

WORKING WITH YOUTH STREET GANGS AND THEIR FAMILIES: UTILIZING A NURTURING MODEL FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

by
Mary S. Jackson, Ph.D., Lessie Bass, DSW,
and Elizabeth G. Sharpe Ph.D.

Abstract

There is an abundance of literature available on youth street gangs, but the majority of this information is descriptive in nature, in that it provides descriptions of membership composition, recruitment activities, gang size, and levels of violence. The news media overtly nurtures the public's conscious fear and urgency for action against gangs, while researchers on the other hand induce a sort of subliminal or unconscious sense of fear with the information and statistics that they make available to the public. Information on intervention strategies with gang members is extremely limited and even more so concerning biological family members and significant others. It is this writer's opinion that it is an absolute myth that children and their biological families cannot leave the gang. Practitioners must overcome the myths and utilize their skills through intervention with models that are relevant to the gang member and their families. This article provides effective intervention techniques that can be utilized when working with gang members by using a nurturing model for practice. Howell's risk factors are utilized as a foundation for introducing how the nurturing model can be used with gang members and their biological family.

Introduction

In the juvenile justice system the task of working with gangs and gang members takes on a different connotation for the social worker. Youths in the juvenile system are often labeled as non-compliant, disrespectful of authority and violent, and when the variable of "gang member" is added to the equation, one can understand why a worker may experience some reluctance and foster negative feelings along with preconceived notions about the youth. The worker adopts a sort of "resistive shield" in preparation for the worst. The media along with many researchers has painted a picture of violent youths who are lost within the dementia of gangland activities and there is no hope of

bringing the youth back to reality because the youth, according to media reports, cannot escape their newly found importance within the ranks of gang activity (Knox, 2000). Thus, when the worker reviews the case of a gang member the image that comes to mind is that of a youth striking an imposing position, wearing a red or blue bandana, holding a weapon and ready for blood. The initial response for the worker is to lock this dangerous kid away someplace to negate the possibility of the youth harming anyone. Some youths may need to be incarcerated for their own safety as well as that of the community. However, a larger number of youths can be prevented from joining gangs, and after consistent intense interventions many youths who have already joined can become successful and productive members of society with appropriate and relevant interventions.

. Social workers and juvenile service workers must create an unexpected combination of images of adolescents at-risk of gang membership for intervention purposes. Decisions regarding the point of intervention will be made here. The nurturing practice model allows discretion regarding the point and with whom the intervention should begin in order to achieve a successful outcome for the youngster and her/his family.

Often intervention strategies with youth street gang members have been based on a suppressive model where millions of dollars are spent on suppressive measures that have proven to be less than successful. Even with the enactment of harsher laws designed to incarcerate gang members, there still appears to be a continuous spread of gang activities and a migration of gangs to other parts of the country. Although Maxson (1998) refutes the notion of massive gang migration, there are migratory factors that should still be considered by law enforcement officers and correctional officers. Thus, the major impact of suppression appears to be overcrowding of the correctional facilities. It does not appear to be deterring or reducing or eliminating gangs and violent gang activities. Suppression transcends all levels of the human system and offers an opportunity for establishing an important interface between law enforcement officers, probation officers and gang members (Knox, 2000:382). If incarceration is meant to suppress gang activities in communities, then one must consider the suppression of the emotions and feelings and life needs that are therefore not addressed as incarceration occurs. The psychological suppression of emotions, anger, and violent feelings is viewed as unhealthy and eventually explosive. This means that if you incarcerate the gang member without addressing

the psychological, emotional and violent feelings; the human system eventually explodes or may become infested with unhealthy needs. In order to inhibit the growth and development of unhealthy emotion, anger, violent feelings, the individual suppression would need to be halted.

Many states are rethinking their gang suppression strategies. California for example has had to disband its CRASH team and rethink its strategy for suppressing gangs and gang activities (Jackson, 2003). Florida has also considered a different approach. Less punitive macro level interventions have focused on community collaboration where the community has been asked to assess the gang problem (National Youth Gang Center, 2002) or community mobilization projects have been suggested (Spiegel, 1995).

