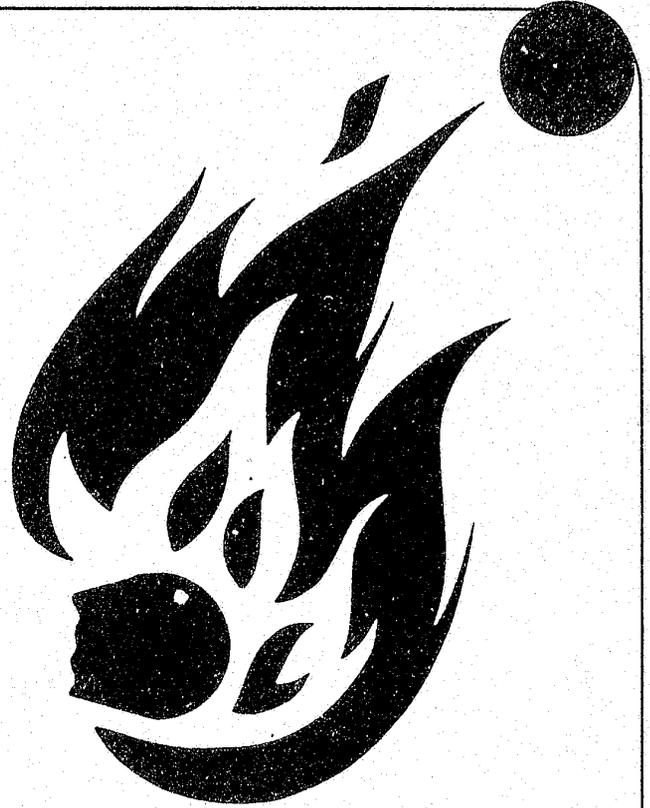


# ADOLESCENT FIRESETTER HANDBOOK

AGES 14-18



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FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
United States Fire Administration

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Prepared for the

**THE UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION  
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

by the

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## **Executive Summary**

This is the third of a three-volume sequence on juvenile firesetting developed for the fire service and related community agencies by the United States Fire Administration in conjunction with the International Association of Fire Chiefs. The first volume, *Young Child Firesetter Handbook. Ages 7 and Under.*, is intended to help professionals work with firesetting youngsters under the age of seven. The second volume, *Child Firesetter Handbook. Ages 7-13.*, is a guide to working with firesetting youngsters ages seven to fourteen. The third volume is aimed at developing programs to work with adolescent firesetters. These three volumes represent a comprehensive system to help the fire service and their communities combat the significant problem of juvenile firesetting.

This third volume on adolescent firesetting is divided into three sections. The first section, *Adolescent and Fire*, describes the psychology of adolescence, which youngsters are likely to become adolescent fire-starters, and why firesetting occurs during this period of life. The second section, *Evaluating Adolescent Firesetters*, outlines procedures for collecting information on firesetting adolescents so that effective decisions can be made to help eliminate their firestarting and related behavior problems. The final section, *Intervention*, details how fire departments and community agencies can develop and maintain programs designed to stop adolescent firestarting and remediate the accompanying psychological problems. This manual presents the most current and thorough information for the fire service on how to reduce adolescent-set fires in their community.

It is the goal of this three volume sequence to set the standard for documenting the most effective methods available to help decrease the incidence of juvenile firesetting. The technical information contained in these volumes represents the combined efforts of many professionals in a variety of fields. The collaboration between the fire service, medicine, mental health, youth agencies, schools, law enforcement and juvenile justice is the best solution for maintaining fire-safe communities.

**SECTION I.**  
**ADOLESCENCE AND FIRE**

## Module 1

# Firesetting During Adolescence

**T**his module describes how and why firesetting develops during adolescence. Interested readers can find a detailed description of the psychology of adolescence in Appendix A. The major assumption is that fire is a naturally occurring interest which is first observed in children between the ages of three to five. If this interest is acknowledged by teaching youngsters fire safety and prevention, the likelihood is low that these children will become involved in unsupervised firestarts. However, the lack of fire safety skills, coupled with various types of psychological stress, can lead youngsters into pathological firesetting behavior. If youngsters receive effective intervention soon after their initial firestart, it is unlikely that they will become involved in subsequent firestarts. However, the older the youngster and the greater the number of unsupervised firestarts, the more severe the firesetting behavior. Similar physical, cognitive, emotional and social factors responsible for childhood firestarting also are observed in adolescent firesetters. Firesetting during adolescence may or may not be classified as mental illness depending on whether the evidence of psychopathology indicates a psychiatric diagnosis. In addition firesetting during adolescence can be viewed as an act of juvenile delinquency, punishable by arrest, trial, conviction and incarceration. It is important to be able to determine if adolescent firesetting represents a mental disturbance as well as a criminal act of arson.

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### Childhood Firesetting

Firesetting does not simply emerge during adolescence as one isolated behavior. Rather, there is likely to be a series of behaviors or events occurring during childhood which indicates whether firesetting behavior will either surface or continue on its course during adolescence. Therefore, it is important to understand how fire interest first develops and why youngsters must learn fire safety and prevention skills. Although fire education may prevent a great number of unsupervised firestarts, the complex effect of specific types of psychological stress on youngsters and their families primarily is responsible for the development of pathological firesetting. Early identification and intervention of firesetting behavior can successfully stop firestarting and remediate associated pathological behavior. However, the older the youngster, the greater the number of supervised firestarts, the more severe the associated pathological behavior, and the longer the intervention is de-

layed, the more entrenched is the abnormal behavior pattern. Describing the development of childhood firesetting and predicting the probability of its continuation is necessary to understanding the nature and course of pathological firesetting behavior during adolescence.

### **Normal Fire Behavior**

Fire interest is first observed in most youngsters during three to five years of age. Children begin to recognize fire as a part of their environment by noticing fire trucks, by blowing out the candles on their birthday cake and by playing with their pretend stoves and ovens. Parents, teachers and fire departments can encourage the development of fire safety skills in youngsters by matching this early interest in fire with age-appropriate instruction in fire safety and prevention. Educating youngsters so that they become safe and competent with fire will prevent them from becoming involved in unsupervised firestarts.

The motivation of most youngsters under seven who do participate in their first unsupervised firestart is curiosity. They want to see how fire burns, how it looks and how it feels. This type of behavior is called fireplay and it is estimated to occur in 30% to 60% of elementary school age youngsters. Many of these fireplay incidents go unnoticed. Many young curiosities also are satisfied by these incidents. However, some of these fireplay incidents are detected, with a small percentage actually resulting in costly and damaging fires. It is critical that once a fireplay incident is noticed that it is met with educational intervention by parents, teachers and fire departments. In cases where fireplay results in a significant fire, retribution or some type of repayment method must be experienced by youngsters. If detected fireplay incidents are not met with these types of interventions, youngsters have learned that unsupervised firestarts may be part of an acceptable pattern of behavior.

Although a significant percentage of children are involved in fireplay, the greater majority of these youngsters do not become involved in pathological firesetting. It is the goal of fire education efforts to prevent unsupervised firestarts for the sake of curiosity. This is because the greater the number of fireplay incidents the greater the likelihood of costly and damaging fires.

### **Pathological Firesetting**

If fire interest and curiosity are successfully mastered by youngsters, the probability is virtually zero that they will become involved in firesetting behavior. However, if their interest and curiosity in fire have not been acknowledged and satisfied, and they have not learned the appropriate skills to handle fire in a safe and competent manner, then the stage has been set for their future involvement in firesetting.

Recurrent or pathological firesetting is characterized by the six primary features summarized in Table 1.1. There is a history of multiple, unsupervised firestarts which are planned primarily for the purpose of malicious mischief. These fires often are aimed at the property of others. Also, youngsters are not likely to admit readily to firestarting and they will feel no remorse or guilt. In addition, they frequently are attracted to fire and attempt to watch it burn. The majority of youngsters who become involved in recurrent or pathological firesetting show a distinct psychological profile.

Table 1.1

Childhood Pathological Firesetting (Ages 7-13)

Feature	Description
History	Multiple, consecutive firestarts during a six month period
Method	Planned and unsupervised firestarts generally alone or with one other youngster
Ignition	Flammable or combustible materials actively gathered for the ignition
Intention	Firestarting for the purpose of revenge, anger, watching the fire burn, malicious mischief or profit
Target	Targets are most often another person's property, although older children (8-13) tend to burn the property of others
Behavior	Rarely will there be a voluntary admission of firestarting, and an attempt will be made to watch the fire burn

The psychological profile of firesetting children is comprised of four factors which are outlined in Table 1.2. Physically, firesetting youngsters typically are young boys of 10 years or more who come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. These children experience higher than average incidences of physical illness, bedwetting is common, they display high levels of energy and many have been diagnosed as hyperactive. Cognitively, these youngsters show normal ranges of intelligence; however, they also frequently experience learning disabilities which result in below-average school achievement. These children display a tendency to experience feelings of overwhelming anger coupled with an inability to appropriately express their aggression. Socially, these youngsters are likely to come from single-parent families where there is evidence of parental distancing and uninvolved involvement. In addition, there is a higher than average incidence of stressful family events such as numerous geographic moves, expression of aggressive behavior, including physical abuse, and psychiatric histories for one or more parents. Firesetting children also display an inability to initiate and maintain significant personal relationships. While all of these physical, cognitive, emotional and social features are not characteristic of all firesetting youngsters and their families, the majority of these factors provide a composite profile of the psychological environment of firesetting children.

Table 1.2

Psychological Profile of Firesetting Children (Ages 7-13)

Factor	Description
Physical	Young boys of 10 years of more who come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. They experience higher than average incidence of physical illnesses, bedwetting and psychiatric diagnoses of hyperactivity.
Cognitive	Normal ranges of intelligence with a higher than average incidence of learning disabilities. These problems result in below average school performance.
Emotional	There is a tendency to experience overwhelming anger and an inability to appropriately express aggression.
Social	Single-parent families with typically high levels of family stress. Youngsters have marked difficulty in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.

Intervention

In addition to prevention programs designed to eliminate the occurrence of a youngster's first unsupervised firestart, there are two basic types of intervention efforts designed to stop pathological firesetting behavior. Psychotherapy and community-based programs are the two interventions effective in helping firesetting youngsters and their families. The key to the success of these programs is the early identification of firesetting children (as soon as possible after their first unsupervised firestart) and the early implementation of an effective intervention strategy.

There are a variety of different types of effective psychotherapy and community-based programs designed to help firesetting children and their families. Psychotherapy programs can be either inpatient (hospital or residential treatment) or outpatient and can utilize a number of different treatment approaches including psychodynamic and behavior therapy for children as well as family psychotherapy. Community-based programs operate mostly in fire departments and provide a spectrum of services including evaluation, education, psychotherapy, partnership and referral. Both psychotherapy and community-based interventions demonstrate significant success in stopping recurrent firesetting in children and remediating the accompanying pathological behavior.

If there is not early identification and intervention with firesetting children and their families, then the probability is high that these youngsters will become involved in firesetting or other antisocial behavior during their adolescence. In addition, children involved in antisocial behaviors other than firesetting who go unidentified and untreated are

likely to become involved in firesetting or other delinquent behaviors during their adolescence. The behavior patterns associated with firesetting and antisocial behavior often can be detected and successfully curtailed during childhood. If these behaviors go unnoticed and untreated, then firesetting and the accompanying antisocial personality style can emerge during adolescence as a well-established pattern of behavior. In those cases where there is no evidence of firestarting or antisocial behavior during childhood, the decay and resulting stress of the psychological environment during adolescence is primarily responsible for the development of firesetting behavior. Therefore, childhood behavior patterns and psychological environment are the major determinants of adolescent firesetting.

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### Adolescent Firesetting

Adolescence is a period of rapid growth and change. Youngsters experience significant psychological growth, where individual capabilities are realized, new relationships are formed, emotional independence is achieved, a significant partner is identified or selected, career directions are chosen and the formation of a personal philosophy begins to take shape. In addition to mastering these challenges of adolescence, youngsters experience dramatic changes in their physical, cognitive, emotional and social behavior and functioning. Successful movement through adolescence results in adequate adjustment to the expected changes in psychological behavior and functioning. Unsuccessful movement through adolescence means that youngsters are likely to develop specific types of psychological behavior problems.

Pathological firesetting is one example of an abnormal or deviant behavior pattern which can emerge during adolescence. Adolescent firesetting is a function of previous patterns of childhood behavior and the quality of the psychological environment. If there is a history of multiple, unsupervised childhood firestarts which go undetected or untreated, the probability is high that there will be involvement in adolescent firesetting. Moreover, if there is a history of other childhood antisocial behavior, such as lying, stealing and vandalism, and these behaviors go undetected or untreated, the probability also is high that there will be involvement in adolescent antisocial behavior, which may include firesetting. If there is a decay in the psychological environment and the growth and change expected during adolescence is retarded, then the probability is high that an abnormal or deviant behavior pattern will emerge and may be characterized by various types of antisocial behavior, including firesetting. Therefore, a history of childhood firestarts or evidence of other antisocial behavior coupled with a decaying psychological environment increases the probability that deviant or antisocial behavior patterns, including pathological firesetting, will surface during adolescence.

Previous patterns of childhood behavior and the quality of the psychological environment are related to whether pathological firesetting will occur during adolescence. A detailed analysis of how these factors actually influence the development of pathological firesetting remains open to future research. However, it is possible to outline the features characterizing the type of pathological firestarting which occurs during adolescence. In addition, it is possible to delineate the psychological factors describing adolescent firesetters. The type of firestarting activity and the type of youngsters involved in the behavior provide a useful profile of adolescent firesetting behavior patterns.

**Table 1.3**

**Adolescent Pathological Firesetting (Ages 14-18)**

Feature	Description
History	A childhood history of fireplay and unsupervised firestarts and multiple, unsafe firestarts during adolescence.
Method	Planned firestarts generally in the company of one or two friends.
Ignition	An attempt is made to actively seek out flammable or combustible material.
Intention	Firestarts are for the purpose of revenge, anger, malicious mischief, watching the fire burn, or profit.
Accompanying Behavior	Firestarts often are accompanied by other antisocial behavior such as drug consumption or vandalism.
Target	The target typically is another person's or institution's structure, grassland, or property.
Subsequent Behavior	There are few feelings of remorse or guilt, there is little tendency to admit to firestarting, and there is rarely an attempt to put the fire out or go for help.

**Pathological Firestarting**

The actual act of firestarting which occurs during adolescence is likely to carry with it a specific set of behavioral characteristics. Table 1.3 outlines the seven major factors associated with pathological firesetting. Although all adolescent firesetting may not be described by all of these characteristics, the majority of recurrent, intentional firestarts are likely to fit at least four of these seven behavioral factors. Adolescent firestarts are characterized by the seven behavioral factors of history, method, ignition, intention, accompanying behavior, target and subsequent behavior. The firesetting events generally are preceded by fireplay and attempted or successful unsafe firestarts. The firestarts are planned and often take place with one or two friends. This small group is likely to actively seek out flammable or combustible materials such as lighter fluid, paint thinner, newspapers and various other ignition sources. These fires are mostly for the purpose of malicious mischief and also can include such motivations as revenge, watching the fire burn and profit. In addition and often at the same time as these firestarts, these youngsters are likely to be involved in other antisocial behaviors such as alcohol and drug consumption and vandalism. The

targets of these fires can be another person's or institution's property or grassland. Following these firestarts these youngsters do not feel remorse or guilt, do not readily admit to firesetting and do not attempt to put the fire out nor go for help. The greater the number of these behavioral characteristics present in an adolescent firestart, the more severe will be the pattern of firesetting behavior.

