reducing recidivism. Based on the principle of universal human needs, the GLM suggests that offending occurs when barriers prevent the attainment of these needs via prosocial strategies (e.g., employment/healthy relationships). By supporting individuals to attain their needs and goals, the GLM assumes that engagement in offending behavior will equally decline. Although the GLM is an increasingly popular framework for offender rehabilitation, there has been a dearth of research examining the applicability of this for understanding and treating gang members. As such, this chapter theoretically applies the GLM to explaining the onset and maintenance of gang membership and gives suggestions on how to implement a GLM-consistent intervention with gang members.

Keywords: Good Lives Model, gang intervention, human needs, violence

Novel Approach to Gang Intervention: Applying the Good Lives Model

Traditionally, interventions aimed at reducing gang involvement focused on deterrence; the idea that individuals will be discouraged from engaging in crime because of the likely punishments that will follow. However, deterrence strategies, including scared-straight programs, civil gang injunctions and joint enterprise policies, have been found to have long-term negative outcomes for gang members (e.g., decreased opportunities for employment) and even lead to increased recidivism rates and gang embeddedness (Wood et al., 2016). Psychologists suggest individual differences, such as identity development, moral disengagement, and group cohesion, play a role in inoculating gang members from deterrence-focused interventions (Wood et al., 2016). As such, there has been a shift towards gang interventions which are both psychologically informed and focus on the specific needs of the individual.

One psychologically informed framework, termed the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model, has been considered the “gold-standard” in offender rehabilitation internationally. The RNR model has three core components (Andrews & Bonta, 2010): (1) Risk (offenders’ likelihood of reoffending should match intensity of treatment), (2) Need (criminogenic needs which inform the development and maintenance of offending behavior should be targeted in treatment), and (3) Responsivity (treatment should be informed by cognitive, behavioral, and social learning theories *and* the attributes and circumstances of the offender). The principles of Risk and Need guide treatment intensity and goals, whilst a fourth principle ‘Professional Discretion’ enables clinical judgement to deviate from previous principles if circumstances necessitate. Meta-analytic reviews support the effectiveness of RNR-consistent interventions at reducing recidivism, with adherence to the three core components substantially increasing intervention success (e.g., Hanson et al., 2009).

Although there is an extensive body of research supporting the RNR with various offence typologies (e.g., sexual offending, intimate partner violence), there has been limited research concerning its effectiveness at reducing gang involvement. Di Placido et al. (2007) found gang members reoffended 20% less violently and 11% less non-violently compared to matched untreated controls at 24-months follow-up. However, they failed to collect information concerning their (dis)engagement with the gang, questioning the program's success at reducing gang involvement. Furthermore, the RNR model has been critiqued for its poor therapeutic alliance, demotivating nature, and neglecting of non-criminogenic needs (Ward et al., 2007). This has led to the suggestion that the RNR has attained a "glass-ceiling", where program refinements will no longer equate to reduced recidivism (Porporino, 2010). Instead, strengths-based models, such as the Good Lives Model, which incorporates the principles of RNR whilst overcoming the criticisms outlined above, have been proposed as an alternative framework for offender rehabilitation.

The Good Lives Model (GLM) was designed by Ward and colleagues (e.g., Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Stewart, 2003) to complement and expand upon the RNR model. The core assumption being that offending occurs when a lack of internal skills or external resources prevents the attainment of universal human needs in prosocial ways. Utilizing a strengths-based approach, the GLM assumes that building the skills and environments necessary for an individual to achieve their needs in a prosocial manner, will equate to a reduction in antisocial behavior. The GLM has been extensively applied as a rehabilitation framework for various offending typologies, with success at reducing recidivism rates and improving access to prosocial support networks, wellbeing, and mental health (Mallion et al., 2020). However, the GLM has only recently been considered in relation to gang members (Mallion & Wood, 2020a). As such, this chapter aims to examine how the GLM can be useful in guiding interventions to address gang involvement. To do this, three key concepts of the

GLM will be explored: (1) *general assumptions* conceptualizing healthy human functioning, (2) *etiological assumptions* for explaining and understanding the onset and maintenance of gang membership, and (3) *practical implications* surrounding the GLM as a rehabilitation framework for gangs.