Micro level gang interventions have not been as popular. Micro level gang interventions are defined as working with individual gang members and their families to assist them with effecting positive acceptable societal change (Goldstein, 1991:136). However, limited micro level interventions have focused on intervening directly with the youths and their biological family. Behavioral change for gang members or those youths at-risk of gang behavior should be grounded by the internalization of the parent's moral standards. The nurturing model seeks to assess the parent's morals and behaviors in relationship to acceptable societal behavior prior to intervention. If and when parental morals and behaviors conflict with societal norms, the parents are re-parented in the intervention process. This action is deliberate and transforming for the parents, who did not internalize acceptable morals and standards from their parents. The re-parenting intervention breaks the cycle of unacceptable morals and standards for that family. The nurturing practice model provides a step-by-step, exercise-by-exercise, rationale for exercise, and the expected outcome of each construct on a micro, macro and mezzo level. Goldstein & Huff (1993) provide a very useful gang intervention handbook, however, specific intervention methods for practitioners to utilize is not as visible for novice practitioners as specific micro level interventions are emphasized. Many of the micro level gang interventionists consider intervening with gang members from a deinstitutionalization and decriminalization perspective. The primary focus is on prevention. However, minimal consideration is given to the family. These families are placed at risk and considered a major risk factor and thus an important aspect when working with gang members and their families. Although structural constraints, policies, and laws bind the worker in the juvenile justice system, these constraints

do not negate the potential for positive outcomes. Positive outcomes can result when working with gang members if appropriate models are utilized to address relevant issues for them and their families. One method of beginning the process is to consider and understand the factors that place youth and families at risk. Howell (2003) has formulated a developmental model that identifies major risk factors for joining gangs.

Howell's Gang Developmental Model

Why do children and adolescents join gangs? They join gangs for many reasons, all of which can be placed in Maslow's (1970) hierarchical basic human needs paradigm. The five areas that Maslow delineated are: biological, safety, belonging/ love, self-esteem and self-actualization. They may join hoping to satisfy one or more of the five areas. But how does one respond to Goldstein's inquiry as to why some youth join gangs and many others do not? There are known factors that place children and youths at risk of becoming gang members. Many youths are successful in overcoming the risks they face while others are unable to escape and are plunged headfirst into the gang arena. Risk factors can predict the youth's vulnerability levels (Howell, 2003:103). Howell (2003) has compiled five risk domains that can be considered major influential elements that will impact whether a youth will become a gang member or not.

Howell's Risk Factors that Lead to Gang Membership

Howell (2003) suggests the importance of understanding that youth with risk factors in all five domains usually join gangs or they may choose “gangsterism” behavior (Grennan et al., 2000:16). The risk domains as delineated by Howell (2003) are:

Individual – focus on the individual and their characteristics: youth who experience numerous unresolved life stressors (e.g., deviant behavior, low self control, alcohol & other drug use, low self-esteem)

Peer group – consideration given to role models and associations (e.g., associations with negative adult role models and delinquent youths)

Community – neighbor and neighborhood expectations: youth who feel trapped in two worlds (the neighborhood and the world outside the hood) where the expectations of success are delineated by both worlds but the means by which to gain the success is quite different (e.g., impoverished areas where many feel a sense of hopelessness and view the only way out of poverty through gang membership while also needing to accomplish the survival and achievement expectations while in the neighborhood)

Family – parental roles/ responsibilities: the youth in many instances may have to take on the role of parent because of insufficient parenting skills by the adults in the household (e.g., if the family structure differs from societal norm and there is a cycle of unskilled generations in a household)

School – progressive and not leaving any youth behind: if the school system is committed only to zero tolerance, the likelihood of success for youths who experience learning disabilities, or who learn differently are low (e.g., low academic achievers who are negatively labeled in elementary school and the reputation follows them to middle school where there has been minimum or limited efforts to maintain the youth in an academic setting (p.89-91).

The beginning development of deviant behavior patterns is usually inappropriate conduct problems and these usually begin in the home environment. The child may not have the appropriate supervision or protective factors and may turn to gang membership as a coping mechanism. Howell (2003) describes protective factors as those elements that can act as a “buffer” that will guard against the youth acting out deviant or delinquent desires (p.105). There are numerous protective factors that can influence the child’s decision to join or not join a gang. However, some of the major factors are: lack of appropriate parental skills and environmental.

