NEW PERSPECTIVES ON AGGRESSION REPLACEMENT TRAINING
Practice, Research, and Application

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AGGRESSION
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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Arnold P. Goldstein was the Director of the Center for Research on Aggression at Syracuse University, Director of the New York State Task Force on Juvenile Gangs, and co-founder of the International Center for Aggression Replacement Training. He served on the American Psychological Association Commission on Youth Violence and on the Council of Representatives for the International Society for Research on Aggression. A prolific writer, he authored more than 55 books and 100 articles on violence, aggression, delinquency, abuse, and related topics. His work was honored with numerous awards, including the Career Achievement Award from the American Psychological Association’s Committee on Children, Youth, and Families (1996), the Senior Scientist Award from the APA Psychology Division (1996), and the 2002 Devereux Massachusetts Legacy of Caring Award. Just before his death in 2002, Professor Goldstein was nominated for a Nobel Prize.

Rune Nensén is the founder of The Oasis, a residential treatment facility for young people and their families, in Sweden. A qualified social worker, he has many years’ experience in the social services as both a supervisor and program director in cities in southern Sweden. Since 1990 he has primarily worked as the director and Program Director for The Oasis which, over the past decade, has served more than 80 cities in Sweden in offering services to families with young children. In 1997 Rune Nensén successfully introduced ART at The Oasis as a program for both families and children.

Bengt Daleflod is a psychologist specializing in cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy. He started his clinical career in the psychiatric care of children and adolescents, and since 1986 he has been working with incarcerated juvenile delinquents and involved in staff training and supervision. He works within SiS (The National Board of Institutional Care) and is now connected to Sundbo Youth Home in Sweden, where ART is one of the main interventions that has been introduced in working with young offenders. Bengt Daleflod is also an active member of the Swedish Behavioral Therapy Association with a special assignment to work out guidelines for treatment of various psychological disorders.

Mikael Kalt was born in Warsaw but has been residing in the city of Malmö in Sweden for the past 23 years. He has a long and extensive experience of working with aggressive and delinquent youth in different settings, ranging from
institutions to community-based projects and schools. Mikael Kalt and his friends and associates Mariusz Hermelin and Ivan Brilje are the co-founders of Ungdomsalternativet (“The Youth Alternative”), a non-government organization working in Sweden with youth at risk in schools and the community and training teachers and youth workers in ART. He is a practicing ART trainer working on a regular basis with youth groups, and is an ART Master Trainer, training staff and new ART trainers.
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SERIES EDITORS’ PREFACE

ABOUT THE SERIES

At the time of writing it is clear that we live in a time, certainly in the UK and other parts of Europe, if perhaps less so in other areas of the world, when there is renewed enthusiasm for constructive approaches to working with offenders to prevent crime. What do we mean by this statement and what basis do we have for making it?

First, by “constructive approaches to working with offenders” we mean bringing the use of effective methods and techniques of behavior change into work with offenders. Indeed, this view might pass as a definition of forensic clinical psychology. Thus, our focus is the application of theory and research in order to develop practice aimed at bringing about a change in the offender’s functioning. The word constructive is important and can be set against approaches to changing behavior that seek to operate by destructive means. Such destructive approaches are typically based on the principles of deterrence and punishment, seeking to suppress the offender’s actions through fear and intimidation. A constructive approach, on the other hand, seeks to bring about changes in an offender’s functioning that will produce, say, enhanced possibilities of employment, greater levels of self-control, better family functioning, or increased awareness of the pain of victims.

A constructive approach faces the criticism of being a “soft” response to the damage caused by offenders, neither inflicting pain and punishment nor delivering retribution. This point raises a serious question for those involved in working with offenders. Should advocates of constructive approaches oppose retribution as a goal of the criminal justice system as a process that is incompatible with treatment and rehabilitation? Alternatively, should constructive work with offenders take place within a system given to retribution? We believe that this issue merits serious debate.