### **Adolescent Firesetters**

There are a number of physical, cognitive, emotional and social characteristics describing adolescent firesetters. Many of these characteristics are similar to those describing childhood firesetters. Moreover, many of these behavior patterns are recognized first during childhood. Table 1.4 outlines the primary features characterizing adolescent firesetters.

**Table 1.4**

#### **Psychological Profile of Firesetting Adolescents Ages (14-18)**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Physical</b>	Boys who come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. They experience a higher than average incidence of accidents resulting in physical injury.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Normal range of intelligence, however a long history of academic failure and behavior problems in school. Frequently these youngsters are suspended from multiple school settings.
<b>Emotional</b>	An inability to experience a range and depth of feeling, including difficulty in experiencing remorse or guilt yet a capacity to feel inappropriately intense anger. Often these emotional feelings result in aggressive behavior and the display of violent tempers.
<b>Social</b>	A higher than average incidence of family instability and stress coupled with a limited number of successful interpersonal relationships.

The majority of firesetting adolescents are boys who come from a mixed socioeconomic background. Many of these youngsters reportedly are involved in a higher than average number of accidents resulting in physical injuries such as broken arms and legs. They show an average level of intelligence; however, they also have a long history of academic failure. In addition, they have a tendency to be viewed as behavior problems in school. They even may have a record of multiple school suspension. Emotionally, these youngsters display an inability to

experience a range or depth of feelings. They lack the capacity to experience remorse or guilt and they experience inappropriately intense levels of anger. In addition, these youngsters are unable to direct the expression of their anger and frequently display aggressive and violent tempers. The families of firesetting adolescents often show instability and higher than average levels of stress, including divorce, violent and physically abusive behavior and histories of psychiatric diagnoses and treatment. These youngsters also have rather limited interpersonal relationships and many of them have remarkable difficulty initiating as well as maintaining friendships. In general, there are a number of physical, cognitive, emotional and social barriers confronting these youngsters.

The profile of adolescent firesetters suggests that these are emotionally aggressive youngsters who are a product of a decaying and non-supportive family and who have experienced a number of academic, behavioral and social failures. Although recurrent, intentional firesetting represents a destructive, pathological behavior pattern, several questions remain to be answered. For example, can adolescent firesetting be classified as a mental disorder deserving of a psychiatric diagnosis and treatment? Is pathological firestarting a criminal act of juvenile delinquency punishable by arrest, trial, conviction and incarceration? The answer is yes to both questions.

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## **Firesetting and Mental Illness**

Recurrent, intentional firesetting is recognized as a symptom of several categories of psychiatric diagnoses. The question of whether adolescent firesetting can be viewed as a mental disorder depends upon the behaviors which accompany and surround the actual firesetting activity. If the essential features describing specific types of mental disorders are consistent with the behaviors associated with firesetting, then a psychiatric evaluation and diagnosis must be considered. Recurrent, intentional firesetting and the related patterns of adolescent behavior are most consistent with the essential features describing the psychiatric diagnosis of Conduct Disorder. Although it is the task of mental health professionals to identify the most appropriate psychiatric diagnosis, it also is important to understand the characteristics comprising the psychiatric diagnosis—Conduct Disorder—which is most frequently applied to firesetting adolescents.

### **Conduct Disorder**

The essential feature of the psychiatric category of Conduct Disorder is that youngsters exhibit a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior that violates the basic rights of others and often consists of violent, antisocial activities. Recurrent, intentional firesetting can be viewed as such a behavior. There are a number of other features describing the psychiatric diagnosis of Conduct Disorder which are strikingly consistent with the profile of adolescent firesetters.

Youngsters diagnosed with Conduct Disorder feel unfairly treated and their self-esteem is low. Academic achievement is below the level expected on the basis of intelligence and age. Behavioral problems include school suspension, legal difficulties and excessive physical injury resulting from accidents and fights with peers. Family characteristics frequently observed are parental rejection, inconsistent discipline with harsh punishment, the absence of one or more parental figures and pa-

rental histories of psychiatric diagnosis, including Alcohol Dependence. Conduct Disorders are common and occur more often in boys, with the sex ratios ranging from 4:1 to 12:1. Hence, there is a good fit between the essential features characteristic of the psychiatric diagnosis of Conduct Disorder and the behavioral factors describing the profile of adolescent firesetters.

Adolescent firesetters are likely to fit the psychiatric diagnosis of Conduct Disorder. If the physical, cognitive, emotional and social factors accompanying the actual firestarting activity reflect the psychopathology characteristic of Conduct Disorder, then adolescents must be evaluated for this mental disturbance. They can be referred to mental health professionals for psychiatric or psychological examination. However, these physical, cognitive, emotional and social factors also describe juvenile delinquent behavior patterns. Therefore it is important to understand that adolescent firesetting can represent a mental disorder as well as an act of juvenile delinquency.

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### **Firesetting and Juvenile Delinquency**

Childhood behavior patterns and a decaying psychological environment are among the factors responsible for the emergence of adolescent firesetting. Youngsters involved in recurrent, intentional firesetting are described by a specific set of physical, cognitive, emotional and social characteristics. These behavioral factors are remarkably similar to those essential features comprising the psychiatric disturbance of Conduct Disorder as well as those characteristics distinguishing juvenile delinquents from non-delinquents. One way to differentiate recurrent, intentional firestarting from a mental disorder versus a criminal act of juvenile delinquency is by demonstrating that the actual firesetting event represents the crime of arson. The critical element in arriving at such a decision is determining whether the adolescent firesetting behavior had sufficient motive and intent to be classified as an arson crime.

### **Firesetting As Arson**

The laws defining the crime of arson as it applies to adolescents are based on the laws defining adult firesetting behavior. Therefore, the determination of whether an adolescent firestart is an arson crime rests with the criminal-legal definition of adult arson behavior. Because the laws defining the crime of arson and their application vary from state to state, California's Penal Code will be used as a representative example of the criminal-legal definition of arson. Each fire department must be responsible for knowing and understanding their state laws regarding arson.

California State Penal Code specifies that persons are guilty of arson when they willfully and maliciously set fire to or burn any structure, grassland or property. The two key terms in this law are maliciously and willfully. Maliciously refers to a wish to vex, defraud, annoy or injure another person. Willfully refers to the mental state of the firesetter. This mental state is defined by the motive and intent to set fire or burn. In California the minimum age of accountability, or the first age at which youngsters legally can be arrested, tried, convicted and incarcerated for criminal activity, including the crime of arson, is fourteen years of age. In addition, the age of accountability can be ignored if motive and intent can be established and it can be proven that

youngsters know and understand the wrongfulness of their firesetting behavior.

### **Motive and Intent**

In California, the determination of motive and intent establishes whether adolescents are mentally responsible for their act of firestarting. In other states this may not be the case. If motive and intent are proven, then firestarting is classified as arson. However, motive and intent are comprised of several elements, and these elements must be demonstrated to operate as a part of the mental state of adolescents. If motive and intent are established, adolescents are mentally responsible for their firestarting and therefore have committed the crime of arson.

There are several elements comprising motive and intent defined by California law, which are summarized in Table 1.5. The firestarting motive must be normal and must have occurred because of at least one of the four following reasons: it accompanies or covers additional crimes; it is the result of malicious mischief; there is no serious concern for the consequences of the fire or it is the expression of affect such as anger or revenge. If the motive is morbid or reflects substantial emotional immaturity or mental disturbance, then the firestarting activity is unlikely to be regarded as a crime of arson. Intent is demonstrated if youngsters are mentally alert and physically capable of planning and setting the fire, and they did so out of their own choice, and they were fully aware of the destructive consequences and the illegality of their firesetting. If there is reasonable doubt that these elements exist, then there is sufficient cause not to classify the firestart as arson.

Adolescent firesetting is arson if there is purposefully destructive plan to set fire to structure, grassland or property. Motive and intent must be established to classify a firestart as arson. Adolescent firesetting which is determined to be a criminal act of arson carries with it serious consequences for youngsters and their families. These consequences may include arrest, trial, conviction and potentially incarceration within the juvenile justice system. The exact mechanisms utilized by the juvenile justice system for adolescent firesetters are described in Module 7.

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## **Adolescent Firesetting—Mental Disturbance and Juvenile Delinquency**

Firesetting which occurs during adolescence is likely to represent an abnormal or deviant behavior pattern. In addition, it is unlikely that it is an isolated behavior, rather it is more likely that it represents part of a more complex pattern of pathological functioning. The development of this type of deviant behavior results from an inability to successfully move through adolescence and master the expected psychological changes which occur during this period of life.

Pathological firesetting which emerges during adolescence is a function of previous childhood behaviors as well as a decaying psychological environment. The behavioral characteristics comprising the profile of adolescent firesetters are strikingly similar to those essential features describing the psychiatric diagnosis of Conduct Disorder as well as those factors distinguishing juvenile delinquents from non-delinquents. Hence, pathological firesetting can represent a mental disturbance as well as an arson crime.

**Table 1.5**

**Firesetting Defined As Arson (By California Law Only)**

<b>Mental State</b>	<b>Element</b>
<b>I. Motive</b>	<b>A. Normal (Not a result of severe emotional or psychiatric disturbance)</b> <b>B. Accompanies or covers additional crimes</b> <b>C. Malicious mischief</b> <b>D. No serious concern for consequences of fire</b> <b>E. Expression of affect</b>
<b>II. Intent</b>	<b>A. Mentally alert</b> <b>B. Physically capable</b> <b>C. Choice</b> <b>D. Aware of consequences, destructive and illegal</b>

An analysis of motive and intent will indicate whether firestarting represents the criminal act of arson. Motive and intent must be established to demonstrate that adolescents are mentally responsible for their firesetting behavior. Motives must be normal and must not represent emotional immaturity or psychiatric disturbance. Therefore, it is often important that adolescent firesetters receive psychiatric examination from mental health professionals. Evidence of mental illness must be ruled out before a substantial motive for firestarting can be proven. Intent is demonstrated when there is a purpose or plan which directs youngsters to firestart. Adolescent firesetting is arson when there is sufficient motive and intent to maliciously set fire or burn.

**Summary**

Adolescent firesetting is a function of previous childhood behavior patterns coupled with a decaying psychological environment. The behavioral characteristics comprising the profile of adolescent firesetters are similar both to the essential features describing the mental disturbance of Conduct Disorder as well as to the psychological factors distinguishing juvenile delinquents from non-delinquents. If sufficient motive and intent can be established and evidence of mental illness can be ruled out, then adolescent firesetting can be classified as a crime of arson.

**SECTION II.**  
**EVALUATING**  
**ADOLESCENT FIRESETTERS**

## Module 2

# Procedures for Evaluating Adolescent Firesetters

**T**his module outlines the various procedures used for evaluating adolescent firesetters and their families. Evaluation refers to the process of collecting information so that effective decisions can be made about how to help adolescents stop their firesetting behavior. However, before these procedures are described, it is important to understand who is likely to be in a position to conduct such evaluations and why it is important to take advantage of the opportunity to screen and assess firesetting youngsters. There are a number of different methods used for evaluation, including collecting information from written records and materials and conducting personal interviews with adolescents and their families. The recommended method of choice yielding relatively accurate and reliable information is the interview. There are a variety of factors which describe interviews, including who is doing the evaluation, its purpose, who is being evaluated and how the information is to be communicated and applied. Module 3 details the critical content areas which are necessary to evaluate during interviews and offers one example of a schedule and format to help professionals conduct meaningful and valuable assessments of adolescent firesetters and their families.

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### Who Evaluates and Why

There are a number of different types of groups and individuals who are most likely to work with firesetting adolescents. Fire service personnel, law enforcement, mental health professionals, physicians and juvenile justice personnel are amongst those most likely to see adolescent firesetters and their families. Each of these groups may work with these youngsters under different circumstances and for different reasons; therefore, it is important to understand who evaluates firesetting adolescents and their families and why it is necessary to develop skills for screening and assessing those presenting with the destructive problem of firesetting.

### Who Evaluates

Although there are many different types of groups working with adolescent firesetters and their families, the fire service is the one group which often interfaces first with firesetting adolescents. In addition, law enforcement agencies frequently make first contact with these youngsters because in many jurisdictions they may share, with the fire

service, the responsibility to investigate arson offenses. Therefore, the evaluation procedures presented here are intended to be most useful to those who interface first with firesetting adolescents. These evaluation procedures also can be useful to mental health professionals, physicians and juvenile justice personnel to provide preliminary guidelines for a more exhaustive analysis of the accompanying physical, cognitive, emotional and social correlates of firesetting behavior.

If adolescents, regardless of motive and intent, set a significant fire to warrant firefighting intervention, it is likely that they eventually will be seen by fire service or law enforcement personnel. In addition, if adolescents set unsupervised fires which do not result in firefighting intervention, but parents or responsible adults seek help for these youngsters, often the fire service will be the first contact agency. Families also may turn to their pediatricians or family physicians and mental health professionals for help. The initial contact with firesetting adolescents must result in an analysis and evaluation of their functioning and behavior.

There are several different types of fire service personnel who see adolescent firesetters. Firefighters responding to adolescent firestarts may be the first to observe lingering youngsters watching fires being fought or watching them burn. Arson investigators, either fire service personnel or law enforcement, may be the first to discover clues leading to specific youngsters and their involvement in a significant and damaging fire. Fire prevention and education specialists working in schools may be approached by teachers, counselors or even students themselves reporting firesetting activity. Regardless of who within the fire service and law enforcement are the first to identify firesetting adolescents, they not only must be prepared to approach and talk with these youngsters, but they must be capable of analyzing and evaluating the nature and severity of the firesetting activity.

### **Why Evaluate**

There are three major reasons why those who first interface with firesetting adolescents and their families must be skilled in the process of screening and evaluation. The first reason is that the initial contact with youngsters often yields the most precise information about recent firestarting. The longer the time between firesetting activities and first encounters, the less accurate the information is likely to be about the specific circumstances surrounding firestarts. It is necessary to collect the most recent and accurate information about firestarting activities so that later determinations can be made regarding the nature and severity of the firesetting incidents.

The second reason for an accurate and reliable initial evaluation is that critical information can be collected and organized utilizing systematic procedures. Because the type of information collected during a first contact often can be rich in content, it is important that the entire range of information be obtained and recorded in an accurate and coherent manner so that it can be clearly communicated to others. A systematic method of organizing first contact information about adolescents and their firesetting activities will contribute to the development of a consistent and reliable resource for data on reported incidents of adolescent firesetting.