General Assumptions of GLM

Conceptualized as a model of healthy human functioning, the GLM suggests all humans are goal-directed beings who aim to attain universal human needs (termed *primary goods*). Drawing on findings from the psychological, anthropological, and biological literature, Purvis (2010) identified 11 distinct primary goods: (1) Life (basic needs for survival and healthy living), (2) Knowledge (learning about a topic of interest), (3) Excellence in Play (pursuing an enjoyable leisure activity that gives mastery experiences), (4) Excellence in Work (engaging in personally meaningful work that gives mastery experiences), (5) Excellence in Agency (sense of autonomy and independence), (6) Inner Peace (freedom from emotional distress), (7) Relatedness (securing close relationships with others), (8) Community (sense of belonging to a wider social group), (9) Spirituality (sense of meaning and purpose in life), (10) Pleasure (experiencing feelings of happiness), and, (11) Creativity (expressing oneself through creative means).

Primary goods are *prudential* rather than inherently moral in nature, meaning they are experiences, conditions, mental states, or personal characteristics that are sought for their own sake. If attained, primary goods are assumed to lead to improved well-being, happiness, and give a sense of fulfilment (Willis et al., 2013). In this sense, gang members do not differ from non-offenders: they too aim to achieve their primary goods, but it is the *way they go about it* that differs. Whilst all primary goods must be attained to some extent, the level of importance assigned to each good is synonymous to the individual's identity, with the time

given to achieving these directly relating to the individual's interests and priorities (Ward, 2002). To achieve primary goods, any available means will be used (termed instrumental or secondary goods) and these can be prosocial or antisocial in nature. Take the example of Relatedness, this could be secured through prosocial (i.e., friendships with a positive peer group) or antisocial means (i.e., friendships through gang membership). Thus, gang membership represents an attempt to attain primary goods, but through socially unacceptable and maladaptive means.

Importantly, when antisocial means are used, it is likely that, at best, primary goods are only 'pseudo-secured'. This is because the primary good is under continuous threat. For instance, gang membership may be used as a means of fulfilling Inner Peace (i.e., gaining emotional support from gang peers), but the exposure to violence associated with gang membership leads to poorer mental wellbeing (Mallion & Wood, 2020b). Thus, the primary good of Inner Peace is only temporarily secured through gang involvement. When primary goods are only pseudo-secured, the individual experiences frustration which prevents them from having a happy, meaningful, and fulfilling life (Purvis, 2010). As such, by assisting individuals to fully attain their primary goods using prosocial means, it is assumed that a reduction in gang engagement will concurrently occur (Mallion & Wood, 2020a).

Etiological Assumptions of GLM

According to the GLM, an individual engages in a gang when they do not perceive, or have access to, any legitimate opportunities to attain their primary goods. The GLM argues that there are four obstacles that prevent individuals from attaining their primary goods through prosocial methods: means, capacity, scope, and coherence. Gang membership can occur due to the presence of one *or more* of these obstacles. The first obstacle, *inappropriate means*, refers to the use of antisocial and/or ineffective secondary goods. As highlighted

above, gang membership represents an inappropriate method of attaining primary goods, which can either be purposefully or indirectly used as a means of attaining primary goods. According to the *direct* pathway, an individual deliberately engages in offending behavior to secure primary goods (Purvis, 2010). For example, to achieve the primary good of Life, an individual needs to have financial security to pay for their basic survival needs. When no legitimate opportunities are available (i.e., employment), individuals may choose to join a gang, as they believe they will have immediate financial gain from their involvement (Levitt & Venkatesh, 2000). This is consistent with choice-based theories of gang membership, whereby individuals rationally weigh the risk of joining a gang against the potential benefits (Densley, 2018). Supporting this, Mallion (2021a) interviewed gang members, finding motivations for joining a gang directly relate to each of the primary goods (see Table 1).