However, to return to our starting point, history shows that criminal justice systems are littered with many attempts at constructive work with offenders, not all of which have been successful. In raising the specter of success, the second part of our opening sentence now merits attention: that is, “constructive approaches to working with offenders to prevent crime.” In order to achieve the goal of preventing crime, interventions must focus on the right targets for behavior change. In addressing this crucial point, Andrews and Bonta (1994) have formulated the need principle:
Many offenders, especially high-risk offenders, have a variety of needs. They need places to live and work and/or they need to stop taking drugs. Some have poor self-esteem, chronic headaches or cavities in their teeth. These are all “needs.” The need principle draws our attention to the distinction between criminogenic and noncriminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs are a subset of an offender’s risk level. They are dynamic attributes of an offender that, when changed, are associated with changes in the probability of recidivism. Noncriminogenic needs are also dynamic and changeable, but these changes are not necessarily associated with the probability of recidivism. (p. 176)

Thus, successful work with offenders can be judged in terms of bringing about change in noncriminogenic need or in terms of bringing about change in criminogenic need. While the former is important and, indeed, may be a necessary precursor to offense-focused work, it is changing criminogenic need that, we argue, should be the touchstone in working with offenders.

While, as noted above, the history of work with offenders is not replete with success, the research base developed since the early 1990s, particularly the meta-analyses (e.g. Lösel, 1995), now strongly supports the position that effective work with offenders to prevent further offending is possible. The parameters of such evidence-based practice have become well established and widely disseminated under the banner of “What Works” (McGuire, 1995).

It is important to state that we are not advocating that there is only one approach to preventing crime. Clearly there are many approaches, with different theoretical underpinnings, that can be applied. Nonetheless, a tangible momentum has grown in the wake of the “What Works” movement as academics, practitioners, and policy makers seek to capitalize on the possibilities that this research raises for preventing crime. The task now facing many service agencies lies in turning the research into effective practice.

Our aim in developing this Series in Forensic Clinical Psychology is to produce texts that review research and draw on clinical expertise to advance effective work with offenders. We are both committed to the ideal of evidence-based practice and we will encourage contributors to the Series to follow this approach. Thus, the books published in the Series will not be practice manuals or “cook books”: they will offer readers authoritative and critical information through which forensic clinical practice can develop. We are both enthusiastic about the contribution to effective practice that this Series can make and look forward to continuing to develop it in the years to come.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is the second book that Professor Goldstein has contributed to our Series. In the Preface to the previous book (Goldstein, 2002) we expressed our sorrow at Professor Goldstein’s untimely death. This book stands as one of Professor Goldstein’s last publications but it also marks the beginning of the continuation of his life’s work. Over his career Professor Goldstein’s work was concerned with understanding aggression and violence and, perhaps more importantly, in finding effective means to change violent behavior. His program Aggression Replacement
Training (ART; Goldstein, Glick, & Gibbs, 1998) represents a significant contribution to forensic practice and has influenced the efforts of practitioners all over the world. The growing worldwide use of ART led in 2001 to the formation of the International Center for Aggression Replacement Training (ICART). The beginning of ICART was marked with a conference in Malmö, Sweden, which attracted over 750 delegates from 20 countries. As noted on the ICART website (www.aggressionreplacementtraining.org), the tasks undertaken by ICART are to provide a forum for the exchange of ART-relevant experiences and data, create an active network of interested professionals, encourage high-quality practice in its use, promote its continued rigorous evaluation, and aid in ART’s growing dissemination as a useful intervention approach. In order to meet these goals ICART sponsors conferences, creates and disseminates the ICART Communicator practitioner–researcher newsletter, and serves as a clearing-house for creative ART practice innovations and developing research findings as they become available. The ICART newsletter is available at the website.

