

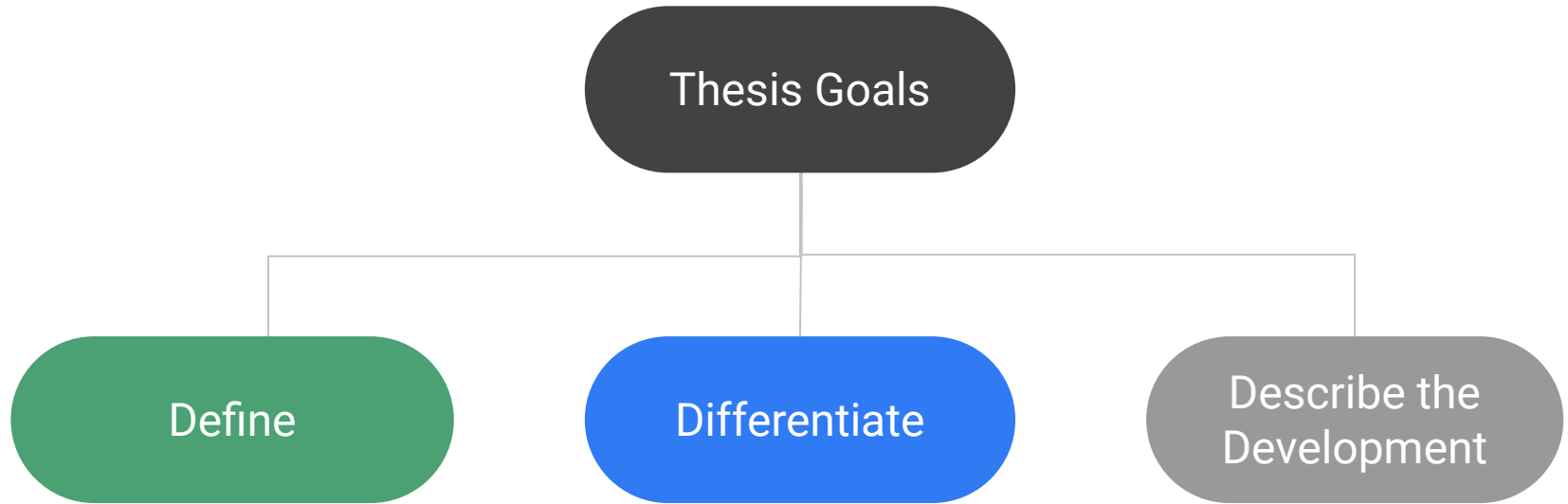
# Defining, Differentiating, and Describing the Development of Psychopathy

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Kelly Haines

# Research Question

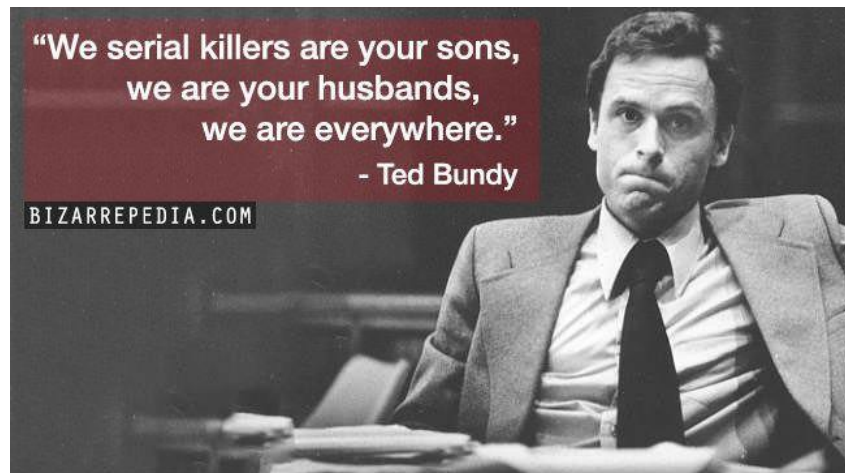
- What are factors for developing psychopathy?