Table 1

Motivational factors for gang membership according to primary goods (adapted from Mallion, 2021a).

Primary Good	Examples of motivations for joining a gang
Life	Sense of safety/protection, securing income to meet living needs, attaining the masculine/fitness standard portrayed by gangs.
Knowledge	Learning how to commit offences (e.g., making/dealing drugs), becoming an ‘expert’ in offending, sharing skills/knowledge with others.
Excellence in Work	Using entrepreneurial skills, developing a criminal career, advancing through hierarchy.
Excellence in Play	Access to deviant leisure activities (e.g., substance misuse, hanging out on the streets, going to parties), overcoming boredom, filling unsupervised time.
Excellence in Agency	Freedom from authority, taking a leadership position, developing a sense of power, status, and control.
Community	Sense of belonging, establishing a territory, having status and respect within the community.
Relatedness	Developing close emotional connections with peers, gaining a sense of family, access to sexual relationships, fostering a sense of belonging.
Inner Peace	Expression of negative emotions (e.g., anger/aggression), access to substances for emotional relief, coping with bullying, emotional support from peers.
Pleasure	Access to substances and sexual relationships, street addiction, financial gain (fund indulgent lifestyle), thrill-seeking, immediate gratification, excitement.
Creativity	Accessing creative opportunities (e.g., drill music), engaging in creative but illegal activities (e.g., graffiti).
Spirituality	Developing group-based goals, having a common purpose, sense of meaning to life.

Alternatively, individuals may follow the *indirect* pathway, which suggests that offending behavior is not purposeful but occurs when something goes wrong in the attempt to fulfil primary goods using prosocial means (Purvis et al., 2011). Take, for example, an individual who is fulfilling their primary good of Excellence in Work by engaging in legitimate employment. If that individual is made redundant, a rippling effect can occur whereby they experience negative emotional states (e.g., anger and depression) and utilize maladaptive coping strategies (e.g., substance misuse). In turn, the use of maladaptive coping strategies leads to a loss of inhibition/control and increases the likelihood of joining a gang (Wolff et al., 2020). It is particularly challenging for individuals who have followed the indirect pathway to understand the relationship between their offending behavior and attainment of primary goods, meaning additional support will be needed during interventions to educate these clients on GLM assumptions (Gannon et al., 2011).

The second obstacle, *problems in capacity*, is the usual cause for relying on inappropriate means to attain primary goods. It is important to note that criminogenic needs (i.e., individual characteristics or environments which increase the risk of offending) are synonymous with capacity obstacles in the GLM (Purvis et al., 2011). Problems internal to the individual, such as a lack of skills, abilities, or knowledge, are referred to as *internal capacity obstacles*. Numerous internal capacity obstacles have been identified in gang members, including endorsement of moral disengagement strategies and antiauthority attitudes, high impulsivity and mental health issues, difficulties regulating and understanding emotions, and poor coping skills (Alleyne & Wood, 2010). Internal capacity obstacles can lead to primary goods being unattainable through prosocial means. For example, if an individual holds antiauthority attitudes, this can lead to conflict with employers, which prevents them attaining the primary good of Excellence in Work. Instead, an individual may

join a gang, where they can achieve this primary good by developing a criminal career and advancing through the gang hierarchy.