The chapters in this book are intended to give a broad flavor of the theory and practice of ART. The opening chapters in the first section look at the broad theory that informs ART and the specifics of the three components—Skillstreaming, emotional control, moral values—of the ART program. Indeed, the latter three chapters bring together the trio of academics, Arnold Goldstein, Eve Feindler, and John Gibbs, who were the originators of the three interventions that currently constitute ART. The second section is then concerned with the application of ART across a range of settings and countries. There are two points that spring to attention when looking at the scope of these chapters and the style of work they encompass. The first point to note lies in the range of settings within which ART has found a home and hence the diversity of client groups with which ART is applied. It can be seen that the chapters build from a focus on the individual offender, then to a variety of settings such as local schools and residential facilities, and finally to the national use of ART in the English and Welsh Probation Service.

The second point to note is the absence of a formal structure around the implementation of ART. This “hands-off” approach leads to an interesting clash in the philosophy of program management. The approach adopted by ART, strongly advocated by Professor Goldstein, is based on encouragement and facilitation of the work of practitioners. To engage practitioners and their clients in the ART program is the fundamental aim; once practitioners are engaged then their work can be supported by training, consultancy, and professional networks. This practitioner-friendly “bottom-up” approach can be contrasted with the “top-down” approach evident in some systems, such as the criminal justice system in England and Wales, in which the development and application of programs is very tightly managed. This latter approach is clearly seen in the intricacies of program accreditation (Lipton, Thornton, McGuire, Porporino, & Hollin, 2000) and in discussions of program management (Bernfeld, Farrington, & Leschied, 2001). It is evident that both approaches have their relative strengths and weaknesses: as ART is currently being used with both approaches, it may be that the data will eventually let us know which approach produces the best outcomes.

In the third section of the book attention turns to new directions in the development of the ART program. As knowledge and experience accrue, so change should
follow: the Prepare and the Peace curricula exemplify this process of program
modification and development. The real spirit of ART is that it is always work in
progress, never the final word. In the same vein, it is also the case that violent be-
behavior is not the province of any one group, and the extension and modification of
ART to new populations, such as forensic patients, is an exciting development. The
chapter by Robert Calame and Kim Parker illustrates how evaluation can be built
into practice, and the penultimate chapter of the book considers what is currently
known about the effectiveness of ART. The final chapter neatly brings the text full
circle in looking to the scientist-practitioner model as the basis for progress. The
work of researchers, as seen in the opening section, feeds into practice; the work
of practitioners, as seen in the second section, tests and contributes to work of the-
orists and researchers; the culmination of the work of scientists and practitioners
leads to increasingly effective practice.

As noted above, this book marks an end and a beginning: we hope that readers
will learn and benefit and be enthused to use ART in their practice. There will be
more work and, as we hope and Arnie had planned, more books just like this one.

Clive Hollin and Mary McMurran

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Sons.


In the mid-1970s, at the very beginning of the social skills training movement, my colleagues and graduate students and I developed our approach to teaching pro-social behaviors, Skillstreaming. Skillstreaming is the topic of Chapter 2. As efficacy studies of the earliest social skills approaches, including Skillstreaming, became available, it became clear that far too often results shared a quality held in common by all psychological interventions—that is, frequent inadequacy of generalization of gain. Skill acquisition generally did occur; skill transfer to out-of-training settings and skill maintenance over time were clearly less frequent outcomes.

Around 1980, I had the good fortune of beginning a series of conversations with Barry Glick, who was at that time the director of an NY State facility for delinquent youth near Syracuse, NY. Our goal was to puzzle through what might optimally be added to Skillstreaming in order to enhance its outcome potency, particularly with regard to generalization. Two additional components seemed to be likely candidates. The first was Anger Control Training to provide trainees with competence in what not to do in the face of provocation. Back then, as now, we viewed Eva Feindler as the US’s leading expert on anger control and sought her out. With her characteristic wisdom and generosity, Eva fully shared her intervention approach and its evaluations with us, and we incorporated it as ART’s second component.