Lack of Appropriate Parental Skills

Single parent households are those families having only one adult guardian responsible for the custodial care of the children. Single parental situations arise as a result of divorce, out of wedlock pregnancy, conscious choice to become a single parent, the death of a parent, or foster care placement. While some researchers have described this single parent situation as “broken home” (Shaw & McKay, 1942) or pathological (Moynihan, 1965), actually, the single parent household is differentiated from the two parent household only in the number of adults responsible for providing care and protection of children in the home. Otherwise, there are no major differences in the urban underclass (single or intact households) as they are described by Wilson’s underclass theory as *The Truly Disadvantaged* (McCorkle & Miethe, 2002). Both family types experience similar issues. However, many of these youths who join gangs are from single parent households. In some instances these parents may work two jobs in order to provide for daily necessities, leaving the children in the household without adult supervision for extended periods of time. However, in many other situations where youth have joined gangs, the parent is readily available but not providing appropriate supervision and guidance, not because they do not want to but simply because they do not know how. Parental skills are lacking, as many of the parents of gang members are themselves very young and inexperienced at parenting. They cannot rely on the wisdom of grandparents either, because many of the grandparents are also young and lack the necessary knowledge and skills. Thus, this intergenerational gap in parental skills adds to the risk of pushing youths into gangs where structure and accountability are necessary and mandatory. Therefore, the biological family, as the first social institution that the child experiences, is not providing the child with appropriate supervision, then one would expect that there may be some problems developing as both the child and the parent struggle to attach some significance to their role in the family. The youth’s search for answers soon shifts to a very powerful influence, the peer group. As the youth continues to experience failures in the home setting and in school, acting out behavior becomes a strategy that youths utilize in order to cope with what they perceive as a hopeless situation. The gang becomes an option for achievement and the fulfillment of their need for success, even though it is involvement in criminal activity they are applauded by fellow gang members as they complete some deviant tasks and they are able to experience successes at the expense of others.

Environmental Factors

Just as the home environment impacts the youth's decision to join a gang, so does the extension of the home environment, the community, or neighborhood. The neighborhood provides youths with a picture image of who they are and what they can aspire to become. Theoretically speaking parents tell their children what they can accomplish in life, but it is the community, which reinforces that, distorts the information, provides confusion or completely nullifies what the parents have suggested. If the parent however, has been unable to strongly impact the child because the parents are also struggling to achieve a sense of self, then the youth is left in what may be a hostile environment to struggle to survive. Thus, the perception that the neighborhood has of the youth may be a miniature reflection of the hopelessness and the gang can offer a way out of this life misery. In urban areas the youth may seek an outlet from the poverty, violence and criminal behavior they see on a daily basis. Joining a gang may provide the youth with the outlet needed in order to obtain some of the necessities in life that Maslow (1970) mentioned, such as security, and protection.

In smaller rural areas the process is similar; however, the needs may be different as rural youths bored by what they deem a drab existence seek the need to be involved in something that is exciting and adventurous. They are enticed to join gangs by stories and activities that are imported into their neighborhood by relatives who have migrated back from urban areas, or by gang recruiters seeking refuge from the urban fast life to expand on their activities in rural areas, where they feel that law enforcement is a country bumpkin that will not have the tools to put a dent in their criminal activities. Whether urban or rural, environmental factors play a very crucial role in enhancing youth's vulnerability to join gangs. All gangs should not be considered bad; there are legally sanctioned gangs (Jackson, 2003). Gangs have and will always exist because they are a natural phenomenon. Youth naturally come together to interact in groups and naturally want to be like each other and strive to be better than their counterpart group that may live in another neighborhood or attend another school. They hang out together and have fun together. However, it is the gang that becomes involved in delinquent and criminal activity that is a cause for concern. If the environment does not provide a nurturing support system that includes accountability, many children are lured into the activity of delinquency and illegal gangs. Howell (2003) suggests that all children and adolescents experience difficulty getting along with each other and that gangs (legal or illegal) are

primarily about adolescents trying to grow up. He suggests that there is no need to have specialized “gang” programs for youths who are in gangs, but the need is to develop comprehensive approaches that blend strategic interventions for both gang involvement and delinquency (Howell, 2003:99). In fact, Howell (2003) recommends the blending of gang and delinquency programs because of the implications of the Windows of Opportunity model, and also because there are few gang prevention and intervention programs (Howell, 2003).