Environments and opportunities necessary to attain primary goods are referred to as *external capacity*. Where these are unavailable or unattainable, an individual may join a gang to fulfil their primary goods. For example, if a young person is unable to achieve their primary good of Knowledge due to repeated suspension from school, they may join a gang as they can instead attain their primary good by learning how to offend. Problems in external capacity which increase the likelihood of joining a gang can be categorized according to family, peer, school, or community domains. Within the family domain, gang membership has been associated with familial engagement in crime and/or gangs, a lack of emotional support, violence in the home, and a lack of parental supervision (Gilman et al., 2014). Exposure to antisocial peers, peer substance misuse, and bullying equally increases the likelihood of engaging in gangs (Alleyne & Wood, 2012). In reference to the school domain, poor academic attainment, delays in learning difficulty diagnoses, repeated episodes of exclusion/suspension, and feeling unsafe at school increases engagement in gangs (Mallion, 2021a). Furthermore, communities with high rates of violence and gangs, and a lack of prosocial recreational and/or employment opportunities lead to increased risk of gang involvement (Alleyne & Wood, 2012). Consistent with Thornberry et al.'s (2003) findings that multiple criminogenic needs increase the risk of gang membership, it is presumed in the GLM that the more capacity obstacles an individual faces, the less likely they will find a prosocial means of fulfilling their primary goods.

The third obstacle, *lack of scope*, occurs when an individual does not attempt to attain each of the 11 primary goods. As all primary goods must be attained to some degree, the GLM suggests that a neglect of one or more primary goods can lead to physical, psychological and/or social dysfunction, which invariably reduces one's overall happiness

and wellbeing (Purvis et al., 2011). Whilst disinterest in some primary goods may lead to a lack of scope, the typical cause is problems in capacity. For instance, poor communication skills can create issues in maintaining relationships and employment, which leads to the primary goods of Relatedness and Excellence in Work being neglected.

The final obstacle, *lack of coherence*, occurs when primary goods are not ordered or coherently related to one another. According to Ward and Stewart (2003), there are two types of coherence: vertical and horizontal. *Vertical coherence* refers to consistency between the lifestyle/skills of an individual and primary goods most important to them. For instance, vertical coherence occurs when the primary good of Excellence in Work is attained by engaging in a vocation that reflects the abilities, skills, and interests of the individual. A lack of vertical coherence can lead to a focus on immediate gratification, rather than long-term goals, which is commonly associated with gang membership (Ward & Stewart, 2003; Alleyne & Wood, 2010).

Comparatively, *horizontal coherence*, refers to a mutually consistent and harmonious relationship between the different primary goods. When primary goods are sought through means that are uncoordinated, this can cause conflict. For example, if an individual places an equally high importance on family relationships (Relatedness) and their independence (Excellence in Agency), these can come into conflict when the individual spends time with friends overnight and sleeps through time typically spent with family. A lack of horizontal coherence increases feelings of frustration and leads to a life lacking meaning and purpose (Ward & Stewart, 2003). As such, an individual may attempt to overcome these negative feelings by engaging in offending behavior. For instance, gang membership can give a sense of family (Relatedness), whilst also enabling autonomy by feeling free of authority (Excellence in Agency). Although this may assist the individual with attaining their most important primary goods, this will result in other primary goods being neglected (e.g., gang

membership increases mental health issues, preventing attainment of Inner Peace). As all primary goods must be attained to some extent, gang membership will lead to a life that is neither fulfilling nor meaningful.

Practical Implications: Using the GLM to Guide Gang Rehabilitation

The GLM is a rehabilitation theory, therefore, rather than telling a therapist *how* to give treatment, the GLM examines *what* should be targeted in treatment. The central aim of GLM-consistent rehabilitation is to build the internal skills and external resources of a client, to assist them in living a happy and meaningful life that does not involve harming others (Willis et al., 2013). The assumption is that by fostering prosocial attainment of primary goods, this will simultaneously reduce the risk of recidivism. Supporting this, Mallion et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review of GLM-consistent interventions, finding they were *at least* as effective as standard relapse prevention programs in pre-post measures of psychometric change (e.g., self-esteem, victim empathy distortions, relapse prevention). Treatment engagement and motivation to change was greater in those receiving GLM-consistent interventions than standard relapse prevention programs. However, research has not yet examined the impact of GLM-consistent interventions on recidivism rates and has primarily focused on programs for clients convicted of sexual or violent offences.