Since aggression is so typically a richly rewarded, infrequently punished primarily learned behavior, trainees can know well what to do (from Skillstreaming) and what not to do (from Anger Control Training) and still choose to behave aggressively. We thus felt that a values intervention needed to be ART’s third component, providing in a sense the prosocial motivation to employ the other components’ skills. We first selected Kohlberg’s Moral Education for this purpose and, in later years, replaced this with John Gibbs’ especially well-grounded Social Problem Solving approach.

Having thus constituted our intervention, Barry and I then set off on a 10 year multi-study journey to examine whether our hope for its potency matched its reality. Over the course of this period, a half-dozen other investigators at widely distributed locations also came to test the adequacy of ART. The combined results of these several studies, reported in detail in Chapter 14, point to ART as generally quite an effective intervention worthy of further application and continued evaluation.

Largely in response to this stream of primarily positive outcomes, a number of developments have occurred. First, ART has been designated as a recommended
program by the US Department of Education, a validated program by the NY State Department of Education, a model program by both the US Department of Justice and the American Correctional Association, and an accredited program by the UK Home Office Probation Unit. Second, a new ART organization has been formed: the International Center for Aggression Replacement Training (ICART). Its purpose is to promote competent application and rigorous evaluation of ART. We invite interested readers of the present book to join us as ICART members. The third result of the frequent demonstration of ART’s efficacy is the wide spread across Europe, North America, and elsewhere in its creative use, energetic training, and continued evaluation.

Arnold P. Goldstein
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Arnold Goldstein’s death was as much of a surprise to him as it was to his family, friends, and colleagues. Only a week before his death he was working on this book, as well as planning future works. Fate intervened, however.

Clive Hollin, dear friend and colleague of Arnie’s, stepped in and took over the work of bringing this book to publication. Without his efforts, Arnie’s project would never have been completed. The contributors to this volume, as well as the whole of the ICART and ART communities, wish to thank him enormously and say, “Good job.”

The pioneers of ART—Goldstein, Glick, and later, Gibbs—created an intervention they thought would be useful. Their own research and rigorous evaluation showed it to be so. Through their efforts and the work of many others, ART has spread far beyond its original test site in upstate New York. Over the years, Arnie began to envision an international ART community of researchers and academics, practitioners and administrators, which resulted in the founding of the International Center for Aggression Replacement Training. I would like to personally thank all of the contributors to this volume for their hard work and support on behalf of ART and ICART. It is as a result of their ongoing efforts that Arnie’s vision has been realized.

Susan Striepling-Goldstein, Co-Chairperson, ICART
PART I

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Contemporary practitioners—whether they are psychotherapists, educators, social workers, or other professionals—find themselves governed more and more in their work by the fact that we are in an “era of accountability.” Government and private agencies are increasingly and rightly insisting that we—the treatment and intervention professionals—firmly and unequivocally demonstrate that our interventions work. In fact, an ever growing number of such agencies now require such efficacy information in advance, as a precondition to selecting and starting to use any given intervention. Nowhere has the accountability movement taken root more strongly than in the UK, where the Prison Service and the National Probation Service have responded to 20 years of evidence showing clearly that the most effective interventions for chronically aggressive persons are those that seek to both alter aggression-promoting thinking patterns and provide new behaviors to aid the person to deal prosocially with previously provocative events—that is, cognitive-behavior interventions. The national initiatives in the UK have been informed by the author of our first chapter, a person considered to be the UK’s premier forensic psychologist working in the field of offender rehabilitation, who has reviewed in detail the existing evaluation literature on cognitive-behavioral approaches and has recommended those he felt to be of value. Clive Hollin is Professor of Criminological Psychology at the University of Leicester. His opening chapter provides us with the cognitive-behavioral context from which ART grew.