The third reason for a concise organization of initial contact infor-

mation is to be able to present this data on adolescent firesetting in a systematic format to other individuals and agencies who work with these youngsters and their families. Many fire departments and mental health agencies have evaluation and intervention efforts designed to help firesetting youngsters and their families, and information collected on firesetting activities soon after their occurrence is useful to these programs. In addition, if adolescent firestarts result in significant and damaging fires requiring juvenile justice intervention, then initial contact information regarding firestarting behavior is helpful in evaluating motive and intent. Clear communication between professionals and agencies about firesetting works to the benefit of helping adolescents and their families recover from their problem behaviors.

The first step in eliminating unsafe firestarts is to collect accurate and reliable information during the initial contact with firesetting adolescents. It is likely that this initial identification and contact will be made by fire department or law enforcement personnel. A systematic method for organizing and presenting initial contact information will be useful in analyzing and evaluating the circumstances, behaviors, motivations and intentions surrounding incidents of adolescent firesetting.

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## **Evaluation Methods**

There are two primary methods which can be used for the initial screening and evaluation of adolescent firesetters. These methods refer to how the information is collected about youngsters and their families. The two ways of gathering data are from written records and materials and from conducting personal interviews. Both of these methods and their application are described with respect to conducting initial evaluations with firesetting adolescents. A combination of these methods is ideal, although personal interviews are likely to yield rich, first-hand accounts of adolescent firesetters and their families.

### **Written Information**

Information from written records or materials can take various forms. Once firesetting adolescents have been initially identified, it is useful to collect information from a variety of sources. For example, school records are helpful in determining the quality of academic performance or whether there is a history of conduct or behavior problems. Or, if the current firesetting incident is part of a series of documented firestarts, previous fire department records are useful in evaluating the severity of the behavior pattern. Also, if there is a need for specific information about youngsters, such as family history, questionnaires may be presented to parents to provide written verification of important family events. Written records and materials provide historical as well as current information on the behavior and functioning of adolescent firesetters.

Written records may not always be accessible to those working with firesetting adolescents. For example, according to laws in many states designed to protect the welfare of minors, juvenile justice records are not available to anyone outside the juvenile justice system. In addition, the release of youngsters' written records from schools or other community agencies to interested parties requires parental permission. Nevertheless, it is frequently in the best interest of helping adolescent firesetters to release and collect as much written information as possible about firestarting incidents and the accompanying pathological behavior pat-

terns. Module 7 details the specific procedures for obtaining written records about adolescents from other professionals and community agencies. In addition, Module 7 outlines the social and legal implications of obtaining these records as well as how these responsibilities relate to keeping and releasing records on firesetting adolescents and their families.

### **Personal Interviews**

Information collected from written records and materials often is called secondary data in that it offers another person's interpretation of adolescent behaviors. Therefore, conducting personal interviews both with adolescents and their families, as soon as possible after firestarting incidents, provides first-hand information that yields a rich evaluation of current problems. In addition, personal or telephone interviews with significant others, school teachers and family friends, are useful in offering different perspectives on the firesetting behavior. Written records and materials and personal interviews in combination is the most thorough approach to collecting information about adolescent firesetters and their families. Moreover, personal interviews provide direct and timely information essential to an accurate and reliable initial evaluation of firesetting incidents and accompanying pathological behaviors.

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## **Interviewing**

Personal interviews are the recommended method of choice for collecting initial evaluation information on adolescent firesetters and their families. Table 2.1 lists and describes the four major factors to consider when conducting personal interviews. The style of presentation utilized by the interviewers, the sequence of interviewing and the phases or process of the evaluations are the four factors which influence the potential outcome of evaluating adolescent firesetters and their families. These factors are related closely to the purpose of these initial screenings and evaluations. The assumption is that the purpose of these evaluations is to collect and organize initial information about the presenting firesetting problem and associated physical, cognitive, emotional and social behaviors. These initial evaluations are not designed to determine the presence or absence of a mental disturbance, detect aggressive or abusive behavior or ascertain whether the crime of arson has been committed. However, these circumstances may occur during initial evaluations and therefore relevant procedures are described in the following sections. Module 3 details the specific content areas which must be covered during initial evaluations and offers a schedule and format for conducting these interviews.

### **Interview Style**

The three different types of potential styles for conducting evaluations are interrogating, talking and interviewing. Interrogating is defined as a process of inquiry that lends itself to eliciting incriminating statements to support arrest or establish guilt. The interrogating style is inquisitorial, accusatory and intimidating. The information obtained from interrogations may not be accurate or reliable because of the style in which questions are presented to adolescents. Interrogating is not the style to be applied when conducting initial evaluations of firesetting adolescents and their families. If methods of interrogation are used, then interviewers are crossing over a dangerous line which may infringe

on the legal rights of adolescents, especially if these youngsters are not legally represented by attorneys. The primary purpose of these initial evaluations is to collect and organize information relevant to firesetting and the quality of the psychological environment, it is not intended as a means to establish incriminating evidence to prove the crime of arson. However, if there is a strong indication that a criminal activity has occurred, these special circumstances require the implementation of certain procedures. The interview procedures to be followed when there is evidence of involvement in the criminal activity of arson are outlined in Modules 3 and 4.

Table 2.1

Factors Comprising Initial Interviews With Firesetting Adolescents

Factor	Description
Style	An interviewing style in which questions are asked for the purpose of understanding the nature and severity of the presenting firesetting problem as well as describing the psychological environment of adolescents and their families.
Guidelines	Interviews which are conducted at the local firehouse where the entire family can sit together in a semicircle to talk with the interviewer in a supportive and open environment.
Sequence	The recommended sequence is first to interview the entire family, then speak individually with the adolescent, then alone with the parents, and then bring the family back together to conclude the interview.
Process	The three basic phases of the interview are establishing good rapport through attentive listening, asking questions relevant to the firesetting problem and related behaviors and communicating impressions and recommendations designed to eliminate firestarting and remediate accompanying pathological behavior.

While on the one hand the interview style is not one of interrogating, on the other hand interviewers are not having friendly chats with adolescent firesetters and their families. These initial evaluations are not meant to be informal talks with little structure or direction. This is not to say that interviewers should not be friendly and supportive, but it is to say that there is purpose and substance to these evaluations.

The most appropriate style for these initial evaluations is one of in-

interviewing adolescent firesetters and their families. An interviewing style is one in which the intent is to understand the nature and severity of the presenting firesetting problem as well as to describe the physical, cognitive, emotional and social functioning and behavior of these youngsters. Table 2.2 summarizes the characteristics comprising an appropriate interview style to be used during initial evaluations. A friendly, warm, supportive environment must be created where questions are asked in a direct manner and youngsters and their families feel they are listened to and heard. These initial evaluations give families the opportunity to tell their story. Therefore, the interviewing style should be one of attentive listening. In addition, interviewers must provide a supportive structure in which a range of questions are asked leading to accurate and reliable information about the patterns of fire-setting and associated behaviors.

Table 2.2

### Characteristics of an Appropriate Interview Style

Factor	Description
Verbal	Use your everyday voice and sound level and speak in everyday English. Avoid using jargon or complicated words. Ask questions directly and say what you want to say in a simple and straight forward manner.
Non-verbal	Smile, be friendly, use open gestures (not closed arms) and look directly (without staring) at the adolescents and their family.
Interaction	The interview is the time to learn from youngsters and their families. Let them share their stories by providing a supportive, open and trusting environment.

### Interview Guidelines

If adolescents and their families are to share their stories, then they must feel secure, trusting and comfortable while they disclose what often is a painful and difficult personal history. There are some guidelines that will help develop an openness of communication for adolescents and their families. First, there are two options to consider when deciding where to conduct these interviews. The interviews can take place at the local firehouse or at the home of the family. While the family home may be more familiar, adolescents enjoy the trip to the firehouse and families feel comfortable knowing they have a place outside the home they can go for help. Second, interviews with the entire family should be conducted with all participants, including interviewers, seated in a semicircle so that each is visible to the other. This format presents an openness which facilitates talking with one another.

Lastly, there is the question of whether fire service and law enforcement should wear their uniforms during these interviews. Opinions differ, with some suggesting that uniforms signify confidence and others suggesting uniforms create barriers. Because firesetting adolescents often have difficulty conforming to societal rules and norms, they may feel less intimidated and more willing to share information with someone who is not wearing a symbol of authority.

### **Interview Sequence**

The interview sequence refers to the actual order in which initial evaluations are conducted with adolescents and their families. Although interviewers may develop their own preference, the recommended sequence is first to interview the entire family, then speak individually with the adolescent and alone with the parents, and then bring the family back together to conclude the interview. This sequence allows interviewers first to get to know the entire family and describe to them what they can anticipate. In addition, it allows for some individual time with the adolescent and with the family to obtain their separate perspectives on how they are experiencing the firesetting behavior. In concluding the interview it is important that the family have a sense of closure and understanding about what has happened and how they are likely to be helped with the firesetting and associated problems.

### **Interview Process**

There are three distinct phases comprising the process of initial evaluations. They are establishing rapport, asking questions and communicating impressions. The first few minutes of initial evaluations are critical in that they often set the tone for the remainder of the interviews. Therefore, it is important to establish an early line of open communication with adolescents and their families. Good rapport is established when there is a free flow of information in a voluntary fashion. Frequently, adolescents and families are likely to be upset and anxious soon after the firestarting incident and these feelings are reflected in their participation in initial evaluations. Interviewers must take an active role helping to put youngsters and families at ease so that they can talk about their experiences. It might be helpful to begin interviews by talking about non-personal topics such as sporting events or other activities which may interest adolescents and their families. This somewhat unstructured approach breaks the ice and takes the pressure off youngsters and their families to immediately disclose their most distressing problems to a relative stranger in an unfamiliar environment. Instead, it offers families a chance to initiate on their own their concerns about firesetting and the associated behaviors. Eventually, the interviewers gently must guide adolescents and their families into talking about specific firesetting incidents and related problems by asking a series of questions and expecting certain types of responses of youngsters and their families.

Thus begins the second phase—asking questions—of these initial evaluations. Module 3 describes the content areas which must be covered during initial evaluations. Appendix B presents the specific questions to be asked of adolescents and their families in the form of Interview Schedules. These Interview Schedules are intended to serve as guides for interviewers during these evaluations. Interviewers can develop their own method and order of presentation for these questions, but it is

critical for them to cover the basic content areas so that they collect enough information to make informed decisions about the nature and severity of the firesetting behavior as well as determining the quality of the psychological environment of adolescents and their families. Module 3 details the procedures for asking questions and utilizing the Interview Schedules.

Once the questions have been asked according to the recommended sequence of interviewing first the family, then adolescents alone and parents separately, the third phase of initial evaluations, communicating impressions, begins when the entire family is brought together for concluding the interview. Because youngsters and their families often are frightened and confused and looking for help and guidance, it is important to offer them some preliminary impressions. If interviewers want to discuss their cases with co-workers or consultants before making their final recommendations, this must be communicated to youngsters and their families, and a future time must be set aside for presenting these conclusions. It is essential that recommendations for intervention be made as soon as possible after these initial evaluations to give the best chance for families to follow through with the required interventions to eliminate firesetting and related problems.

The four major factors to consider when conducting initial evaluations—style, guidelines, sequence and process—are critical to ensuring that fair and useful interviews are conducted with firesetting adolescents and their families. The purpose of these initial evaluations is to collect and organize information so that an informed evaluation can be made of the nature and severity of the firesetting problem and related behaviors. The style, method and approach utilized by interviewers will influence the quality of the information obtained during these initial evaluations. These interviews should result not only in an accurate description of the firesetting behavior and the contributing psychological factors, but a clear set of recommendations should emerge which will lead to the elimination of firestarting and the remediation of related behavior problems.

## Summary

It is important for a number of different professionals, such as fire service and law enforcement, mental health and juvenile justice, to have a systematic method for collecting and organizing initial contact information on firesetting adolescents and their families. The best combination of procedures for gathering this information is utilizing written records and materials and conducting personal interviews. Interviews with adolescent firesetters and their families provide rich, first-hand accounts of the presenting problem. There are four critical factors—style, guidelines, sequence and process—which contribute to the success of collecting meaningful and useful information during these interviews. It is the intention of these initial evaluations to describe the firestarting problem and the quality of the psychological environment and to offer recommendations to eliminate firesetting and remediate accompanying pathological behavior.

## Module 3

# Conducting Evaluation Interviews

The most essential feature of conducting evaluation interviews with adolescents and their families is asking a series of questions relevant to the presenting firesetting problem. In addition to describing the nature and severity of the firestarting, questions must be asked which will lead to an understanding of the psychological factors contributing to this adolescent and family problem. There are critical content areas around which interview questions can be organized and communicated to youngsters and their families during initial evaluations. By utilizing this organization of questions into content areas, interviewers then can have a format or schedule to follow when conducting evaluations with adolescents and their families. There always are a number of special concerns during these interviews and they typically focus on the level of trust established between interviewers and the families. Once the evaluation questions have been asked and answered, interviewers must be able to organize the information so that they can determine the severity of the firesetting problem and describe the contributing psychological factors. Finally, conclusions must be drawn by formulating an intervention plan and presenting this plan to adolescents and their families for the specific purpose of eliminating firestarting and remediating the related pathological behaviors.

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### Critical Content Areas For Evaluation

There are three critical content areas around which evaluation questions can be organized for initial interviews with firesetting adolescents and their families. They are firesetting history, including current firestarting activities, psychological environment, describing the physical, cognitive, emotional and social characteristics of adolescents and their families, and special circumstances, which rule out relatively infrequently occurring but serious kinds of situations such as severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse and firesetting behavior that can be classified as arson. These three critical content areas are described with respect to the specific factors relevant to determining the severity of the firesetting behavior, describing the quality of the accompanying psychological environment, and ruling out the presence of special circum-

stances. A detailed understanding of these three critical content areas leads directly to the organization of evaluation questions for the format and schedule of the initial interviews with adolescent firesetters and their families.

### **Firesetting History**

It is essential to be able to evaluate the entire history of fire behavior for adolescents. It is necessary to understand the developmental process whereby fire interest evolves into patterns of pathological firestarting. Therefore, the characteristics of initial fire interest, the circumstances of fireplay, and the details of reported firestarts must be evaluated to determine the severity of the presenting firesetting problem. This can be accomplished by asking questions of both adolescents and family members regarding fire interest, fireplay and firestarting. The same set of questions regarding firesetting history presented to both adolescents and family members, if answered fully and honestly, will yield an accurate and reliable account of fire behavior.

Information must be obtained about when fire interest first surfaced for these adolescents. Typically fire interest emerges in the majority of children around the age of three or four. It usually takes the form of questions about fire-related activities, such as what makes candles burn, or it may surface in play, such as a request for a toy fire truck or toy oven. It is important to discover the age at which youngsters demonstrated their initial interest in fire, how it was expressed, and how it was responded to by parents or other responsible adults. Gauging family reaction to initial fire interest will provide information both on attitudes toward fire as well as efforts made within the home to emphasize fire safety.