To date, there has only been one case study which examined the effectiveness of GLM-consistent interventions at reducing gang involvement. Six years after receiving a GLM-consistent intervention, a high-risk violent offender had fully disengaged from the gang and had not committed any further offences (Willis & Ward, 2013). Whilst research concerning the effectiveness of GLM-consistent interventions with gang members is limited, the general and etiological assumptions of the GLM have been empirically examined with this population (Mallion, 2021a). The findings were consistent with the GLM assumptions,

whereby gang members aimed to attain all primary goods, but problems in scope, coherence, capacity and means prevented these from being fulfilled in prosocial ways. As such, this provides evidence supporting the application of GLM-consistent interventions to gang members. The remainder of this section outlines the ethical and treatment assumptions of the GLM, with suggestions of how this can be used as a framework for gang interventions.

Firstly, in GLM-consistent interventions, a clinical interview should be conducted with the client. This takes the form of a collaborative approach, whereby the practitioner and client work together to identify obstacles that prevent prosocial attainment of primary goods and co-create goals (short, medium, and long-term) which are personally meaningful to the client. The clinical interview should: (1) explore primary goods being pursued (directly or indirectly) through gang membership, (2) examine obstacles preventing prosocial attainment of primary goods (including problems in scope, coherence, capacity, and means), (3) assess the clients' personal strengths (i.e., internal abilities) and means (i.e., external opportunities) available, and (4) consider the environment the client will be in during and following the intervention and how this can impact on attainment of primary goods. For gang members, it is important to examine the primary goods and obstacles that led to both the *onset* and *maintenance* of membership, as these may differ. In addition, the clinical interview should explore the current and future goals of clients. See Table 2 for an example of a clinical interview for gang members.

Table 2

Good Lives clinical interview questions for gang intervention (Mallion, 2021a)

Clinical Interview Question	Guidance for Therapist
What needs did I meet through my gang membership?	<i>Ensure each of the 11 primary goods are discussed. Whilst not all primary goods may directly relate to gang membership, the client may be unaware of the indirect relationship between their primary goods and street gang involvement, which can be elucidated through discussion with the therapist.</i>
How do I meet my needs now?	<i>It is important to consider both appropriate and inappropriate means of attaining primary goods.</i>
Which of my needs do I neglect?	<i>This targets the obstacle of scope. For a happy and meaningful life, each of the primary goods need to be attained. A Good Lives plan should identify 'missing' primary goods and ways of achieving these.</i>
Which of my needs conflict with each other?	<i>This targets the obstacle of coherence. For primary goods to be effectively attained, they need to be coherently related to each other. A Good Lives plan should identify any conflict and devise methods of overcoming this.</i>
What strengths do I have?	<i>Identifying a client's strengths and internal capacities can aid in the development of goals that are attainable.</i>
Looking forward, how will I achieve my needs in positive ways?	<i>This should include short, medium, and long-term goals. Goals should be realistic and attainable and consider the internal and external obstacles the client could face. Ensure the goals are prosocial and positive, steering clients away from the reliance on a gang.</i>
How will I know I am achieving my needs?	<i>Developing observable ways of attaining goals can aid in maintaining client motivation, as they feel they are benefiting and achieving something by adhering to their Good Lives plan.</i>

Who/what do I have around me that can help?	<i>This includes identifying prosocial support networks/environments that resemble positive external capacities. To attain goals, we all require support from others, so knowing who they have or where they can go for help can reduce the reliance on gang members.</i>
What do I need to change about myself to stop my gang involvement?	<i>This relates to the previous questions regarding the neglect and lack of coherence between primary goods. Identifying obstacles faced by the client allows therapists to identify which interventions they would most benefit from. Internal obstacles may be implicit (e.g., offence-supportive attitudes/moral disengagement), so therapists should guide the identification of these.</i>
What do I need to change about my environment to stop my street gang involvement?	<i>The environment that a client is exposed to will impact on how realistic and achievable goals are. Different environments expose individuals to different opportunities, and this should be considered.</i>
What do I need from treatment to help me achieve my goals?	<i>This should consider the variety of interventions available to the client and which they are most likely to benefit from.</i>