The following three chapters bring together the three persons who were the originators of the three interventions that constitute ART. Arnold P. Goldstein and his colleagues at Syracuse University first constituted Skillstreaming; Anger Control Training was developed by Eva Feindler, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Psychological Services Center at Long Island University in New York; and ART’s Moral Reasoning Training—in the form of Social Problem Solving Intervention—was first formulated by John Gibbs, Professor of Developmental Psychology at Ohio State University.
Chapter 1

AGGRESSION REPLACEMENT TRAINING:
THE COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL CONTEXT

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INTRODUCTION

Developed in the 1980s, the first complete publication of Aggression Replacement Training (ART) in 1987, by Arnold Goldstein and Barry Glick, saw the formulation of a multimodal approach to working with aggressive offenders. Utilized on an increasingly wide basis throughout the 1990s, the accumulated outcome evidence shows that ART is an effective method by which to reduce aggressive behavior (Goldstein & Glick, 1996). The latest text offering a revised edition of the program (Goldstein, Glick, & Gibbs, 1998) details and refines the three components that make up ART: these three components, delivered sequentially, are Skillstreaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning Training.

Skillstreaming involves the teaching of skills that serve to displace the out-of-control destructive behaviors with constructive, prosocial behavior. The skills element of ART teaches constructive social skills in terms of step-by-step instructions to managing key social situations. In keeping with the principles of skills training, the skills are modeled by group leaders and then practiced by offenders. ART addresses a “core” set of social skills relevant to the target group in order to bring about change.

Anger Control Training follows the established sequence of establishing Antecedent–Behavior–Consequence (A–B–C) sequences to determine triggers for anger. ART then uses the standard anger management techniques of enhancing self-awareness of internal angry cues, teaching coping strategies, skills training, self-instruction, and social problem solving.

Moral Reasoning Training seeks to address issues concerned with a delay in maturing of moral reasoning and the associated egocentric bias. Thus, this part of the program seeks to enhance offenders’ moral reasoning skills and widen their social perspective taking. These aims are achieved through self-instruction training,
social problem solving, skills training, and guided peer group social decision-making meetings.

The aim of this chapter is principally to describe the theoretical underpinnings for ART, then to consider the evidence that speaks to this theoretical base. In looking to theory, there are two dimensions to discuss: first, the broad theoretical position adopted by ART, and, second, the specific theoretical rationale for the three components.

ART: BROAD THEORY

This section develops the theme of cognitive-behavioral theory as the bedrock theory on which ART is built. To achieve this aim, an overview of the broad extent of cognitive-behavioral theory is presented. The theme will be developed by suggesting that a cognitive-behavioral approach is one that seeks to locate behavior within a social context, with an emphasis on the reciprocity between the social context and an individual’s functioning. The dovetailing of ART and these theoretical principles will then become clear.

There is no doubt that ART has its theoretical base in learning theory: “Aggression is primarily learned behavior, learned by observation, imitation, direct experience, and rehearsal” (Goldstein et al., 1998, p. 3). In its initial formulation as a theory of learning, traditional behavioral theory concentrated on the relationship between the environment and observable behavior (Skinner, 1974). The theoretical position articulated by Skinner was that given the right setting conditions or antecedents (A), then behavior (B) develops through the individual’s experience of the rewarding or punishing consequences (C) delivered by the environment following their actions. In an A–B–C model, the consequences may be rewarding, in which case they increase the frequency, or reinforce the behavior; or aversive, in which case they may decrease, or punish the frequency of the behavior. This deceptively simple model of behavior was applied to the explanation of criminal behavior in the form of Differential Reinforcement Theory (Jeffery, 1965). The use of A–B–C sequences to explain the development of extreme violence is seen in Gresswell and Hollin’s (1992) case study of attempted multiple murder.

The advent of social learning theory added to the picture by incorporating more explicitly the role of cognition and emotion into a theoretical account of human aggression specifically (Bandura, 1973) and human functioning generally (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Social learning theory departed from the traditional behavioral position in that, while continuing to acknowledge the role of external reinforcement, it suggests that learning can also take place purely at a cognitive level. Further, Bandura also advanced the concept of “motivation” to supersede reinforcement as the force that develops and maintains behavior. In social learning theory terms, motivation is held to take three forms: external reinforcement in the traditional sense that the term is used in behavioral theory; vicarious reinforcement, where an individual’s actions are based on observing what happens to other people who behave in a particular way; and actions that produce self-reinforcement, as in a sense of personal pride or achievement.
While social learning theory retains some degree of overlap with behavior analysis, theorists have increasingly turned their attention to the study of cognition. As social learning theory precipitated interest in the role of cognition within an overarching behavioral framework, the term cognitive-behavioral entered popular usage. Thus, cognitive-behavioral theory increasingly became a focus for a range of researchers, and cognitive-behavioral interventions became a focus for practitioners.