Many firesetting adolescents begin their pathological firestarting through involvement in fireplay. Yet, not all adolescents who participate in fireplay will become involved in pathological firesetting. Therefore, information also must be collected on initial fireplay behavior. Adolescents and family members must be asked at what age the first unsafe firestart occurred, the method or planning of the firestart, the type of material used in the ignition, what, if anything, was set on fire, the behavior before and after the firestart and the consequences of the fireplay incident. Responses to these questions are important because there are a specific set of circumstances describing fireplay activity which predict later involvement in pathological firesetting.

There are several elements of fireplay activity which predict potential involvement in future pathological firestarting. Therefore, if these elements are evident in the fireplay of children, then the likelihood increases that these children could become involved in adolescent firestarting. The specific elements of childhood fireplay which represent indicators of potential adolescent firesetting behavior include leaving the scenes of accidentally set fires without trying to extinguish them or notifying someone to help put them out, frequently returning to fire scenes either to watch the fires burn or to see the resulting destruction, and denying any involvement in the actual firestarts. In addition, youngsters involved in accidental firestarts which result in fires and

who do not experience the consequences of their behavior, such as parental discipline or retribution, are likely to be socially reinforced for their firesetting. Given the right circumstances or an increased level of psychological stress, they may turn to expressing their frustrations by starting another fire. Thus the pattern of firesetting behavior begins for these youngsters. When adolescent firesetters are interviewed, most often it will be discovered that their fireplay activity as children is characterized by one or more of these elements predicting pathological firestarting.

Once fire interest and fireplay history has been established, then it is important to collect information on each unsupervised, unsafe firestart. There are five factors which must be evaluated for each firestart. First, the planning of the firestart must be assessed. For example, is the firestart planned over several days with an effort made to pick the best time to avoid detection or the best place to maximize destruction? Or perhaps the firestart is not intentional, but the result of a quick decision made by a group of adolescents at the scene of the fire. In general, the longer and more complex the planning procedures, the more serious the firesetting behavior.

The second relevant factor is the type of materials used to start the fires. They can range from the use of available book matches to the use of complicated explosive devices. The majority of adolescent firestarts are ignited with available materials including book matches and disposable lighters. The severity of the firesetting behavior dramatically increases when there is an active attempt to seek, gather or construct flammable or combustible materials or explosive devices. The more sophisticated the ignition source and the greater the use of combustible materials, the more serious is the intention to destroy by fire.

The third factor which must be evaluated are the stated reasons for firesetting. Many adolescents are unable to verbalize their reasons for firestarting and offer such answers as "I did it for the fun of it." Given that many adolescent firestarts are motivated by emotional expression such as anger or revenge, it is useful to offer this as a possible explanation to youngsters who are unable to explain their behavior.

The fourth factor of importance is the object or target of the fire. If personal items are set on fire, then adolescents may be expressing inner struggles or attempts at self destruction. If another person's or institution's properties are set on fire, which is frequently the case, then firestarting may be an expression of adolescent anger or revenge directed at those individuals or organizations. The meaning of what is set on fire must be ascertained and both adolescents and their families must be given the opportunity to respond to these questions.

The fifth factor which must be considered is the behavior immediately preceding and following the firestarts. Also, the experienced consequences of firesetting activity must be assessed. Adolescents are likely to set fires with one or two friends. Alcohol or drug use often precedes the firestarting. Accompanying the firesetting, adolescents also may engage in other antisocial behaviors such as petty theft or vandalism. The severity of the firesetting behavior significantly increases for ado-

lescents when there is no attempt to put fires out or go for help; when efforts are made to watch fires burn, and when there is insistent denial of firestarting activity or an absence of feelings of guilt or remorse following the fires. In addition, if previous firestarting resulted in discipline, retribution, treatment, or incarceration, and subsequent firesetting behavior occurs, then it becomes increasingly difficult to help these adolescents and their families.

Table 3.1 lists the important characteristics of firesetting history which must be evaluated for adolescents. Fire interest, fireplay and firestarting compose the developmental process from which emerges pathological firesetting. It is important to understand and document the relevant factors contributing to the current firestarting problem. In addition, during initial evaluations it is necessary to collect as much of this information as possible on firesetting history from both adolescents and family members so that these interviews yield accurate and reliable accounts of the patterns of firestarting behavior.

**Table 3.1**

**Interview Information on Firesetting History**

Factor	Characteristic
I. Fire Interest	A. Earliest age B. How expressed (e.g. questions, play) C. Parental reaction
II. Fireplay	A. Earliest age B. Method C. Ignition source D. Target E. Behavior F. Fire damage G. Consequences
III. Firesetting	A. Earliest age B. Method C. Ignition source D. Motivation E. Target F. Accompanying behaviors G. Fire damage H. Consequences

**Psychological Environment**

Without a description of the psychological environment of adolescents and their families it is difficult to understand the relevant factors contributing to the emergence of pathological firesetting. The psychological environment is comprised of physical, cognitive, emotional and social conditions which influence the behavior of youngsters and their

families. Research suggests that there are a set of such characteristics associated with firesetting adolescents. There also is evidence indicating that while firestarting behavior can be temporarily stopped, in order for it not to resurface adjustments must be made in the psychological environment of youngsters and their families.

Therefore, it is important that during initial evaluations, historical as well as current information be collected describing the physical, cognitive, emotional and social conditions comprising the psychological environment of firesetting adolescents and their families. If problems in the psychological environment can be identified and an intervention plan can be designed to remediate them, then there is a good chance of permanently eliminating pathological firestarting behavior.

There are several physical characteristics which must be evaluated during initial interviews. These physical attributes have been observed during the childhood and adolescence of firestarting youngsters. First, demographic indicators show that the majority of firesetters are young males between the ages of ten and eighteen. Second, parents must be questioned about the general health of their youngsters. Often they will report a higher than average energy level for their youngsters which frequently is accompanied by a childhood diagnosis of hyperactivity. In addition, there may be a history of bedwetting and a higher than average incidence of accidents resulting in physical injuries. Therefore, it is advisable to inquire about general health and current physical functioning, with attention paid to those physical qualities most likely to occur in the lives of firesetting youngsters.

The cognitive features of youngsters can be evaluated by describing intelligence level, learning ability and school performance. Many of these characteristics can be assessed during initial interviews with adolescents and family members. Parents must be questioned about the progress and achievement of their youngsters in school. This is one way of determining academic performance. There is a trend for adolescent firesetters to demonstrate normal intelligence while at the same time exhibiting patterns of learning disabilities. Consequently, their school performance is often below average. In addition to inadequate academic achievement, firesetting adolescents frequently display conduct and behavior problems in school. Often when firesetting adolescents are asked about school they express great dissatisfaction and disinterest. If parents and their youngsters confirm a history of poor school performance and adjustment, and there has been no formal assessment of intelligence or learning ability, then the resulting plan must include a recommendation for psychological and intelligence testing. There are additional methods for collecting information on cognitive functioning such as conducting telephone or personal interviews with school teachers and counselors. These methods will be discussed in greater detail in following sections.

Emotional experience and expression are perhaps the most striking features of the psychological environment to be evaluated during initial interviews. Of critical importance is the relationship between emotional states and actual firesetting incidents. Therefore, it is necessary to ask how feelings are experienced and expressed in the family in general

as well as to ask about the predominant emotional state of adolescents immediately prior to and following their firestarting. Frequently it is reported that firesetting adolescents experience a somewhat constant state of unexpressed anger. In addition, youngsters fail to recognize or acknowledge their feelings of anger. Consequently, the anger sits below the surface waiting to be expressed at the slightest provocation. Regardless of what events trigger its emergence, adolescent firesetting often is associated with the expression of anger or aggression. Moreover, adolescents typically report feeling mad or angry just prior to firestarting and offer the reason of revenge or anger immediately after setting fires. The relationship between emotional experience and expression and firesetting must be described because this can be essential information utilized to stop firestarting and adjust the underlying mechanism, that is the inappropriate expression of anger or aggression, responsible for the pathological behavior.

The social conditions of the psychological environment are the fourth and final aspect which must be evaluated during initial interviews. The two most important features of the social environment are the family and friends of adolescents. These two features comprise the social support system and it is the quality of this system which must be assessed during these interviews. This can be accomplished in part by observing how family members interact with one another during these evaluations. In addition, adolescents and family members can be asked directly about the quality of their relationships with one another and with others outside the family. It is important to describe the nature of family and peer relationships for firesetting adolescents because it is likely that certain factors present in these relationships are significantly related to the occurrence of firesetting behavior.

There are four family characteristics which must be assessed during initial evaluations. They are structure, behavior, events and pathology. These four characteristics can be assessed both by observing family interaction as well as by asking questions of family members. Structure refers to the number of family members and how they are related to one another. It is important to know whether both parents are living in the home and the various roles and responsibilities they assume for their adolescents. Also, the number, sex and ages of brothers and sisters is necessary to know because it indicates the special relationship between family members. A description of family structure provides information on where and how adolescents fit within their primary social support system.

Family behavior is defined as the way in which family members interact with one another. The type of role modeling which occurs in the family can significantly influence adolescent behavior. For example, if family members express their anger by physically destroying objects, adolescents may think that this is an appropriate way of responding and they may view firestarting as a natural extension of this aggressive behavior. In addition, the nature and degree to which parents supervise or discipline their adolescents can influence behavior. Neglect, on the one hand, or overly harsh methods of punishment, on the other hand, both have been related to the occurrence of firesetting behavior. During initial interviews an attempt must be made to describe

the quality of family interaction from the perspective of each family member.

The stressful events that occur within the family system can have a major impact on the behavior of adolescents. The effect of these events on behavior may be observed immediately after their occurrence as well as three to six months later. Therefore, family members should be asked to recall any significant family events occurring within the last year such as geographical moves, separation or divorce, additions of new family members, or deaths. The number, type, and frequency with which these events took place should be assessed. The occurrence of fire-setting behavior is often linked both in time and in significance to the occurrence of stressful family events.

The final family feature which must be assessed during initial evaluations is whether individual family members, especially parents or responsible adults, have psychiatric histories. Frequently parents of firesetting adolescents have psychiatric histories which include diagnoses of Antisocial Personality or Alcoholism. These psychiatric diagnoses indicate that parents have been involved in at least two or more of the following behaviors including inconsistent work behavior, inability to maintain interpersonal relationships, irritability and aggressiveness, impulsivity, violating the rights of others and substance abuse. Parental psychopathology can have a profound influence on adolescent behavior; therefore, it is necessary to know about the psychiatric histories of immediate family members.

The remaining aspect of social circumstances—peer relationships—is perhaps one of the most important characteristics to assess during initial interviews. Adolescent firesetting often is the result of a small group decision to participate in some type of antisocial activity. Therefore, adolescents must be encouraged to evaluate the quality of their friendships. Of primary concern is the role which youngsters play in determining how their peer group will spend their time. The type of mutual interests adolescents share will direct the types of activities in which they participate. Participation in peer group activities depends upon the agreement amongst its members. For example, members of a peer group can agree to play baseball, however they also can agree to firestart. The type of peer group activity in which members agree to participate is directly related to the attitudes and values that individual adolescents bring to their group. These attitudes and values determine the goal and direction of peer group activities. Parents also must be responsible for monitoring the nature of the peer group in which their youngsters socialize. Because a great majority of adolescent behavior is influenced by the shared values of their peer group, and because participation in firestarting frequently is the result of this small group decision-making process, it is important to describe the social network of firesetting adolescents.

Table 3.2 summarizes the characteristics which comprise the four factors of psychological environment. The physical, cognitive, emotional and social circumstances of adolescents and their families must be evaluated during initial interviews. The purpose of assessing the psychological environment is to understand the underlying factors which

are significantly related to pathological firesetting. While adolescent firestarting can be stopped, it is only through the identification and remediation of the contributing psychological factors that pathological firesetting can be replaced with productive and socially acceptable patterns of behavior.

**Table 3.2**

**Interview Information on Psychological Environment**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>
<b>I. Physical</b>	<b>A. Demographic B. General health C. Energy level D. Bedwetting E. Accident rate</b>
<b>II. Cognitive</b>	<b>A. Intelligence B. Learning ability C. School performance</b>
<b>III. Emotional</b>	<b>A. Experience B. Expression</b>
<b>IV. Social</b>	<b>A. Family structure B. Family interaction C. Family events D. Family pathology E. Peer group interaction</b>

**Special Circumstances**

There are three additional areas of importance which must be assessed during initial evaluations. They are the identification of severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse and juvenile delinquent activities. They are labeled as special circumstances because they are not considered to be the primary focus of these interviews. However, these circumstances can surface during evaluations of firesetting adolescents and their families. Therefore, interviewers must be able to recognize these situations and they must be prepared to follow the appropriate procedures for the benefit and protection of youngsters and their families.

There are specific indicators of severe mental disturbance which may emerge during initial interviews with firesetting adolescents. The two major categories of severe mental disorder most likely to be observed are psychotic behavior, depression and suicide risk. Table 3.3 describes the essential features of psychotic and depressive mental disorders and suicide risk. Psychotic behavior is characterized by disorganized thought, altered perceptions and dramatic changes in mood. Psychotic adolescents are not able to communicate their ideas or

thoughts, they cannot answer simple questions and they may appear either severely withdrawn or overly excitable. Depressed adolescents will be tearful and cry without obvious reason, they will be excessively irritable and angry towards their friends and family, they will have withdrawn from participating in their usual activities and, when at risk for suicide, they may have repeated thoughts about death or suicide. In addition, suicide risk is high when adolescents have a specific plan of where, when and how they intend to hurt themselves. Identification of any one of these signs of severe mental disturbance must result in immediate referral of adolescents and their families to mental health professionals or services.

**Table 3.3**

**Interview Information on Severe Mental Disorder**

Factor	Characteristic
I. Psychosis	A. Disorganized thoughts B. Altered perceptions C. Dramatic mood changes
II. Depression	A. Tearful B. Spontaneous crying C. Excessive irritability D. Excessive anger E. Withdrawn
III. Suicide Risk	A. Repeated thoughts of death B. Specific plan

Physical and sexual abuse of adolescents can be recognized by a number of different factors during initial interviews. In addition, adolescents involved in or perpetrating acts of physical or sexual abuse can be identified during these evaluations. The factors indicative of physical and sexual abuse are summarized in Table 3.4.

Adolescents who have been physically abused may have unexplained bruises, welts, bite marks, burns, fractures and lacerations. Also evident may be unexplained abdominal injuries including swelling and localized tenderness and constant vomiting; unexplained hair loss due to hair pulling and injuries to the upper body which are unlikely to happen as the result of a physical accident. Adolescents who have been sexually abused may have genital trauma and/or venereal disease, may be pregnant, may display sleep disturbances, may experience bedwetting, abdominal pain, appetite disturbance and dramatic weight change.

Adolescents engaged in acts of physical abuse often display intense outbursts of temper accompanied by attempts to physically destroy objects or hit other people. Adolescents engaged in acts of sexual abuse frequently exhibit overly-sophisticated knowledge about sex, may be promiscuous or overly-sexualized and may have a history of prostitution.