The clinical interview leads to the creation of a Good Lives Plan; an action plan highlighting the interventions, internal skills and external resources that are needed for clients to attain their short, medium, and long-term goals through prosocial means. As each client has different needs, strengths, resources, and goals, it is important that a Good Lives plan is individualized and personal to the client (Yates et al., 2010). Furthermore, a Good Lives plan should be realistic and achievable; whilst long-term goals are important, incremental attainable steps should be included. This enables a sense of achievement and supports motivation to pursue longer-term goals. In general, it is assumed that through attainment of these goals, the need to rely on the gang will be reduced.

Critically, gang members are notoriously difficult to engage in interventions and have elevated drop-out rates, due to their high levels of mistrust and lack of motivation (Di Placido et al., 2017). By focusing on the primary goods that are of importance to the gang member, this will ensure the intervention is personally meaningful and inherently motivational, which supports the successful outcome of an intervention program. Specifically, the more applicable the Good Lives plan is to the client, and the more the client can directly benefit from it, the more likely they are to attempt to follow it. In particular, the use of achievable milestones (in the form of short or medium-term goals) supports clients to feel motivated to engage in positive behaviors long-term (Mallion & Wood, 2020a). As the client's goals or obstacles can change, be attained, or overcome, a Good Lives plan should be viewed as a dynamic and adaptable tool that guides and supports therapeutic work (Ward et al., 2007).

As a framework for offender rehabilitation, the GLM 'wraps-around' existing evidence-based interventions for gang members and guides which programs would be most appropriate for the client. These include psychological programs (e.g., Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, substance use groups), skills programs (e.g., educational programs, apprenticeships) and access to opportunities/resources (e.g., employment, health care, prosocial support

networks; Mallion, 2020b). Furthermore, the GLM informs how these programs should be framed. According to the GLM, interventions should utilize approach goals, be positively framed, and emphasize client agency. Approach goals refer to objectives that a client wants to achieve, rather than situations/behaviors they want to avoid (Mann et al., 2004). Whilst avoidance goals can be overwhelming and shaming, approach goals allow the client to believe a life without offending is both desirable and attainable.

Importantly, it is assumed that avoidance goals will still be addressed (albeit indirectly) by using approach goals (Ward & Fortune, 2013). For example, the approach goal of attaining meaningful and prosocial employment (e.g., becoming a youth worker), means the avoidance goal of 'stop dealing drugs with the gang' will simultaneously be challenged. Young people from unstable environments, with low educational attainment (all factors associated with gang membership), represent those most negatively affected by using avoidance goals in interventions (Porporino, 2010). This suggests gang members are more likely to benefit from interventions using approach goals, as recommended by the GLM (Mallion & Wood, 2020a).

With its grounding in the ethical concept of human dignity, the GLM encourages the use of positive and humanizing language throughout interventions (Ward & Maruna, 2007). Supporting this, and consistent with the use of approach goals, language used in GLM-consistent interventions should emphasize the strengths and abilities of the client, rather than their risks. Furthermore, therapists should demonstrate empathy and respect toward their client, praising them as they make positive strides towards attaining their goals (Barnao et al., 2016). This supports the development of a strong therapeutic alliance, which improves the likelihood of intervention success at reducing recidivism and enabling positive behavioral change (Gannon & Ward, 2014). Mallion (2021a) suggests gang members are particularly vulnerable, having experienced more internal and external obstacles than their non-gang

counterparts. As such, focusing on the development of a strong therapeutic alliance is key to success of gang interventions.