The nurturing program is such a program that not only addresses the needs of the youths, but also the needs of the entire family. Too often programs are designed to focus on gang members and there is very limited, if any, involvement focused on the biological family, gang family or the neighborhood (community). The nurturing approach offers a holistic paradigm that assists gang members and their families with bringing about change while avoiding the negation of the systemic requirements of the juvenile justice system.

The Nurturing Practice Model

The nurturing practice model promotes the philosophy of caring for self, family, children, substitute parents and the community. The nurturing practice model is a family model and is utilized in the broader sense of community. The model addresses generational and intergenerational issues within the scope of creating new ways of life, new life energies and a focus on life productivity and potential. Educating individuals and families and communities about nurturing is viewed as the single important force in the treatment and prevention of violence and abusive behaviors. After all, how can anyone abuse or violate other people when they are genuinely caring for them?

Theoretical Assumptions

Grounded in systems theory, the family, the community, the gang and juvenile services all are systems. Involvement of all parents, children, substitute parents, law enforcement officers, juvenile court workers, teachers, and community members are essential to change the system. Gang members and other members of the system(s) participate together in-group or home-based interventions. Empathy is the single most desirable quality in nurturing youngsters, parents and other life related systems. Empathy is the ability to be aware of the needs of others and to value those needs (Bavolek, 2002). When empathy is high among gang related youngsters, family members, peer group, and community violent

behavior and various kinds of abuse are low. Empathy and violence are essentially incompatible. The nurturing practice model seeks to develop empathy in all stakeholders and players involved in the cessation of gang activities. Some law enforcement officers and school officials may hiss at the notion of teaching empathy to gang members. Parenting exists on a continuum (Bavolek, 1989). All families experience healthy and unhealthy interactions. The nurturing practice model is deliberately focused on building positive, healthy interaction between family members as an important key to reducing family violence that may be carried over into street violence.

Learning is both cognitive and affective. To effect change in the lives of gang members and their families, intervention strategies must impact their cognitive, (knowledge) as well as their affective (feeling) sense. Youths who enjoy feelings of high self-esteem are more likely to promote nurturing interactions with others because youngsters who feel good about themselves are more capable than those who voice feelings of low self-worth. The nurturing practice model increases their self-esteem and develops positive self-concepts. Very few adolescents prefer violent and abusive interactions and given a choice, all families would rather engage in happy, healthy interactions than those of a violent, problematic nature.

Nurturing Practice Model Constructs

The cognitive and affective education engages several constructs. The constructs represent the internalization of negative learning. The youngster or individual has internalized the negative learning and existing behaviors reflect the violent negative behavior that is inconsistent with society's expectation. The nurturing program includes the following constructs: 1) Lack of Empathy, 2) Lack of Appropriate Parental Skills, 3) Corporal Punishment and 4) Role Reversal (Bavolek, 1989).

Sample of Nurturing Practice Model Intervention Sessions

Session 1: Program orientation and Pre-test
Model requirements and expectations: activities model requirements for family living, established rules in the room will reflect rules established in the home. Re-parenting and parenting starts here.
Family Nurturing Hour
Families are required to discuss issues being presented in-

group sessions.

- Session 2: Feelings-It is all about feelings
The Four Primary Feelings
Honoring Being and Doing
- Session 3: High School Dance Exercise (Takes parents back in time to their adolescence and their own adolescent needs)
Parents may not see their children as having needs as much as they see them as problems.
The Cocoon and the Butterfly: Approaching and Leaving Adolescence
- Session 4: The youngster has developed an image or partial image of her/his “core being” and is beginning to address appropriate and inappropriate ways of getting needs met. Unmet needs produce anger and violence. Meeting one’s needs appropriately produces laughter, pleasure, productivity and a good and balanced life.