# What is Psychopathy?

Define

- A personality disorder that is categorized by antisocial behavior, lack of remorse and empathy, and egotistical traits (Hirstein, 2013)
- Media portrayals of psychopaths are often exaggerated and inaccurate
- They can be successful CEOs, lawyers, entrepreneurs, politicians, or leaders (Walsh, 2008)



# Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R)

Define

- Most popular way of rating someone's psychopathic traits
- Majority of the studies included used the PCL-R to test
- Can score 0, 1, or 2 on each item (n/40)

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| 1. Glib and superficial charm                            | 11. Sexual promiscuity                               |
| 2. Grandiose (exaggeratedly high) estimation of self     | 12. Early behavior problems                          |
| 3. Need for stimulation                                  | 13. Lack of realistic long-term goals                |
| 4. Pathological lying                                    | 14. Impulsivity                                      |
| 5. Cunning and manipulativeness                          | 15. Irresponsibility                                 |
| 6. Lack of remorse or guilt                              | 16. Failure to accept responsibility for own actions |
| 7. Shallow affect (superficial emotional responsiveness) | 17. Many short term marital relationships            |
| 8. Callousness and lack of empathy                       | 18. Juvenile delinquency                             |
| 9. Parasitic lifestyle                                   | 19. Revocation of conditional release                |
| 10. Poor behavioral controls                             | 20. Criminal versatility                             |

(Walsh, 2008)

# Distinguishing Primary vs Secondary Psychopathy

Psychopathy (Primary)	Sociopathy (Secondary)
Lack of guilt, remorse, and empathy	Lack of remorse, but guilt and empathy can be present
Pretends to feel emotions	Can feel certain emotions (ex: anger)
Inability to form emotional connections	Can form close attachments to few people
Can be successful in their careers	Often violates law, difficult to hold a job
Manipulative, narcissistic behavior	Aggressive, reckless behavior
1% of total population	4% of total population

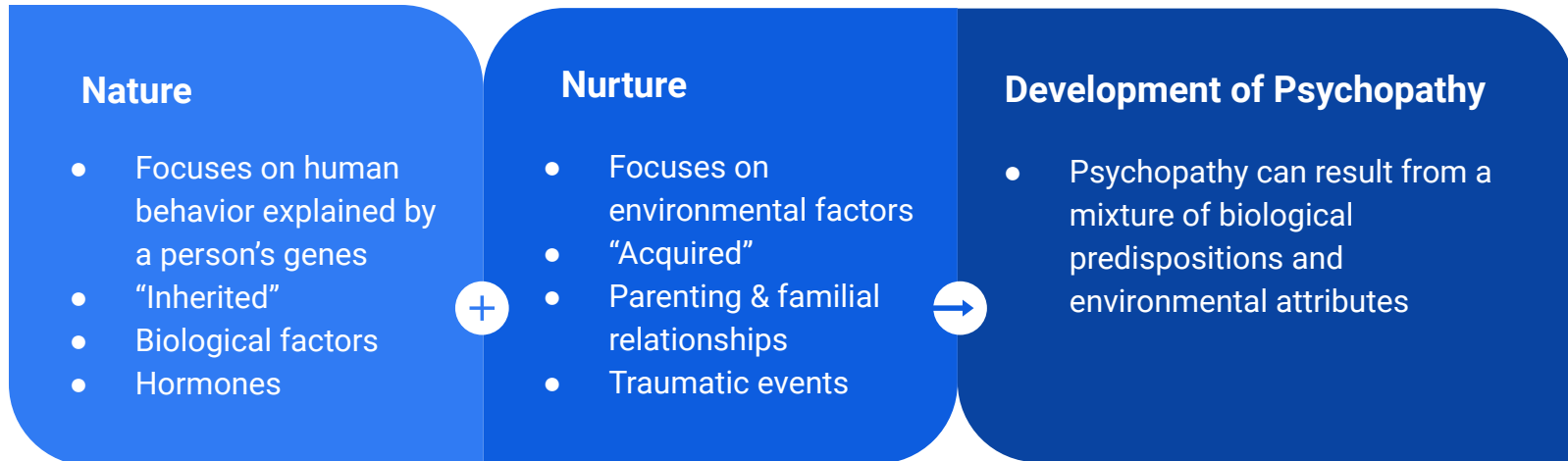
# Comparing Psychopathy to Other Similar Conditions