With its mixed heritage, from the standpoint of both research and practice, it is difficult if not impossible to give a watertight definition of cognitive-behavioral theory or practice. Kendall and Bacon (1988) have previously noted the problems with attempts to define cognitive-behavioral therapy and to say precisely how it sits alongside traditional behavioral theory and practice. Indeed, Kendall and Bacon suggest that it is preferable to see a cognitive-behavioral approach to practice as a general perspective rather than a single unified theory. It is clear that models of human behavior based on learning have become increasingly complex.

This theoretical complexity is seen in the behavioral model of violent conduct developed by Nietzel, Hasemann, and Lynam (1999). This model is based on four sequential stages across the life span (Figure 1.1). At the first stage, there are distal antecedents to violence: Nietzel et al. suggest that these are biological precursors, including genetic transmission and ANS lability, psychological predispositions including impulsivity and deficient problem solving, and environmental factors, such as family functioning and the social fabric of the neighborhood. At the second stage, there are early indicators of violence as the child develops. These first signs include features of childhood such as conduct disorder and poor emotional regulation. Third, as the child matures the developmental processes associated with the intensification of violent behavior come into effect: these processes include school failure, association with delinquent peers, and substance abuse. Finally, as the adolescent moves into adulthood there is a stage at which maintenance variables come into force. These maintaining variables include continued reinforcement for violent conduct, association with criminal peers, and social conditions.

The type of model proposed by Nietzel et al. is an excellent example of the application of cognitive-behavioral principles. The model includes social factors,
environmental forces, and cognitive processes, and is dynamic in speaking to progression and change over the life span.

It is evident that ART has its theoretical base in similar territory. Goldstein (1994) described three levels of analysis in the physical ecology of aggression, all incorporating various levels of a person–environment interaction. The macrolevel refers to analysis of violence at a national or regional level; at the mesolevel the analysis of violence is at the level of the neighborhood; and microlevel analysis is at the level of the home, street, public house, and so on.

The fundamental point to take from these complex models is that a cognitive-behavioral approach neither has an exclusive focus on the individual, nor does it neglect the possibilities of preventing violence through social and environmental means. However, for those charged with the responsibility of working with offenders, the focus of their day-to-day work lies with the individual. Reviews of the literature show that the history of working with offenders, including violent offenders, is dominated by a single-target approach (Hollin, 1990a). In other words, practice is dominated by trying to change one aspect of the offender’s functioning, such as their social skills or educational achievement. In contrast and in keeping with the more complex models, contemporary practice is concerned with multimodal programs that seek to change several aspects of the offender’s functioning. To its credit, ART was one of the first programs to adopt a multimodal perspective, seeking to change the individual’s thinking, emotion, and action. As discussed in the following sections on each specific component of ART, the theoretical base for this tripartite approach is well established.

SPECIFIC THEORY: SKILLSTREAMING

The original social skills model (Argyle & Kendon, 1967) held that socially skilled behavior consists of three related components—social perception, social cognition, and social performance (Hollin & Trower, 1986c). Social perception refers to the ability to perceive and understand verbal and nonverbal social cues and signals; social cognition, in this sense, is analogous to social information processing; and social performance is, of course, observable social action. Thus, the socially competent individual will use all aspects of their social skills to function effectively in their interactions with others and so achieve their social goals.

The application of this way of thinking about social behavior with respect to offender populations raises two issues: first, is there any evidence to indicate that offenders have particular difficulties in any specific areas of social ability? Second, is an offender’s level of social skills related to his or her offending?