The nurturing practice model intervention sessions continue for 16 sessions and ends with a celebration session. The sessions are progressive and build on learning and practice blocks. Session two should not occur until session one is successfully completed. Session three is dependent on session two, three on four and so on. The intervention process is “undoing” what is not working in the family and “doing” with families what they need in order to replace angry, violent feelings and thoughts. The sessions are dependent upon affective and cognitive exercises and learning opportunities (Bavolek, 1989).

This model is unlike any other model available to help youngsters, families, communities, neighborhoods and organizations decrease gang activities and reduce environmental risks. The model collaborates with other models utilized for gang reduction. This model helps youngsters and families and communities develop life opportunity and successful outcomes. The model helps families and communities engage in healthier, more nurturing ways to live together and interact with each other. The model offsets the generational perpetuation of dysfunctional behaviors and gang practices.

The essential elements for success include: 1) workers who believe in nurturing as an energy to generate life potential and happiness,

- 2) practices in the community that promotes nurturing relationships and
- 3) commitment to a nurturing lifestyle and violence-free community.

Nurturing

Nurturing programs have been utilized by the Department of Social Services to foster the preservation of families (Jackson & Knepper, 2003). Gangs instill within their members the importance of “looking out for each other” and “staying together.” They are able to maintain their gang family that is often described as their “second family” (Curry & Decker, 1998:11) by showing their love or a sense of belonging (Knox, 2000:313) to one another as they lash out at anyone who may try to cause dissention among their family. They preserve their family history by OG’s (Original Gangsters) passing it on to younger gang family members. The relating of their history, like all histories, secures their roots (heritage) and instills self-esteem within the youth who is seeking meaning to life. One of the primary tenets of nurturing programs is the need to be non traditional and flexible and tenacious (not giving up). An ecological perspective is utilized where all factors are considered and addressed that may impact the youth and the family which means including all levels of significant others in the equation when working with the family.

The nurturing approach emphasizes the need for taking responsibility for actions (Bass & Moody, 1994). So, then, youth street gangs and gang activity becomes the responsibility of not only the youth involved in the activity, but the biological family and the neighborhood which includes systems such as the gang family, school, court and law enforcement. Nurturing strategies presume that the initial strategy will be proactive and focus on the family as the beginning point for treatment (Jackson & Knepper, 2003). In situations of gang members the issue would be which family should the focus begin with, the biological family or the gang family?

The primary goal when working with gang members should be to capitalize on the youth’s strengths and assist the youth with refocusing those strengths into legitimate ventures. Family plays a major role in this process of change. Thus, immediate attention should be given to the circumstances of the biological family because there may be a need to strengthen this component first by considering the strengths that the family has and working with those strengths. Often when youth join gangs there is a void between them and their biological family, for example, some families may not be able to provide needed structure and

guidance. Thus, the youth may seek out gangs because they provide them with structure and guidance. Thus, one goal of nurturing would be to provide parental structure that is termed re-parenting (Bass & Moody, 1994) so that they can begin to fill the gap and reclaim the area that was missing from the youth's life that led to gang membership.

Re-parenting skills is a hands on technique whereby parents and children meet in-group sessions to discuss ways of monitoring and providing guidance to their children. Because the youths are deeply involved in this process it allows them the opportunity to witness the re-parenting, thereby eliminating the "unknown or mystery" factor and erasing the youth's fears. Throughout the session the youth are able to voice their thoughts and opinions right along with the parents, Schoolteachers, court workers and law enforcement officers may be involved in the process in deliberate and proactive ways. In this way, the entire community is working toward assisting the family to change the illegitimate outcomes to legitimate ones.