The GLM assumes that human beings are naturally predisposed to seek autonomy and agency (i.e., functioning independently, making decisions, and developing one's own values; Ward et al., 2006). As such, this should be fostered throughout GLM-consistent interventions, with the client playing an active role in identifying obstacles preventing attainment of primary goods, finding ways to overcome these, setting goals, and developing an intervention plan. Ward et al. (2006) suggests a lack of autonomy prevents attainment of primary goods (including Excellence in Work, Knowledge, Relatedness etc.), as it hinders the individual's ability to formulate and effectively carry out their plan for achieving these. Thus, interventions designed to enhance these skills, via exposure to situations where choice and decision-making is enabled and supported, can improve the effectiveness of interventions. Critically, gang members are known to place a high value on independence, reputation, and status (all factors associated with a sense of autonomy), with interventions that foster decision-making demonstrating success at reducing gang involvement (Esbensen et al., 2011).

In addition to client-therapist collaborations, Mallion (2021b) highlights the importance of interagency collaboration when utilizing GLM-consistent interventions for gang members. As clients are likely to present with numerous needs (i.e., internal/external obstacles) and goals, effectively targeting these will be beyond the scope of a single organization. Interagency collaboration refers to input from various organizations (e.g., criminal justice system, healthcare, education, community services, social services, and psychological services) in achieving a common goal, including reduction of gang involvement. Different organizations can support the attainment of some primary goods better than other organizations, due to specialized skills, expertise, and resource access. As all

primary goods must be attained for a fulfilling and meaningful life, interagency collaboration is needed to support this. For instance, social services may be best placed to enhance family relationships (Relatedness), whilst healthcare can focus on physical needs (Life), and psychological therapists can focus on internal obstacles and mental wellbeing (Inner Peace).

Using a holistic approach, interagency collaboration has been found to improve client retention rates and family relationships, whilst reducing risk-taking, antisocial behavior and violence (Oliver et al., 2010). Regarding gang interventions, interagency collaboration has been associated with a reduction in gang-related homicides and violent firearm offences over a 42-month period (Engel et al., 2013). When implementing a GLM-consistent intervention with gang members, Mallion (2021b) suggests that after the co-creation of the Good Lives plan between the client and therapist, this should be used to identify areas in which input from additional agencies could benefit the client. Furthermore, to overcome barriers of effective interagency collaboration (e.g., poor communication, confidentiality issues, and lack of consistency; Cooper et al., 2015), Mallion (2021b) suggests regular interagency meetings, appointment of a project manager, and establishing confidentiality and data sharing procedures at an early stage. Most important, to ensure consistency in the intervention, Mallion (2021b) recommends interagency training covering the general, etiological, and intervention assumptions of the GLM. With this training, this can aid in developing therapeutic alliance between the client and different agencies involved in the intervention. If done well, input from multiple agencies can support the client to attain more of their primary goods in a prosocial manner, leading to a happier and healthier life which is gang free.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the GLM as a framework for understanding the etiology of gang membership and how this can be used to guide gang rehabilitation programs.

Ultimately, the GLM assumes gang members have the same wants, needs and desires as non-offenders. However, obstacles faced in themselves (i.e., cognitive, psychological, and behavioral skills) or their environment (i.e., opportunities and conditions available) impede the attainment of these and lead, directly or indirectly, to gang involvement. As these assumptions have been upheld with a gang population (Mallion, 2021a), this supports the application of a GLM-consistent intervention to gang members. Whilst GLM-consistent interventions have been utilized with various offending typologies, research into the application of this to gang members is limited. To date, only a single case study has reported success at reducing gang involvement when using a GLM-consistent intervention (Willis & Ward, 2013). As such, further research is needed to explore the application of GLM-consistent interventions to gang members.

This chapter outlined how the GLM can be applied to gang interventions. By assisting gang members to achieve their primary goods through prosocial means, this can enable them to have a happy, meaningful, and fulfilling life, without the need to participate in gangs. Importantly, gang members deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, and empathy, and supported to develop their autonomy by engaging in the decision-making process surrounding the intervention. In addition, interagency collaboration can enable more primary goods to be fulfilled, if there is good communication and consistency between organizations. Overall, current risk-based approaches to gang intervention have reached the 'glass-ceiling', meaning strengths-based frameworks (such as the GLM) can be the way forward in improving gang intervention.

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