**Table 3.4**

**Interview Information on Physical and Sexual Abuse**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>
<b>I. Physical Abuse</b>	
<b>A. Victim</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unexplained bruises</li> <li>2. Welts</li> <li>3. Bite marks</li> <li>4. Burns</li> <li>5. Fractures</li> <li>6. Lacerations</li> <li>7. Abdominal injuries</li> <li>8. Hair loss</li> <li>9. Upper body injuries</li> </ol>
<b>B. Perpetrator</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Temper outbursts</li> <li>2. Physical attacker</li> </ol>
<b>II. Sexual Abuse</b>	
<b>A. Victim</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Genital trauma</li> <li>2. Venereal disease</li> <li>3. Sleep disturbance</li> <li>4. Bedwetting</li> <li>5. Abdominal pain</li> <li>6. Appetite disturbance</li> <li>7. Dramatic weight change</li> </ol>
<b>B. Perpetrator</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sophisticated knowledge of sex</li> <li>2. Promiscuous</li> <li>3. Prostitution</li> </ol>

In many states there are laws requiring that those who identify or suspect physical or sexual abuse must report their observations immediately to the appropriate child welfare agency. Those interviewing fire-setting adolescents and their families must be aware of the regulations and procedures in their state regarding the recognition and reporting of physical and sexual abuse.

During initial evaluations with adolescent firesetters and their families evidence may indicate that the firestarting activity in question may in fact represent a criminal act of arson. The question of whether firesetting represents such a criminal act rests with both the legal definition of arson as well as who is interpreting this definition as it applies to a specific firestarting incident. Fire department, law enforcement and juvenile justice personnel interviewing adolescent firesetters are in a position to determine whether a specific firestarting incident classifies as a crime of arson. Because laws vary from state to

state, it is important for those conducting initial interviews with fire-setting adolescents to have sufficient knowledge of their state's criminal-legal system.

There are some general guidelines to follow in determining whether firestarting is arson. Regardless of the size or amount of damage caused by fires, there are certain conditions classifying firesetting as arson. Table 3.5 summarizes these conditions. Each state has an age of accountability above which youngsters can be arrested, tried, convicted and incarcerated for criminal activity, including arson. In general, adolescent firesetting constitutes arson if it can be demonstrated that there is a purposefully destructive plan to set fires. Sufficient motive must be established indicating that firestarting accompanied or covered other crimes, was the result of malicious mischief, reflected a lack of concern for the consequences of firesetting or represented an expression of affect such as revenge or anger. Motive, however, must not be morbid, that is, it must not reflect serious emotional or mental disturbance. In addition, intent must be evident in that adolescents must be mentally alert, physically capable of planning and setting fire, firestarting out of their own choice, and fully aware and capable of understanding the consequences and illegality of their firesetting behavior. These conditions must be demonstrated to categorize firestarting as arson. If there is reasonable doubt regarding any one of these elements, then there is sufficient cause not to classify the behavior of firesetting adolescents as arson.

**Table 3.5**

**Interview Information on Juvenile Delinquency**

Factor	Characteristics
I. Responsibility	A. Age of accountability
II. Motive (Must include one or more of these reasons)	A. Accompanies or covers other crime B. Malicious mischief C. No concern for consequences D. Expression of affect
III. Intent (Must include all these conditions)	A. Mentally alert B. Physically capable C. Voluntary D. Goal-directed E. Rational F. Willful

If these three circumstances—severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse or juvenile delinquency—or other special problems surface during initial interviews, it is best for interviewers to keep in mind the purpose of their evaluations. Often these purposes may be different depending on who is conducting these interviews. For example, certain types of fire department personnel, such as members of the arson investigating team, may be in a position to evaluate whether firestarting ac-

tivity represents arson crime. The critical content areas which are identified—firesetting history, psychological environment and special circumstances—suggest one way to organize the entire range of information which potentially can be obtained during initial interviews with firesetting adolescents and their families. Interviewers must recognize that they may find themselves having to make difficult choices regarding significant consequences of adolescent behavior. If members of an arson investigating team determine that a firestarting incident represents a crime of arson, they are making the transition from the identification of an antisocial behavior to the classification of that behavior as a crime. Behavioral or psychological problems and criminal activities carry two very different meanings as well as consequences for adolescents and their families. Therefore, in those cases, especially where special circumstances exist, it is necessary to make these difficult decisions based on what is in the best interest of youngsters and their families and what will benefit and protect the surrounding community.

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### **The Interview Schedules and Parent Questionnaire**

The Interview Schedule and Parent Questionnaire used when conducting initial evaluations with firesetting adolescents and their families are presented in Appendix B. There are two Interview Schedules and a Parent Questionnaire. There is an Adolescent Interview Schedule to be used when interviewing youngsters. There also is a Family Interview Schedule to be used when interviewing parents and other family members. Finally, there is a Parent Questionnaire which is filled out by the parents of firesetting adolescents. All three of these forms are scored to provide specific information about juvenile firesetters and their families. Appendix B also presents the procedures for scoring the Interview Schedules and Parent Questionnaire.

The Interview Schedules are organized according to the type of information which must be collected during these evaluations; namely, the three critical content areas of firesetting history, psychological environment and special circumstances. There are three major sections of the Interview Schedules which correspond to these three critical content areas. Each of the three sections contains specific questions reflecting the major features of these critical content areas. These Interview Schedules represent the range of information which must be covered during initial interviews with adolescent firesetters and their families.

The Interview Schedules are intended to be used as a guide during initial evaluations. The Schedules identify the questions which must be asked of firesetting adolescents and their families. These questions represent the topics which must be described during these evaluations. The specific style of presenting these questions is left to the interviewers. However, the answers to these questions must be obtained during the initial evaluations with youngsters and family members. Once the interviews have been completed with adolescents and family members, then interviewers must be able to fill out and answer the questions contained in the Interview Schedules.

The Interview Schedules provide the structure and direction for ini-

tial interviews with firesetting adolescents and their families. They enumerate the content areas and the questions which must be asked and answered. However, it is the responsibility of interviewers to ask questions in a manner that maximizes the amount of information shared by youngsters and family members. Guidelines are described indicating which Interview Schedules questions are to be presented during which phases of the interviews. In addition, while initial interviews may begin as a series of questions and answers, often during the course of these evaluations problems or concerns, such as resistance to answering questions or confidentiality during interviews, emerge as significant topics for discussion. These issues are discussed because they can contribute to the relative success in collecting the relevant information during these initial interviews with adolescent firesetters and their families.

### **Asking the Questions**

It is important for interviewers to know how to use the Interview Schedules during the sequence of interviews. In addition, it is necessary for interviewers to understand how to present the specific questions of the Interview Schedules to firesetting adolescents and their families. Although the application of the Interview Schedules can vary with different interviewers, there is a recommended approach for using them during the various phases of these evaluations. First, during the initial meeting with the entire family, interviewers can describe the content areas which are going to be discussed. Firesetting history and psychological environment can be mentioned as the major topics, because special circumstances are not always relevant to the majority of interviews. This strategy reduces anxieties and fears by letting adolescents and their families know what types of questions they can anticipate. Second, when interviewers meet alone with youngsters, utilizing the Adolescent Interview Schedule as a guide, they can ask the full range of questions regarding firesetting history. Although early memories of fire interest, fireplay and firesetting may be vague, it is important to at least ask adolescents for their impressions. Also, the full range of questions regarding psychological environment can be covered. (During adolescent interviews, parents can be asked to complete the Parent Questionnaire.) Third, utilizing the Family Interview Schedule as a guide, questions can be asked of parents regarding firesetting history and psychological environment. In addition, any questions parents may have about the Parent Questionnaire can be discussed. Finally, when adolescents and family members are brought back together, any inconsistencies or clarifications can be reviewed. It is important during this final phase not to emphasize the discrepancies between the stories of adolescents and their parents, but rather only to question those areas where details may be missing or there may be some confusion about what has been described during these interviews. Also, during the conclusion of these evaluations adolescents and family members must be given the opportunity to ask any questions which they may have concerning the process and content of these interviews.

The method of presenting the specific questions to adolescents and family members often determines the quality of the resulting information. Different interviewers will have different styles of presentation,

however one recommended approach when asking questions is to do so first in an open-ended manner. For example, rather than ask, "Did you set the fire because you were mad?" the question can be restated to ask, "Can you tell me how you were feeling before you set the fire?" If adolescents respond by saying "no" or "I can't remember," then it is appropriate to say, "Perhaps you were feeling upset or angry." Asking questions first in an open-ended fashion allows for the maximum openness of responses. However, some adolescents and family members may not be comfortable with this approach and they may need more structure and guidance before they can respond. In addition to presenting open-ended questions, interviewers must emphasize that they want to understand why specific behaviors occur. Adolescents and parents are likely to give rich responses when they understand that interviewers are interested in their opinions and reasons. Interviewers must learn to recognize early on during the evaluation the quality of the responses they are receiving and they must try to adjust their style of presentation to elicit thoughtful and detailed information from adolescents and their families.

Most likely it will be impossible to cover every base and answer all the questions contained in the Interview Schedules. All initial interviews will be different and the quality of the information obtained will depend on how the relationship develops between interviewers and adolescents and their families. The Interview Schedules are a guide for interviewers as well as a method for organizing information. It is not intended to tell interviewers how to talk with or ask questions of those they are evaluating. The feelings and reactions of youngsters and their families will play a significant role in determining how much information they share. During initial evaluations the interviewers must strike a delicate balance between covering the material as outlined in the Interview Schedules and being sensitive to and acknowledging the feelings and concerns of adolescents and their families.

### **Resistance**

Interviewers will encounter youngsters and families who will not be willing to share information or answer questions. This may be the result of several circumstances, some of which can be adjusted by interviewers during the evaluations. First, adolescents and family members may not respond to questions because of their method of presentation. Interviewers may need to change their questioning strategy by either giving more freedom for responses or by providing more structure to questions and answers during these interviews. Second, adolescents and family members may carry into these evaluations specific feelings, concerns or questions for which they want attention. These issues may block or override their ability to answer questions. Therefore, it is important for interviewers to recognize this as a possible explanation for their unwillingness to answer questions and give them the opportunity to talk about what is troubling them. Interviewers must not give up the total interview time, but once the burden is shared it often clears the way for the remainder of the interview to be focused on the original intent. Finally, there are some adolescents and families who will not cooperate with interviews, regardless of how many adjustments are made or who is conducting the interviews. There may be several reasons for this, none of which they

will be able to share. These interviews are conducted on a voluntary basis. Therefore, if there is a clear message of non-cooperation, it may be best to understand the limits of helping these youngsters and their families. Adolescents and family members must understand that without sharing information, it is impossible to resolve their problems. However, interviewers also must understand that these are a small number of adolescents and families who cannot share information and therefore cannot receive the necessary help. Interviewers must make their best effort at keeping the evaluation process open for the benefit of helping firesetting adolescents, their families, and the community.

### **Confidentiality**

Frequently, adolescents and family members will want to know whether what is said during initial interviews will be communicated to others. There are two major and somewhat different concerns regarding confidentiality. The first concern is confidentiality within the interviews. Because adolescents and parents are interviewed separately, they may want to share information in confidence. The second concern is the confidentiality of interviews with respect to disclosing shared information to those outside the interview. For example, juvenile courts adjudicating youngsters for charges of arson may want to use the information collected during these evaluations. This second concern is the topic of Module 7. The first concern of confidentiality within the interview process is described because it is important to the developing relationship between interviewers and adolescent firesetters and their families.

When issues of confidentiality are raised by adolescents or parents during interviews it is important to talk about their concerns. In general, if questions about confidentiality are not raised, there is little need to discuss them. It is assumed that the nature of the relationship during initial interviews is that of a reasonable trust between interviewers and adolescents and their families. However, adolescents may want to share information with interviewers and they may ask that it not be shared with the rest of the family. In addition, parents may request that certain information not be shared with their youngsters. If these situations occur, interviewers must clearly state to those requesting the confidential communication that, while the confidence can be maintained, if interviewers determine that it is in the best interest of adolescents or family members to disclose the information, they will let them know prior to sharing the confidence. The general rule for disclosing confidences resides with whether the information contained in the communication can be potentially harmful to those sharing it or to others. An example of this type of harmful communication is disclosure by the parents of physical or sexual abuse. Interviewers must use their best judgement about the content of the confidential communication. The majority of requests for confidences do not contain harmful or threatening information, but rather they take the form of some untold experiences which need to be expressed. Confidential communication or the building of a reasonable trust can improve the quality of information shared between interviewers and adolescents and their families.

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## Supplementary Interviews

The majority of information about firesetting and related problems comes from initial evaluations with adolescents and their families. There are two additional sources of information which can be of value when determining how to help these youngsters and their families. Family friends often can provide useful information. In addition, teachers and counselors at school can verify the impressions of adolescents or the observations of parents. However, there are some important questions to consider before embarking on these types of interviews.

The primary concern in conducting interviews with family friends or school personnel is how adolescents and family members will react to this type of activity. The family may welcome input from their social support network. The family also may not want their problems disclosed to their friends or to the school. If interviewers determine that it is important to conduct supplementary interviews, then it may be necessary for them to discuss this with adolescents and family members. Interviewers can state the reasons why they think it is important to conduct these interviews and they can ask for parental permission to speak with specific family friends or school personnel. If parents do not give their permission, interviewers may have to be content with the information they obtain from their interviews with adolescents and their families.

If parents agree to supplementary interviews, then interviewers must consider carefully the purpose and content of these interviews. For example, if there is a need to confirm observations about specific characteristics of the psychological environment, such as the quality of family interaction, then interviewers can ask family friends for their evaluation of these circumstances. Or, if there is a need to confirm academic or behavioral performance in school, interviewers can question teachers or counselors about the level of achievement or the quality of conduct. Interviewers must decide on a limited and focused set of questions to ask during these supplementary interviews. They can conduct these evaluations in person or by telephone. Interviewers must pay careful attention to the nature of questions asked and answered during these supplementary interviews so they do not interfere with the relationship which has been established between these adolescents and their families and their social support network. The intention of supplementary interviews is to confirm initial observations or gather additional information for the purpose of describing firesetting and related behaviors and determining the best plan for helping these youngsters and their families.

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## Summary

The critical content areas which comprise the focus of these initial interviews are firesetting history, psychological environment and special circumstances. Firesetting history includes information on fire interest, fireplay and firesetting. A description of the psychological environment contains information on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social conditions of adolescents and their families. Special circumstanc-

es refer to the recognition of those unique situations, such as severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse or juvenile delinquency, which may surface during initial interviews. Interviewers must ask a full range of questions concerning these critical content areas to both firesetting adolescents as well as their family members. Interview Schedules are presented as a method for organizing and presenting questions during evaluations. The relative success of these initial interviews depends on the skills of interviewers in maintaining a balance of asking relevant questions and being sensitive to the specific feelings and concerns of firesetting adolescents and their families.

## Module 4

# The Interview Information— Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of initial interviews is to collect and organize information which will describe the firesetting problem and related behaviors of adolescents and their families. The intended outcome of these interviews is an evaluation of the severity of the firesetting and accompanying pathological behaviors and recommendations on how to remedy these problems. Therefore, it is important to understand how to organize the information collected during these initial interviews for the purpose of making decisions regarding the presence or absence of special circumstances, the severity of the firesetting problem and the quality of the psychological environment. Once the interview information has been organized and evaluated, the resulting conclusions lead to the formulation and presentation of an intervention plan designed to eliminate firestarting and correct the accompanying pathological behavior. The relative success in preventing the reoccurrence of firesetting behavior in adolescents is directly related to a comprehensive evaluation procedure in which there is a description of the problems as well as recommendations for their solution.