A major element to the success of nurturing is the worker's ability to see the strengths within the youth and the family. In some instances, this may mean seeing something as simple as their presence in a session as a very strong foundation upon which to build. It is extremely important to discuss the nurturing process with the youth prior to beginning any other processes. Explaining the goals and the expected outcome is important information for the youth to have and understand. A simple nurturing quiz and pre-test may be administered prior to the beginning of group sessions. The nurturing quiz is a fun instrument and the pre-test assesses the individual's level of violence and anger. After a positive rapport has been established between the worker and the youth, they can proceed to include the youths significant others in the change process. It is important to remember that the change process in the youth's life begins when the youth agrees to meet with the worker. How the worker handles the process from that point on is extremely important, as it is a determining factor as to whether or not the youth will continue to participate in the process. A major component in keeping the youth involved is to continue to gain the youth's input and have some successes. These may include finding a way for the single parent to be home with the youth in the evenings. Members of the community may assist the parent/caretaker in locating volunteers to plan activities for the youth. Churches and neighborhood centers are excellent places to begin the development of resources for the youth.

Training a nurturing facilitator in the community works well in terms of leaving the product and process as a gift to the neighborhood. Initially, small steps have to be taken, which means that the mom may not be able to manage but one night a week at home, so other alternatives would have to be considered. For example, can the grandparent stay with the youth until the mom returns home from work? Or can a mentor work with the youth after school. These are things that the worker will have to work out along with seeing to the needs of the youth. If the worker can be successful with just one youth, other successes will then begin to follow. Youths do not want to be criminals they do not wake up one morning and say: “okay, today I am going to become a gang member”. Becoming a gang member is a slow process. Thus, nurturing youths from gang membership is also a slow process and the worker will undoubtedly experience some setbacks. However, if the worker is as persistent as the gang recruiters, the worker will win the youth over, simply because it is to the worker’s advantage that the youth really does not want to spend time locked up away from family.

Nurturing can be used as a primary prevention technique as well as an intervention strategy. Utilizing it, as an intervention strategy will require the use of more options than if utilized as a primary prevention tool. Intervening with a youth who is a “regular” member will require harder work; however, it can be done. The regular members have undergone an initiation process and can move to the next level of “hardcore” if they remain in the gang for a long period of time. The “hardcore” gang members are usually those members who are older and have been in the gang for a long period of time. They have experienced incarceration and in some instances, may still be incarcerated. The re-parenting process requires a different level of intensity where the worker may recruit a “gang” of nurturing community leaders, peers, and teachers from the community as participants. We call them volunteers who can work with the “regular” gang members. Thus, the focus of nurturing with gang members is more effective with regular members and wanna-be members.

Generic Youth Street Gang Organizational Paradigm

HARD CORE GANG MEMBERS – are members who are usually older and considered OG's (Original gangsters). They set the tone and the pace for the gang activities. They have usually been incarcerated a number of times and are known by law enforcement officers by their gang affiliation.

Regular Members – are those youths who have been initiated into the group by performing tasks as required by the OG's.

Associates – are those youths who identify with gangs but have not undergone the official initiations. They are allowed to perform some tasks for gang members however; they are not trusted with major responsibilities or information. In many instances they become the gang taggers or lookout.

Wanna-Be's – are those youths who have a curiosity about gangs, but are not members nor are they associates. They aspire to become yet they are suspicious and leery about the criminal activities. They are in search of their true identities and the most boisterous about the gang life that they have not really experienced.

An assessment scale, the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI), is utilized to evaluate and monitor success rates when using the nurturing approach. The Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI) may be administered at intervals in the practice model. Over the years nurturing programs have undergone a great deal of investigation and field-testing. The original format was developed with the support of the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) of the United States. Outcome measures include four types: 1) the AAPI is an affective measure; 2) the nurturing quiz is a cognitive measure; 3) process measures include self-reports and observations during and after the intervention(s); 4) session evaluations; 5) family logs and 6) family social history questionnaires. The AAPI serves as the primary outcome measure and the pre and post-test. The AAPI, developed by Dr. Stephen Bavolek, is a simple 32-item questionnaire that is easy to score. It is used to assess the degree to which attitudes held by adolescents and adults tend to be nurturing, or violent and abusive. In each of the four constructs addressed

by this practice model, the tool has been validated and norms established with over 2000 adults and 6500 adolescents in the U.S. A Spanish version has been validated in Mexico. Attitudes are the interface between affect (feeling) and beliefs, and are known to affect behavior. The AAPI may be used as a follow-up tool to measure continued effectiveness.