- Psychopathy and sociopathy both fall under the umbrella of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)
- Antisocial Personality Disorder includes a failure to conform to social norms, deceitfulness, impulsivity, aggressiveness, disregard for self and others, and lack of remorse (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)



# Evidence for the Development of Psychopathy

- The nature vs nurture debate can be closely related to psychopathy research  
(McLeod, 2018)
- There is a lot of varying research on this topic, which made it difficult to distinguish what exactly makes someone a psychopath



# Nature: Biological Influences and Genetics

Intent of Study	Population	Predictors & Outcomes	Results & Implications
Relationship between oxytocin levels and psychopathy (Fragkaki, Verhagen, van Herwaarden, & Cima, 2019)	57 males	IV- Oxytocin levels & trauma DV- Psychopathy	Results suggested that primary psychopathy may be linked to lower daily oxytocin levels Oxytocin is associated with empathy, trust, and relationships
Finding the association between a serotonin transporter gene, the 'psychopath' gene, and psychopathy (Sadeh, Javdani, & Verona, 2013)	237 males	IV- 5-HTT & MAO-A genotypes DV- Psychopathic traits	Carriers of the 5-HTT serotonin transporter long allele showed highest emotional deficits, showing evidence of molecular genetics with psychopathic traits
Determining the relationship among twin heritability with interpersonal-affective & antisocial traits of psychopathy (Blonigen, Hicks, Krueger, Patrick, & Iacono, 2005)	626 pairs of twins (17 yr olds)	IV- Genetic influence DV- Interpersonal & antisocial facets of psychopathy	Significant genetic influence on psychopathic traits, such as an increased genetic risk for externalizing psychopathy. Helps to explain some etiological boundaries in psychopathy
Testing if low resting heart rate will be associated with aggression and psychopathic traits (Raine, Fung, Portnoy, Choy, & Spring, 2014)	334 (11-17 yr olds)	IV- Low resting heart rate DV- Aggression, psychopathy	Low resting heart rate was significantly related to higher proactive aggression and total child psychopathy



# Nurture: Familial Relationships and Parenting Styles

Intent of Study	Population	Predictors & Outcomes	Results & Implications
Testing if psychopathy can begin as a failure to respond to attachment figures (Dadds et al. 2012)	24 children (4-8 yr olds)	IV-Maternal love, eye contact DV-Psychopathy	Children with conduct disorders expressed lower levels of affection and minimal eye contact towards their mothers than the control group
Examining the role of parental psychopathic traits in parent-child relationships (Cox, Kopkin, Rankin, Tomeny, & Coffey, 2018)	146 adults	IV- Parenting styles DV- Psychopathic traits	Each parenting style related to a facet of psychopathy, authoritative parenting is viewed to have the overall best result
Investigating adult-child relationships among psychopathic traits (Alzeer, Michailidou, Munot, & Kyranides, 2019)	211 young adults	IV- Parental attachment styles DV- Psychopathic traits	Dismissive and fearful (avoidant) attachment styles were highest in relation to psychopathy These type of relationships were more common with fathers
Examining attachment styles with parents for psychopathic traits (Craig, Gray, & Snowden, 2013)	153 F & 61 M college students	IV- Parenting practices DV- Psychopathic behaviors	Anxious and avoidant attachments were most prominent Attachment dysfunction through parenting practices could contribute to developing psychopathic traits

# Implications and Further Research

## Misconceptions

- Media has a skewed portrayal of psychopathy
- Psychopath does NOT equal serial killers
- Contradicting explanations for the differences between psychopathy, sociopathy, and ASPD

## Limited Population

- Majority of studies are focused on the criminal population (Walsh, 2008)
- Male psychopaths are more studied than females (Efferson & Glenn, 2018)

**Due to its strong media appeal,  
psychopathy has become an important area  
of interest. The characteristics of the  
disorder are vital for society to be aware of.**

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