Social Perception

The ability to recognize, understand, and interpret interpersonal cues is central to all social behavior (Argyle, 1983). In a study of social perception in delinquents, McCown, Johnson, and Austin (1986) showed that young offenders had some difficulty in recognizing the emotion expressed in different facial expressions.
Similarly, a body of evidence has accumulated to suggest that young people who struggle socially, particularly with respect to aggressive behavior, have difficulties in both the selection and interpretation of social cues (e.g., Dodge, Murphy, & Buchsbaum, 1984; Dodge & Tomlin, 1987; Akhtar & Bradley, 1991). Further, a study by Lipton, McDonel, and McFall (1987) suggested that sexually aggressive men may misperceive social cues in male–female social interactions.

The misperception of social cues may in turn lead to misattribution of intent, so that the actions of other people are mistakenly seen as hostile or threatening (Slaby & Guerra, 1988; Lochman & Dodge, 1994; Crick & Dodge, 1996). The manner in which a social encounter is perceived will, in turn, influence the way in which the person deals with a given social encounter.

Social Cognition

Following their perception and understanding of other people’s behavior, the individual must decide on a suitable response. This type of decision making requires the ability to generate feasible courses of action, consider potential alternatives and their likely consequences, and make plans towards achieving the desired outcome (Spivack, Platt, & Shure, 1976). Several studies have suggested that some offenders, perhaps particularly younger offenders, may experience difficulties in solving social interaction problems. For example, studies using the Adolescent Problem Inventory have shown that male young offenders typically gave less socially competent responses than non-offenders to a series of social problems (Palmer & Hollin, 1996, 1999). Offenders typically use a more limited range of alternatives to solve interpersonal problems, and rely more on verbal and physical aggression. A similar pattern has been reported for female offenders using the Problem Inventory for Adolescent Girls (Gaffney & McFall, 1981; Ward & McFall, 1986).

It is clear that social cognition, including social problem solving, is related to offending behavior. There is a weight of research in the tradition illustrated above that strongly suggests that difficulties in setting social goals, solving social problems, and accurately perceiving social feedback on performance are critical factors in understanding antisocial, including aggressive, behavior (e.g., Ross & Fabiano, 1985; Hollin, 1990a, 1990b; Akhtar & Bradley, 1991; Demorest, 1992; Crick & Dodge, 1994).

Social Performance

In a typical study, Spence (1981a) compared the social performance skills of young male offenders with non-delinquent controls matched for age, academic performance, and social background. The delinquents showed significantly less eye contact and speech, but more “fiddling” and gross body movements, behaviors shown to relate to poor observer ratings of social skill (Spence, 1981b). On global ratings of social skill, social anxiety, and employability the delinquent group were rated less favorably than the non-delinquents.

In summary, the research suggests that some offenders do experience difficulties with social skills. However, it would be wrong to assume that this is a characteristic
of all offenders: clearly offenders are a heterogeneous population with a wide distribution of social ability (Veneziano & Veneziano, 1988). Nonetheless, there are offenders with social difficulties and the hypothesis has been formed that there is a link between social ability and offending (e.g. Howells, 1986). If this hypothesis is true, in some cases at least, then remediation of these social difficulties, typically through the use of Social Skills Training (SST), may contribute to a reduction in offending.

SPECIFIC THEORY: ANGER CONTROL

A second strand in ART is enabling participants to control their anger. Anger is the emotional state most frequently associated with violent behavior (Blackburn, 1993). Specifically, the concern here is with the experience and expression of dysfunctional anger. Anger is seen to be dysfunctional when the experience and expression of this emotion have a negative consequence for the individuals themselves (for example, dysfunctional anger is associated with poor physical and mental health) or for other people (Swaffer & Hollin, 2000, 2001). It is known that violent acts are committed by people in angry states (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997), and that levels of anger in violent offenders can be greater than those in nonviolent offenders (Hunter, 1993). However, it would be wrong to assume that anger is the main cause of violence or that all violent offenders must be angry. Indeed, some studies suggest that a propensity to anger, in and of itself, does not distinguish violent and nonviolent offenders (Loza & Loza-Fanous, 1999). The point is made that anger management should be seen as a component, rather than the main focus, of work with violent offenders.