### Organizing the Information

The organization of interview information for the purpose of drawing conclusions and making recommendations closely follows the content areas of the Interview Schedules. Firesetting history, psychological environment and special circumstances represent the major areas where the current problems are focused and therefore become the areas targeted for change. The goal of organizing information in each of these three areas is to be able to detect significant problems needing professional consultation, determine the severity of the firesetting behavior so that appropriate methods can be utilized to eliminate its reoccurrence, and assess the quality of the psychological environment to discover the underlying factors related to, and often responsible for, such antisocial activities as firestarting. Therefore, the presence of special circumstances needing professional consultation must first be ruled out, and then conclusions drawn regarding the severity of the firesetting behavior and the specific factors in the psychological environment which contribute to the presenting problems. Once decisions have been reached and conclusions have been drawn concerning these areas of evaluation, then an intervention plan can be designed to help firesetting adolescents and their

families.

### **Ruling Out Special Circumstances**

The presence of special circumstances during initial interviews, such as severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse or juvenile delinquency, must be identified immediately and given the appropriate attention. However, for the majority of interviews with firesetting adolescents and families, indications of these special circumstances can be ruled out according to specific criteria. The criteria for ruling out each of these three special circumstance situations can be applied through observation and questioning during initial interviews and conclusions can be drawn regarding their presence or absence. Once these circumstances have been ruled out, the resulting evaluations can yield accurate descriptions of the presenting problems and methods for their cure.

Severe mental disorder can be ruled out by asking specific questions during initial interviews. These questions are contained in both the Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules. These questions should be asked only if interviewers suspect or detect the presence of mental disturbance or if family members have psychiatric histories. There must be no evidence of any of the features of psychosis, such as disorganized thoughts, altered perceptions or dramatic mood changes, nor of depression, including spontaneous crying, excessive irritability or anger and withdrawal. In addition, if adolescents demonstrate one or more signs of depression, then questions contained in the Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules relating to suicide risk must be presented. If there is a positive response from adolescents or family members on any one of the indicators of the severe mental disorders of psychosis, depression or suicide risk, then families must be referred immediately to mental health professionals or services. However, the majority of cases involving firesetting adolescents will not exhibit any of the positive signs of severe mental disorder and its occurrence can be ruled out with an adequate degree of confidence.

Victims and perpetrators of physical and sexual abuse can be detected through observation and by asking a preliminary set of questions contained in the Interview Schedules. Questions regarding abuse should be asked only if interviewers observe or detect these problems or if there is a known history of these types of behavior. Facial injuries, bruises to the upper body and physical injuries can be directly observed and followed up by questions concerning their origin. Questions regarding how family members express their anger and the methods of discipline utilized can identify the presence or absence of physical aggression or abuse. Sexual abuse can be more difficult to detect, although questions concerning the sexual activity of adolescents may confirm or deny instances of abuse. The number of sexually active adolescents is increasing; however, it is the nature and type of sexual activity which causes the concern for safety. The observation or identification of unusual physical or sexual behavior, as outlined in the Interview Schedules, must be noted. If any evidence of such behaviors exist, then local reporting procedures must be followed. The detection of physical or sexual abuse does not necessarily preclude a complete evaluation of firesetting behavior, however, these accompanying problems necessitate that additional procedures must be followed for the safety of adolescents and their families.

Finally, there always exists the possibility that firesetting can be

classified as arson crime. Answers to questions regarding responsibility, motive and intent of specific firesetting incidents can indicate sufficient evidence for conscious and malicious purpose to destroy by fire. If this situation occurs, then information collected during initial evaluations can be utilized in an investigation of arson crime. In addition, if arson investigators or other law enforcement personnel are conducting these evaluations, they can investigate and arrest adolescents for arson crime. Therefore, it is important in these cases to seek legal consultation in determining when and if youngsters must be read their rights or Mirandized during these interviews. Mirandizing refers to informing adolescents that information shared during conversations or interviews can be used as evidence in a court of law. Module 6 outlines the law enforcement procedures to be followed during interviews when adolescents must be read their rights. Appendix E presents juvenile Miranda rights and waiver questions which have been recommended by the Los Angeles, California Grand Jury. If resulting fires warrant firefighting intervention and there is significant damage or destruction, then the probability increases that collecting information for the purpose of describing and remedying firesetting behaviors can lead to gathering evidence for possible arrest, trial and conviction of arson.

The presence of severe mental disorder and physical or sexual abuse can be ruled out through observation, and asking questions contained in the Interviews Schedules, and by applying the specific criteria utilized to recognize these behavior patterns. The interpretation of firesetting as a crime of arson is a more difficult special circumstance to evaluate and often requires legal knowledge and consultation. If any of these special circumstances surface during initial interviews, then the appropriate procedures must be followed for the protection and benefit of the community as well as adolescents and their families.

### **Firesetting History**

The Interview Schedules identify the specific characteristics to be assessed for firesetting history. An analysis of these factors indicate whether adolescents are at little, definite or extreme risk for becoming involved in future firestarting. In addition to this classification resulting from the Interview Schedules, there are two more indicators which suggest the severity of the current firesetting behavior. The purpose of evaluating firesetting severity is to determine the risk for its reoccurrence and to recommend methods for preventing another firestart. The two additional types of information which can be utilized for this purpose are the nature of the most recent firestart and the existence of a future plan to burn.

The nature of the most recent firestart indicates the severity of the current firesetting behavior. Generally, severity increases with age, when a significant amount of time and effort has gone into planning the firestart, when the ignition source has been collected or built, when other antisocial behaviors such as petty theft or vandalism accompany the firestart, when adolescents admit they intended to destroy by burning, when they feel no remorse or guilt and when they leave the scene of the fire without going for help and return to watch the fire burn. The presence of these indicators suggest that these types of firesetting behavior represent a definite plan of action by adolescents to destroy by fire. In addition, they suggest that these youngsters do not regret their behaviors and may even derive a certain satisfaction from participating in them. The probability is high that adolescents engaged in these

kinds of firesetting incidents will repeat their firestarting activity if they do not receive appropriate and effective help.

While the presence of specific indicators suggest the severity of the most recent firestart, when these indicators are coupled with the existence of a future plan for firesetting, then there is a dramatic increase in the risk that adolescents will continue to firestart. During initial interviews adolescents must be asked whether they have a plan for their next firestart. If they answer yes, then they must be questioned about the specifics of their plan. The more detailed the plan, the more serious the risk for future firestarting. For example, if adolescents have thought about when their next firestart will occur, or what the target will be, these factors increase the likelihood of their participation in firesetting. If adolescents have formulated a firesetting plan aimed at a specific target, the question of whether they are a significant threat to themselves or others must be evaluated. If these youngsters declare they are determined to set their next fire, then these adolescents may have to be removed from their immediate environment. In addition, steps such as hospitalization, may have to be taken to prevent these youngsters from setting another fire. These steps are outlined in detail in Module 6. A plan for future firestarting represents a well-established pattern of firesetting behavior which demands swift and effective attention.

The severity of adolescent firesetting increases with the presence of specific indicators in the most recent firestart and the existence of a future plan to burn. If these two factors are present, adolescents are at the highest level of risk for involvement in future firestarts. The longer the history of firestarting without remedy the greater the established behavior pattern and the more difficult it will be to turn around this pathological activity.

### Psychological Environment

The four major factors comprising the psychological environment—physical, cognitive, emotional and social—can be viewed as the essential features related to pathological firesetting behavior. The assumption is that if the appropriate adjustments are made in these factors, then the risk of future firestarting is significantly reduced or eliminated in the majority of cases. Therefore, indications of problems in the physical, cognitive, emotional or social functioning of adolescents are significantly related to firesetting behavior, and once they have been remedied, the risk of future firestarting also is eliminated. It is important to identify those salient physical, cognitive, emotional and social factors which, once adjusted, are likely to stop pathological firesetting.

There are several physical characteristics of adolescents related to firesetting behavior. The presence of certain physical features may require psychological treatment. For example, firesetting adolescents often display higher than average levels of energy which may be accompanied by shortened attention spans and other factors associated with the psychiatric diagnosis of hyperactivity. If these features are observed or reported, then a referral must be made for psychiatric evaluation. There are additional physical indicators typical of firesetting adolescents, such as histories of bedwetting or numerous physical injuries resulting from accidents, which deserve psychiatric attention. Because firesetting adolescents frequently display these physical dysfunctions, it is important that they be identified so that the appropriate psycho-

logical treatment can be recommended to remedy these problems.

While firesetting adolescents often exhibit normal levels of intelligence, they also may demonstrate poor academic achievement because of significant learning disabilities. If parental report suggests poor school performance and supplementary interviews with school personnel confirm these observations, then recommendations must be made to evaluate the nature and extent of the learning problems. Special programs designed to work with youngsters displaying learning difficulties can help adolescents adjust to these problems. In addition, these programs allow youngsters to experience a less frustrating and more rewarding school environment.

Firesetting adolescents typically have difficulty experiencing and expressing their emotions, especially their feelings of anger or aggression. Once these problems have been identified, there are numerous counseling methods which can be utilized to improve the emotional functioning of these youngsters. Because the most frequently occurring reason for adolescent firesetting is revenge or anger, it is important to evaluate and remedy this aspect of psychological behavior and functioning.

There are several social circumstances which characterize firesetting adolescents and their families. Perhaps the most influential feature of the social network is the quality of the family environment. There have been cases of adolescent firesetting which have been identified as the expression of family pathology. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the family structure, their style of interacting with one another and the significant family events occurring in the recent past. These factors can play a major role in influencing the behavior of adolescents. If firesetting is related to family problems, then psychological evaluation and treatment which includes the entire family may be the intervention of choice. In addition to assessing the family environment, the personal friendships of adolescents must be acknowledged. Because adolescent thinking and decision-making is greatly influenced by the behaviors and activities of their friends, it is necessary to understand the nature of the relationship between members of their peer group. Often firesetting adolescents who are having difficulties with their friends can participate in programs designed to help them achieve socially appropriate group behavior. Identifying problems in the social support network and making the appropriate adjustments can provide the essential structure and guidance for those adolescents for whom firesetting was an expression of dissatisfaction with their family or social life.

Table 4.1 summarizes the three major areas—special circumstances, firesetting history and psychological environment—from which specific information must be evaluated and organized during the initial interviews. The Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules and the Parent Questionnaire presented in Appendix B are the specific tools utilized to collect this information on adolescent firesetters and their families. Once the information contained on these forms has been evaluated and scored, then conclusions can be drawn regarding the behavior and functioning of firesetting adolescents and their families. The Interview Schedules and Parent Questionnaire will yield information regarding specific risk levels for future firesetting involvement. The determination of these risk levels is directly related to the types of recommendations which can be made concerning the elimination of firesetting behavior as well as the mitigation of the psychological factors which are related to the pathology. The following section outlines how the information

collected during initial interviews is organized to make recommendations which can be presented to firesetting adolescents and their families.

**Table 4.1**

**The Organization of Interview Information**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>
<b>I. Special Circumstances</b>	
<b>A. Severe Mental Disturbance</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Psychosis</li> <li>2. Depression</li> <li>3. Suicide risk</li> </ol>
<b>B. Abuse</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physical</li> <li>2. Sexual</li> </ol>
<b>C. Juvenile Delinquency</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibility</li> <li>2. Motive</li> <li>3. Intent</li> </ol>
<b>II. Firesetting History</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fire interest</li> <li>2. Fireplay</li> <li>3. Firesetting history</li> <li>4. Most recent firestart</li> <li>5. Future firesetting plans</li> </ol>
<b>III. Psychological Environment</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physical</li> <li>2. Cognitive</li> <li>3. Emotional</li> <li>4. Social</li> </ol>

**Making Recommendations**

There are four basic steps in making recommendations to adolescent firesetters and their families based on the conclusions drawn from the information collected during initial interviews. The first step is to formulate intervention plans which will eliminate firesetting behavior and mitigate the related problems occurring in the psychological environment. The second step is to present these intervention plans to adolescents and their families. The third step, when appropriate, is to write in a concise manner the conclusions and recommendations of the initial interviews. The fourth step is follow-up to ascertain whether adolescents and their families have initiated the prescribed recommendations. The completion of each of these four steps marks the end of the final phase of the interview process. The successful completion of initial interviews with firesetting adolescents and their families results in the formulation of effective plans for reducing the risk of future involvement in firesetting behavior. Once these intervention plans have been achieved, attention must focus on the implementation of these plans to mitigate the presenting problems. The next section of this Manual—

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Intervention—describes the various options available which are designed to stop firestarting and resolve the associated pathological behaviors.

### Formulating Intervention Plans

The goal of formulating effective intervention plans is to make appropriate suggestions to eliminate firesetting and the accompanying behavior problems. The primary considerations for formulating intervention plans are to determine when there is adequate information to present them and what will be contained in the organization and format of the plans. Although these questions can vary from interview to interview, there are recommended guidelines to follow which can be applied to the majority of evaluations with firesetting adolescents and their families.

In general, intervention plans are first presented to adolescents and family members during the last phase of initial interviews when they have gathered together for their final thoughts and concluding remarks. Therefore, intervention plans are based on the information collected during initial interviews. In addition, these plans are formulated almost immediately and little time is allowed for second considerations. However, it is suggested that, if intervention plans are presented within this time frame, that they be presented as preliminary recommendations. Supplementary interviews may need to be conducted to verify certain types of information or in those difficult cases, especially those involving firesetting as arson crime, there may be a need for legal or other types of professional advice or consultation. Because it is important to offer youngsters and their families some relief in the form of useful suggestions, especially concerning the elimination of future firestarting, it is necessary to offer preliminary recommendations for help during the close of the initial interviews. Adjustments, modifications and additions to these recommendations can occur at a later point in time and as a result of collecting additional information or obtaining relevant advice or consultation.

There are two major parts to the organization and format of intervention plans. The first part is the description of the problem and the second part is recommendations for its resolution. The description of the problem first must rule out the occurrence of special circumstances. The presence of any one of the three special circumstances—severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse or arson crime—requires immediate action. Table 4.2 summarizes the intervention methods which must be employed for each of these circumstances. If there is evidence of severe mental disturbance, referral must be immediately initiated to mental health professionals or community agencies. If there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse, in most states this must be reported to the appropriate child protective services agencies. If there is evidence indicating that firesetting is an arson crime, it must be recommended to adolescents and parents that they seek legal advice. In addition, given these circumstances, it may be necessary to terminate the initial interviews until adequate legal procedures, including informing adolescents of their legal rights or Mirandizing, can be initiated. If these special circumstances occur during initial interviews, it is best to follow the suggested guidelines in Table 4.2 or to have worked-out within various agencies specific policies directed at handling these special circumstances in a manner which will benefit the community, firesetting adolescents, and their families and the community.