Summary

There is an urgent need to inundate the literature with research on working with gang members just as the literature has been bombarded with research on gang activities. When we begin to focus on intervention strategies that focus on interacting with youths and their families to change their negative behaviors, we will then be able to make a stronger impact on deterring serious violent behavior by street gang members. Suppressive efforts are not challenging the creative boundaries of gang members and they are becoming more astute regarding the laws and suppression. As a result, they have been so convincing until even some law enforcement gang units have taken on some of their characteristics (Jackson, 2003).

Have we really dropped the ball with gang members when using a flawed suppressive approach where we simply lock them up without providing effective prevention or intervention? Have we dropped the ball by attempting to distinguish treatment programs for youths from treatment programs for gang members? Have we dropped the ball when we have attempted to work only with the specific gang members without any interaction with significant others?

Gang membership and gang activities are individual choices for the youth involved in the process. However, they are community concerns and the community should be involved in the process of deterring and reducing gang activities in the neighborhood. A collaborative effort as exemplified by a nurturing approach can ensure a successful outcome for the gang member, family and the neighborhood.

REFERENCES

Bass, L. & D. Moody (1994). *Enhancing Nurturing Parenting Skills In African American Families*. Park City, Utah: Family Development Resources, Inc.

Bavolek, S. (1989) *Nurturing Program for Parents and Adolescents*. Park City, Utah: Family Development Resources, Inc.

Bavolek, S. (2002) *Nurturing Parenting Programs : Creating A Better World Through Nurturing*. Park City, Utah: Family Development Resources, Inc.

Curry, G.D., & S.Decker. (1998). *Confronting Gangs: Crime and Community*. L.A., Calif.: Roxbury Publishing.

Grennan, S., M.T. Britz, J. Rush, & T. Barker. (2000) *Gangs An International Approach* Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.

Goldstein, A., & R. Huff. (1993). *The Gang Intervention Handbook*.

Howell, J. (2003). *Preventing & Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A comprehensive Framework*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc.

Jackson, M.S. (2003). *Law Enforcement's Response to Gang Activity*. In *Critical Issues*. (Ed.) Albert R. Roberts. Belmont, Calif.: Sage Publication.

Jackson, M.S. & P. Knepper (2003). *Delinquency & Justice: A Cultural Perspective*. Boston, Mass.: Allyn & Bacon.

Knox, G. (2000). *An Introduction to Gangs*. Peotone, Ill.: New Chicago School Press, Inc.

Maslow, A.(1970). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Row

Maxson, C.L. (1998). *Gang Members on the Move*. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Youth Gang Series. Washington, D.C., U.S. Dept. of Justice.

Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency.

McCorkle, R. & T. Miethe. (2002). *Panic: The Social Construction of the Street Gang Problem*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Moynihan, D. (1965). *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. Washington, D.C.: Dept. of Labor.

National Youth Gang Center. (2002) *Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Shaw, C., & H. McKay. (1942). *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

Spergel, I.A. (1995). *The Youth Gang Problem*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

About the Authors

Mary S Jackson, PhD is a Criminal Justice professor at East Carolina University has devoted over 15 years working with gang members. She is a certified gang specialist under the mentorship of Dr. George Knox. She is the author and co-author of two books and numerous publications. Dr. Jackson has worked as a probation and parole officer as well as clinical director of a male juvenile maximum secure correctional facility.

Lessie L. Bass, DSW is an associate professor at East Carolina University in the School of Social Work. Her areas of expertise are Family Centered practice, violence, Nurturing parenting, and diversity. She has spent over 10 years working with families and training professionals in enhancing nurturing parenting skills using a Multi-cultural perspective. She has presented her research nationally and internationally at the University Lincolnshire and Humberside in Cambridge, England, and University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Elizabeth G. Sharpe, PhD is an Assistant Professor at East Carolina University in the Department of Criminal Justice. She has over ten years of experience with the North Carolina Department of Correction in the areas of probation, parole, and chemical dependency. Her research interest include gangs, interviewing, crisis intervention, corrections, and chemical dependency.