As with the term “cognitive-behavioral,” there are difficulties in defining the term anger: while anger is said to be an emotion, as Dodge and Garber (1991) state, “Emotion is like pornography: The experts have great difficulty defining it, but we all know it when we see it” (p. 3). Currently, the most influential theory of anger is that proposed by Novaco (1975, 1994). Novaco’s position is close to cognitive-behavioral theory in that anger is understood as a subjective emotional state, involving both physiological and cognitive activity, but which is clearly related to environmental circumstances.

According to Novaco, for a person to become angry some environmental event triggers distinctive patterns of cognitive and physiological arousal. Most typically, this trigger lies in the individual’s perception of the words and actions of another person. The physiological processes associated with anger are increased autonomic nervous system activity, such as a rise in body temperature, perspiration, muscular tension, and increased cardiovascular activity. The cognitive processes are complex, beginning with the individual labeling their emotional state as “anger.”

Novaco and Welsh (1989) suggest that labeling of an emotional state is a function of the individual’s pre-existing system of beliefs and knowledge, or “schemas.” Schemas serve the useful purpose of speeding up information processing, but have the disadvantage that increased speed can lead to faulty or biased judgments. Novaco and Welsh (1989) identified five information-processing biases in individuals prone to anger: (1) attential cueing, (2) perceptual matching, (3) attributional
error, (4) false consensus, and (5) anchoring effects. These cognitive biases are all concerned with the encoding of external and internal cues and the interpretation and cognitive representation of those cues.

Attentional cueing refers to the tendency of people who are prone to anger to see hostility and provocation in the words and actions of other people (Dodge, Price, Bachorowski, & Newman, 1990). Perceptual matching is found when an individual, regardless of the situation, bases their current behavior on how they behaved previously. Thus, if a person has found that a display of anger and violent behavior solves a problem, then when faced with another problem in another context they will become angry and violent. An attribution error occurs when the individual perceives their own behavior as situationally determined, but the behavior of other people as explained by their personality. Thus, I see that my behavior is caused by circumstances (external attribution): so, I hit you because you challenged me in front of my friends and they made me respond. On the other hand, I see that your behavior occurs because you are that type of person (internal attribution): you hit me because you are a bad and violent person.

The notion of a false consensus is applied when individuals assume that more people agree with them than is actually the case. This, in turn, inhibits perception and appreciation of the other person’s point of view. Novaco and Welsh (1989) suggest that false consensus is found among those individuals who have problems with anger. Finally, there are anchoring effects so that once an individual has made an initial value judgment, they maintain this position even in the face of contrary evidence.

Thus, triggering events precipitate cognitive and physiological process which the individual labels as “anger”; the processing biases noted above may play a role at this stage. The progression from anger to violence depends in large part upon the disinhibition of internal control: disinhibition can come about through a range of factors, including person-specific factors such as high levels of physiological arousal, perception of a low possibility of punishment, and the use of drugs or alcohol. Novaco (1993) advises that anger should be understood in context: that is, situational factors, both physical and social, can influence a person’s experience and expression of anger.

**SPECIFIC THEORY: MORAL REASONING**

The third strand in ART lies in attending to the participant’s level of moral reasoning. The process of socialization is linked with moral development in the theories of both Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1964, 1978). In particular, Kohlberg has used his theory to develop an explanation for antisocial behavior and this is therefore of interest here.

Kohlberg, like Piaget, argues that moral reasoning develops in a sequential manner as the individual attains maturity. Kohlberg describes three levels of moral development, with two stages at each level. As shown in Table 1.1, at the lower stages moral reasoning is concrete in orientation, becoming more abstract at the higher stages and involving concepts such as “justice,” “rights,” and “principles.”