**Table 4.2**

**Intervention Methods For Special Circumstances**

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
<b>I. Severe Mental Disturbance</b>	<b>A. Immediate referral to mental health professional or agencies.</b>
<b>II. Physical or Sexual Abuse</b>	<b>A. According to individual state laws, report to appropriate child protective agencies.</b>
<b>III. Juvenile Delinquency</b>	<p><b>A. Advise adolescents and parents to seek legal counsel.</b></p> <p><b>B. According to individual state laws, follow appropriate legal procedures, which may include Mirandizing.</b></p>

Once the presence of special circumstances have been ruled out, it is necessary to describe and analyze firesetting risk. Scoring the information contained in the Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules and the Parent Questionnaire yields determination of the risk level for future firesetting behavior. These scores are represented on the Category Profile Sheets (Appendix B). The procedures for scoring also are outlined in Appendix B. The Category Profile Sheet indicates three major risk levels—extreme, definite and little for future involvement in firesetting. These risk levels refer both to the nature of the firesetting behavior as well as to the quality of the psychological environment. In addition, the most critical determination of future firesetting risk is based on an analysis of firesetting history and recent firesetting behavior. Therefore, in addition to the scores adolescents and families receive on the Interview Schedules and Parent Questionnaire, there are specific criteria for firesetting behavior which must be taken into consideration when determining extreme, definite or little risk for future firesetting activity.

The most severe risk level of firesetting exists when there are well-defined plans for subsequent firestarts and adolescents threaten to follow through with their intentions. In addition, their scores on the Category Profile Sheet will indicate extreme risk for firesetting. If these factors are present, then there is extreme risk for future firestarting and immediate action, including referral to mental health professionals for possible hospitalization, must be initiated. These adolescents are threatening to themselves and their community and must be isolated and given the appropriate help for their safety as well as the safety of others. If there is no future plan for firestarting, but the most recent firestart is indicative of arson crime, there also remains extreme risk for firesetting. Adolescents and their parents must be informed of this significant risk level and they must be advised to seek legal counsel. In addition, interviewers must be aware of their state laws regarding the investigation and arrest of adolescents for arson crime. They may need to consult their legal experts for the purpose of following the most appropriate procedures, which may include Mirandizing or reading adolescents their rights. Mirandizing refers to informing adolescents that information

shared during conversations or interviews can be used as evidence in a court of law. Appendix E presents juvenile Miranda rights and waiver questions which have been recommended by the Los Angeles, California Grand Jury. Details on the interface between firesetting behavior, arson crime and the juvenile justice system are the topics of Module 6.

If the most recent firestart does not appear to be the result of a malicious intent to burn, but there is a childhood history of fireplay and firesetting, and one or more factors in the most recent firestart are indicative of pathological behavior (outlined in Table 1.3 in Module 1,) then there remains a substantial risk that firestarting will reoccur. Scores on the Category Profile Sheet will fall into definite risk for firesetting. These cases can be classified as definite risk for involvement in future firestarting. Parents must be cautioned about this potential and adolescents and their families must be encouraged to participate in some type of intervention program designed to eliminate the firesetting behavior and related problems. Definite risk adolescents can be helped by fire department efforts as well as community-based programs. These intervention methods are the topics of Modules 5 and 6.

Finally, if there is no childhood history of fireplay or firesetting, but the most recent firestart contains one or more factors indicative of pathological behavior, (indicated in Table 1.3 in Module 1), then there is little risk for future firesetting behavior. Also, scores on the Category Profile Sheet will indicate little risk for firesetting. Although it is unlikely that these adolescents will become involved in future firestarts, it is important to take steps to ensure that their firesetting behavior will not be repeated. These youngsters can benefit from participating in intervention programs designed to teach adolescents fire prevention and safety. In addition, these youngsters and their families can take advantage of a variety of other fire department and community programs outlined in Modules 5 and 6.

Table 4.3 summarized the three risk levels of firesetting—extreme, definite and little—and describes the specific intervention methods which can be applied to these risk levels. The most severe or extreme level of risk where there is an immediate threat of firestarting may require separating adolescents from their home environment and temporarily institutionalizing them. In addition, extreme risk also can include defining the most recent firestart as a crime of arson. This extreme risk level requires adolescents and parents to seek legal counsel and it mandates interviewers to follow specific legal procedures which can include Mirandizing. The next level, definite risk, indicates both a history of childhood fireplay or firesetting as well as the presence of one or more characteristics of the most recent firestart suggesting pathological behavior. This level of definite risk requires the application of various intervention methods designed to stop future firestarting incidents. The final level, little risk, shows no history of fireplay or firesetting but suggests pathological behavior indicators are present in one reported adolescent firestart. Educational efforts and counseling programs will help little risk adolescents. These risk levels and corresponding intervention strategies represent guidelines for interviewers to follow when making their recommendations to help adolescents and their families prevent a repetition of firesetting behavior.

The determination of risk for involvement in future firesetting, whether it is extreme, definite or little, must be accompanied by a description of the psychological factors related to firestarting. Firesetting most often occurs in relationship to corresponding problems in the psy-

chological environment. Therefore, to effectively eliminate recurrent firesetting it is necessary to mitigate the identified problems in the psychological environment. The specific physical, cognitive, emotional and social problems occurring within the lives of firesetting adolescents must be targeted for change or improvement. For example, if parents report a higher-than-average incidence of physical injuries resulting from accidents, a medical or psychiatric evaluation can be recommended to discover the possible reasons for such occurrences.

**Table 4.3**

**Risk Levels of Firesetting and Intervention Methods**

<b>Firesetting Risk Level</b>	<b>Intervention Method</b>
<b>I. Little</b>	
No history of fireplay or firesetting, single-episode firestart and "little" risk score on Category Profile Sheet	Educational programs in prevention and safety, fire department counseling programs, youth services, mental health and other community programs
<b>II. Definite</b>	
Fireplay or firesetting history, most recent firestart contains one or more pathological characteristics	Fire department counseling programs, youth services, mental health and other community programs
<b>III Extreme</b>	
Stated intention to firestart, specific future plan and "extreme" risk score on Category Profile Sheet	Immediate referral to mental health or juvenile justice
Arson crime	Advise legal counsel for adolescents and, according to individual state laws, follow appropriate legal procedures

Table 4.4 summarizes a number of possible intervention methods which can be employed given the most frequently occurring physical, cognitive, emotional and social problems of firesetting adolescents and their families. In addition, there are a number of counseling methods, the topics of Modules 5 and 6, which focus both on eliminating firesetting behavior as well as reducing the associated problems in the psy-

chological environment. A healthy psychological environment dramatically reduces the risk of future firestarting behavior for adolescents.

**Table 4.4**

**Problems in the Psychological Environment and Intervention Methods**

<b>Psychological Environment</b>	<b>Intervention Method</b>
<b>I. Physical</b>	
<b>A. High rate of physical injuries due to accidents</b>	<b>1. Referral for medical or psychiatric evaluation</b>
<b>II. Cognitive</b>	
<b>A. Poor school performance</b>	<b>1. Referral for educational evaluation</b>
<b>III Emotional</b>	
<b>A. Experience of overwhelming anger and inappropriate expression of aggression</b>	<b>1. Referral for counseling or psychological treatment</b>
<b>IV Social</b>	
<b>A. Family intervention</b>	<b>1. Referral to family counseling</b>
<b>B. Peer group interaction</b>	<b>1. Referral to group counseling or youth group activities</b>

Formulating effective intervention plans includes presenting to adolescents and their families, during the final phase of initial interviews, a description of the current problems coupled with specific recommendations for their resolution. The description of these problems covers both an analysis of the risk for future firesetting as well as those factors in the psychological environment related to firestarting behavior. Scores on the Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules and the Parent Questionnaire help determine risk levels for involvement in future firestarting behavior. There are specific intervention methods which can be employed to eliminate the risk of future firesetting involvement. In addition, because firestarting occurs in relationship to specific physical, cognitive, emotional and social characteristics in the psychological environment, it is important to recommend changes or adjustments in those psychological factors which will improve the quality of life for adolescents and their families.

## **Presentation of Intervention Plans**

Intervention plans are formulated as interviewers collect information during initial interviews. In the majority of cases they are generally presented to adolescents and families during the final phase of these interviews. The development of these plans relies heavily on the quality of the information offered by adolescents and their family members. Because there may be a need to verify the information by conducting supplementary interviews or because there may be certain conditions requiring additional advice or consultation, in some cases it may be necessary to present these intervention plans within the context of preliminary recommendations. If there is a need for supplementary interviews or outside consultation this can be discussed during the presentation of the recommendations. In those cases requiring immediate action, such as evidence of any one of the three special circumstances or the presence of severe risk for firesetting, the specific steps to be taken must be discussed with adolescents and their parents during the final phase of interviews. Often these are the most difficult and delicate interview circumstances and may require mental health, legal or other kinds of consultation or back-up. If doubts or questions arise as to how to proceed with the presentation of recommendations, the most effective course of action is to seek advice or consultation. Appropriate decision-making is often supported by additional advice, and the resulting recommendations and intervention plans are likely to be more successful in benefiting adolescent firesetters and their families.

## **Written Evaluations**

There may be specific instances where the results of initial interviews must be described or summarized in a written report. It is recommended that agencies conducting initial interviews with firesetting adolescents and their families keep some written records of their evaluations. There are a number of methods which can be utilized for this purpose. Many agencies already may have their own format for written records. The Interview Schedules and resulting Category Profile Sheet, presented in Appendix B, once completed, can serve as a written record. In addition to records, there may be a need for written communication concerning these initial evaluations with adolescents and their families. These situations are covered in detail in Module 7. However, it is important to understand how to communicate in writing to others the information collected during initial interviews. Appendix C contains examples of written evaluations of adolescent firesetters and their families. The content of these reports includes a statement of purpose, description of the presenting problems and recommendations for their resolution. These examples can be used as guides when there is a need to communicate with others about information collected during initial interviews with firesetting adolescents and their families.

## **Follow-Up**

Once recommendations have been presented to adolescents and their families at the completion of the initial interviews, it is assumed that the recommendations will be followed. However, unless interviewers conduct a follow-up they will not know whether adolescents and their families actually become involved in intervention programs. Therefore, it is important for interviewers, after an appropriate length of time (two to four weeks) to contact families and ask about their participation in the recommended interventions. It also is important that inter-

viewers tell families during the initial interviews that they intend to contact them for follow-up. In this way families will be supported in their efforts to obtain help. At follow-up, if no attempt has been made by families to participate in interventions, they should be encouraged to make attempts to follow the recommendations. If they have initiated interventions, they should be praised and encouraged to continue their involvement. The purpose of follow-up is to let families know that there is concern and commitment in helping them to resolve their fire-setting and related problems.

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## Summary

The information collected during initial interviews must be organized so as to yield a description of the current problems and recommendations for their resolution. First, the presence of special circumstances must be evaluated. If any one of the three special circumstances exist—severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse or juvenile delinquency—then specific and immediate steps must be taken for the benefit and safety of the community, firesetting adolescents, and their families. If the presence of these special circumstances is ruled out, then there must be an accurate description of firesetting history coupled with an analysis of the risk for future firestarting. Different risk levels of firesetting necessitate different types of interventions. In addition, because firesetting occurs in relationship to corresponding problems in the psychological environment, there must be an evaluation of the physical, cognitive, emotional and social characteristics effecting the lives of adolescents and their families. The identification of problems within the psychological environment must result in recommendations designed to make appropriate changes and improvements in the quality of life for firesetting adolescents and their families. In most cases, intervention plans are presented to adolescents and family members during the final phase of initial interviews. Frequently, there will be instances where written records and reports must be generated from these initial interviews, therefore it is important to know how to communicate in writing the results of these evaluations. Finally, interviewers must follow-up with adolescents and their families to know whether they have pursued the recommended interventions. An accurate and reliable description of firesetting and related problems, coupled with intervention plans aimed at eliminating firestarting and improving the quality of life for adolescents is the first significant step in working toward a community free of firesetting youngsters.

**SECTION III.**  
**INTERVENTION**

## Module 5

# Fire Department Intervention

**F**ire department intervention actually begins when there is first contact with adolescent firesetters and their families. This first contact is called detection. The detection of adolescent firesetters occurs in a number of different ways including parents and youngsters asking for help, schools and other community agencies referring cases to fire departments, fire education and prevention specialists working with these adolescents and arson investigators identifying youngsters who have set significant fires. Most often adolescents with firestarting problems are detected only after they have set fires. When fire departments identify adolescent firesetters they must decide what procedures to follow to effectively suppress the immediate firestarting problem as well as to prevent its recurrence. There are a number of steps or interventions which fire departments can take to help firesetting adolescents and to protect their community. Each fire department can select a number of different options from providing evaluation services for adolescents and their families to offering direct intervention services such as counseling programs designed to eliminate the problem of adolescent firesetting. Regardless of the specific intervention method employed, because fire departments frequently are the first community agency to identify adolescent firesetters, they must take effective steps to reduce adolescent involvement in firesetting.

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### Detection

Most often the identification of adolescent firesetters by fire departments occurs after they have been involved in one or more unsafe firestarts. Typically these youngsters have childhood histories of fireplay or firestarting and they may or may not have been exposed to fire education or prevention programs. Frequently the firestarting of these adolescents has resulted in significant fires. These youngsters come to the attention of fire departments in a number of different ways. First, parents may discover firestarting behavior and voluntarily seek help for their adolescents. Second, schools, mental health, social service and other community agencies may refer youngsters and families presenting with firestarting problems to fire departments. Finally, after damaging and costly fires, arson investigators may identify specific adolescents involved in illegal firestarts. These three methods of recognizing adolescent firesetters are important because they not only indicate the severi-

ty of the firestarting behavior, but they also are related to the specific methods which are employed to prevent future firestarting activity. The types of programs designed to help adolescents and families who voluntarily seek help for their recognized firesetting problems often are different from those programs developed to rehabilitate adolescents who are investigated, caught or arrested for arson crime. Fire department efforts can vary according to whether adolescents are identified voluntarily, by referral or investigation. Fire departments must take into consideration how firesetting adolescents are detected to develop the most appropriate and effective methods to suppress future firestarts.

### **Voluntary**

If parents or adolescents recognize their firesetting problem before a significant fire is set, they stand the best possible chance to eliminate the firestarting behavior and prevent its recurrence. However, once parents or adolescents identify their problem, they must also know where to turn for help. This is why it is important for parents and youngsters to be educated about where in their community they can receive effective intervention for their firesetting problem. Fire departments can play an active role in educating their communities about the dangers of adolescent firesetting, how to prevent its occurrence and how to get help for those who recognize their problem. Community education and prevention efforts by fire departments aimed at discouraging dangerous fireplay and firestarting and encouraging the recognition of firesetting problems will dramatically reduce the occurrence of adolescent set fires.

Effective community education and prevention programs allow fire departments to take an active role in helping parents and adolescents identify their firesetting problems and voluntarily seek the appropriate type of help. A description of how fire departments can develop education and prevention efforts aimed at adolescent firesetters is presented in the following the section on intervention. Most parents and adolescents who voluntarily come for help for their firesetting problems generally demonstrate a strong desire and motivation to make the necessary adjustments to prevent the recurrence of firestarting.

### **Referral**

Fire departments who operate community education and prevention programs focused on adolescent firesetters are most likely to be referred families from other community agencies such as schools, mental health centers and social service agencies. Those fire departments which do not have such programs also are likely to get referrals, but the number of referrals is likely to be significantly less. Community agencies often look to fire departments to provide technical knowledge and assistance regarding youngsters and their firesetting behaviors.

If fire departments set up services for adolescent firesetters and their families, then they must be prepared to accept referrals and work closely with other community agencies. If fire departments do not intend to set up programs for firesetting adolescents, it is important for fire department personnel to know when, where and how to get help for these youngsters and their families in their community. Specific community resources which may be of help are described in the following section on intervention. It is in the best interest of maintaining fire-safe communities to have fire departments take a major leadership role in knowing

how to get help for firesetting adolescents and their families.

## **Investigation**

Once significant fires have been set requiring firefighting intervention, and there is suspicion of adolescent involvement, arson investigators begin procedures to determine who was responsible for the ignition. These procedures represent the investigation process and can include interviews, interrogation and eventual arrest. At any time during this investigation process adolescents suspected of criminal firestarting can be interviewed by arson investigators or other fire service personnel. If adolescents are suspects in criminal firestarting and they are interviewed by arson investigators who have the authority to interrogate and arrest, then adolescents must be informed that they are suspects and they must be advised of their legal rights or Mirandized, including the right to seek legal counsel, before answering questions related to the specific firesetting incident. If adolescents suspected of criminal firestarting are interviewed by fire service personnel who do not have the authority to interrogate and arrest, questions remain as to whether information obtained during these interviews can later be used as evidence in criminal investigations. Because the interface between fire service and law enforcement varies from community to community, it is the responsibility of individual fire departments to seek their own legal counsel relating to whether information obtained during evaluation interviews can be used in later criminal investigations.

The investigation of criminal firestarting, generally conducted by arson investigators, results in the collection of information leading to either dismissing the possibility of adolescent involvement or confirming the participation of specific adolescents in the ignition of fires. Arson investigators determine whether there is sufficient evidence for arrest. Arrest marks the end of the investigation process. At any time during the investigation process, adolescents suspected of criminal firestarting also can be referred for psychological evaluations, mental health or counseling services or other types of appropriate help. Regardless of whether adolescents are investigated or eventually arrested for criminal firestarting, they can and should participate in programs designed to remedy problematic psychological behaviors. Investigation and or arrest for criminal firestarting does not rule out the possibility of these adolescents receiving necessary and appropriate psychological or other types of services. In fact, youngsters investigated and arrested for arson crime are likely to benefit from additional support programs designed to eliminate firestarting and other pathological behavior patterns. Legal procedures and rehabilitation programs can work hand-in-hand to prevent the recurrence of firesetting.

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## **Evaluation**

The identification of adolescent firesetters, voluntarily or by referral or investigation, marks their entry into a network of services designed to remedy their unsafe firestarting behavior. Regardless of how firesetting adolescents enter this network of services, the first important intervention step is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of these youngsters and their families. Fire departments are in an excellent position to provide these evaluation services because they are the community agency most often involved in the initial identification of these adolescents. Therefore, it is important for fire department personnel to be equipped with the appropriate skills and techniques to execute an eval-

uation which will provide information as to the various factors associated with firesetting behavior and the specific steps to be taken to prevent its recurrence. Section II, *Evaluating Adolescent Firesetters*, Modules 2, 3 and 4, provide the information and tools necessary to conduct a thorough evaluation of these youngsters and their families.

The recommended evaluation strategy is the interview. Personal interviews with firesetting adolescents and their families provide the most accurate and reliable first-hand information surrounding patterns of firesetting and other problematic behaviors. Supplementary interviews also can be conducted with additional family members and friends, school personnel and others who know or who have worked closely with these youngsters and their families. The key to successful mitigation of unsafe firestarting behavior is organizing the interview information so that specific recommendations can be made for effectively eliminating the recurrence of pathological firesetting.

Evaluation is both separate from as well as part of effective intervention. It is separate in that it is an information gathering process which does not provide immediate or direct techniques for eliminating unsafe firestarting. It is a part of the intervention process in that it is the critical first step in understanding why youngsters become involved in firesetting and determining the appropriate steps which need to be taken to resolve the problematic behaviors. Fire departments and community agencies must understand the benefits as well as the limitations of evaluation. Examples of programs capable of evaluating adolescent firesetters and their families are described in the following section. Fire departments and community agencies developing evaluation programs for firesetting adolescents and their families become involved in a major effort to initiate procedures which will lead to preventing unsafe and illegal firestarting.

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## **Intervention**

There are four categories of intervention methods designed to help adolescent firesetters and their families. They are education and prevention programs, evaluation and referral services, counseling programs and referral or community networking efforts. Fire departments and community agencies can select one or more of these methods as part of their strategy to eliminate unsafe firestarting behavior. Each of these four intervention methods are described in terms of specific program goals, the particular types of adolescents and the certain kinds of problems they target, and the techniques they utilize to achieve success. Program examples of each of these four intervention methods are presented in Appendix D. The relative effectiveness of these intervention methods is judged by their ability to eliminate unsafe firestarting and adjust the accompanying pathological behaviors.

### **Education and Prevention**

There are two major goals of education and prevention programs aimed at adolescent firesetting. The first goal is to teach communities how to prevent the occurrence of adolescent firesetting through the presentation of useful information on firestarting behavior. The second goal is to teach families, friends and communities how to recognize unsafe firesetting behavior and encourage them to seek help before firestarting results in damaging and costly fires. Effective education and prevention efforts can discourage adolescents from participating in unsafe fireset-

ting, teach parents to identify these problem behaviors in their youngsters and convince them to obtain the necessary help before they experience or are responsible for the setting of a major fire.

There are several factors to take into consideration when determining the best target group for education and prevention programs. First, communities must identify whether they have a higher than average incidence of adolescent-set fires. Although it is often difficult to know the extent of adolescent involvement in firesetting, one indicator is the number of fires set in middle schools and high schools. Regardless of the size of fires, from trash cans to entire buildings, there is a significant relationship between adolescent firesetting and school-set fires. Second, those community agencies and programs working with adolescents and families can be effective communicators of information on adolescent firesetting. Appropriate community programs include not only agencies providing recreational activities for youngsters, such as boys and girls clubs, scouting groups and youth organizations, but those community programs which already may be working with adolescent firesetters such as mental health and social services. Finally, those families and parents of youngsters with histories of childhood fireplay or firestarting or other antisocial behaviors are at risk and perhaps in most need of information about adolescent firesetting. Unfortunately, these families frequently are the most difficult to identify unless they have received services for their problems in community agencies. Nevertheless, education and prevention programs must try to reach the majority of those at risk, including adolescents and their families, community programs and agencies working with youngsters and specific communities where there may be a high incidence of adolescent-set fires.

The most effective techniques and methods employed by education and prevention programs take into consideration three major factors. The first of these factors is the type of presentation utilized in teaching communities about adolescent firesetting. The two primary types of presentation are verbal communication and the written word. Fire departments can work directly with adolescents by developing specific educational programs. For example, fire departments can offer short training sessions teaching adolescents how to become aware of fire hazards and how to remove them before they cause significant fires. Also, fire departments can talk with community agencies regarding the problem of adolescent firestarting. For example, fire departments can work directly with schools, either with the teachers or the students, presenting relevant information on how to prevent adolescent involvement in unsafe firestarts. In addition, fire departments and community agencies can prepare public service announcements for radio and television to educate the general public about unsafe adolescent firestarting behavior. The media can be helpful in spreading the word to the community about adolescent firestarting. Also, fire departments and community agencies may want to prepare brochures for adolescents and families describing firestarting problems and how to get help. These are all effective ways to present messages about adolescent firesetting. However, the second important factor, the content of messages, also must be given special consideration. Messages describing the types of unsafe firestarting situations in which adolescents find themselves, such as lighting their first cigarettes in dry, open fields, can deliver significant impact. Finally, not only is the content of messages important, but it is when they are delivered, or their timing, that is critical. For example, because leisure time for adolescents increases dramatically during the summer, messages just prior to the summer months discouraging youngsters from lighting

matches or lighters or playing with firecrackers in dry open fields are likely to be more relevant and have a greater impact. The verbal or written word, the content of messages and the timing of their presentation are essential techniques and methods for successful education and prevention programs.

Table 5.1 outlines the goals, targets and techniques of effective education and prevention programs for adolescent firesetting. The major approach of these types of efforts is to discourage adolescent participation in firesetting and to encourage families and parents to seek help if they recognize these behavior problems. Fire departments and community agencies can select from a number of different program options, including educational programs in school settings, public service announcements and adolescent and parent brochures, to prevent the occurrence of adolescent-set fires. Appendix D presents examples of current fire education and prevention programs focused on adolescents.

**Table 5.1**

**Education and Prevention Programs for Adolescents**

Goals	Targets	Techniques
I. Prevent unsafe firestarting	A. Communities with high levels of adolescent involvement in firesetting	1. Fire department educational programs for adolescents 2. Fire departments working with community agencies 3. School prevention programs for adolescents
II. Early recognition of firesetting problem and encouragement to seek help	B. Community agencies or groups working with adolescents	4. Fire departments working with the media to communicate fire prevention information to the general public
	C. Adolescents and families at-risk	5. Preparation of public service announcements for radio and television 6. Production and distribution of brochures to adolescents and parents about unsafe firesetting

**Evaluation and Referral**

The majority of fire department and community agencies currently operating juvenile firesetter programs have implemented evaluation and referral services. This intervention approach's wide acceptance and practice contributes to a relatively smooth application of these proce-

dures to the population of adolescent firesetters. The major goals of evaluation and referral programs include the identification of adolescent firesetters, the description of their firesetting and psychological histories and the recommendation of appropriate intervention strategies to prevent the recurrence of unsafe firestarting and the accompanying pathological behaviors. Fire departments and community agencies developing evaluation and referral programs will make a significant contribution to reducing the incidence of adolescent-set fires in their communities.

Evaluation and referral services offered by fire departments and community agencies can be targeted at the majority of adolescents involved in firesetting. Regardless of how these adolescents are identified, voluntarily or by referral or investigation, and regardless of the severity of the firesetting behavior, generally it is important to collect information regarding firestarting and psychological history immediately after the firesetting incident. This type of information is necessary in order to make informed recommendations on how to help these adolescents and their families. The first step in preventing the recurrence of unsafe firestarting is a comprehensive evaluation of the presenting problem. Fire departments as well as some community agencies, such as mental health and social services, are in the best position to offer evaluation and referral services because they often are the point of first contact for adolescent firesetters and their families.

The basic technique or method employed by evaluation and referral programs is the personal interview. Interviewing adolescent firesetters and their families is the recommended method of choice for obtaining accurate, reliable and first-hand information about firestarting and psychological history. Supplementary interviews also can be conducted with family members, friends, school personnel and other significant persons. Once these interviews are completed, the information is organized so that recommendations can be made to adolescents and their families on where and how to get help for eliminating the recurrence of unsafe firestarting and accompanying pathological behaviors. Section II, Evaluating Adolescent Firesetters, Modules 2, 3, and 4, details the specific procedures, interview schedules and intervention plans which represent the basic elements of evaluation and referral programs. Fire departments and community agencies implementing effective evaluation and referral services for firesetting adolescents and their families significantly reduce the risk of adolescent involvement in unsafe firestarts.

Table 5.2 summarizes the goals, targets and techniques of evaluation and referral programs for firesetting adolescents and their families. Evaluation and referral services employ a two-step procedure. First, personal interviews are conducted with youngsters and their families to collect information on firesetting and psychological history. Second, the information collected from these interviews is organized so that recommendations can be made for effective interventions to eliminate unsafe firestarting and the accompanying behavior problems. Those fire departments and community agencies which already have developed evaluation and referral services for firesetting children can consider expanding their programs to include adolescents. Those fire departments and community agencies who do not yet have procedures for working with firesetting youngsters may want to consider evaluation and referral services because they are the most widely accepted and practiced programs for firesetting adolescents. Appendix D describes the current evaluation and referral programs which are working with adolescent firesetters and their families.

**Table 5.2**

**Evaluation and Referral Programs for Adolescents**

Goals	Targets	Techniques
I. Identify adolescent firesetters	A. The majority of adolescents involved in unsafe firesetting	1. Personal interviews 2. Interview schedules, Parent Questionnaire and Category Profile Sheet
II. Describe firesetting and psychological history		3. Intervention plans
III. Recommend appropriate interventions to eliminate unsafe firestarting and treat psychological problems		

**Counseling**

There are some fire departments and community agencies which provide both evaluation services as well as direct intervention programs for adolescent firesetters. They differ from evaluation and referral programs in that instead of referring adolescents to other agencies or professionals for treatment or intervention once the evaluation is complete, these programs provide their own counseling or intervention methods designed to eliminate unsafe firestarting. Therefore, the goals of these programs are two-fold. First, there is a comprehensive evaluation of the presenting problem, including firesetting and psychological history. Second, once the evaluation is conducted, adolescents enter an intervention program designed to eliminate unsafe firestarting. In addition to stopping firesetting behavior, most of these programs also attempt to treat the associated psychological problems related to the firestarting. These intervention programs, often operated by fire departments and community agencies such as mental health, utilize mental health professionals either as consultants or providers of services. Consequently, counseling programs for adolescent firesetters and their families operated by fire departments and various community agencies, and supported by mental health care professionals, can offer comprehensive and effective services.

The target of these counseling programs depends primarily on both the nature of the presenting firesetting problem and the specific type of services provided by fire departments and community agencies. For example, if an evaluation reveals that a recent unsafe firestart is related to an adolescent's unexpressed anger toward a sibling, then counseling methods designed to work on emotional experience and expression may be most appropriate. Adolescents and the nature and underlying causes of their firesetting behavior must be considered in light of the specific goals, objectives and techniques of individual counseling methods. Therefore, it is not only adolescents and their families who must be carefully evaluated, but the techniques and methods of counseling programs must be appropriate to the presenting problem of firesetting and the related psychological problems.

There are a variety of counseling programs which work with adolescent firesetters and are operated by fire departments and some community agencies. These counseling programs employ a number of different techniques and methods in working with youngsters and their families to eliminate unsafe firestarting and related psychological problems. Appendix D describes these programs in detail. The types of techniques and methods range from training firefighters in specific kinds of counseling procedures to providing family therapy by trained mental health care providers. Fire departments and community agencies operating counseling programs for adolescent firesetters can choose from a number of different approaches, all of which involve working with mental health agencies or professionals.

Table 5.3 details the goals, targets and techniques of counseling programs which work with adolescent firesetters and function within fire departments and some community agencies. The development, organization and operation of these counseling programs for firesetting adolescents requires a significant commitment of time and resources. Specifically, fire departments and community agencies must offer both evaluation and intervention services. In addition, they must work closely with mental health care agencies and professionals. There are a number of different counseling approaches, presented in Appendix D, which can be considered by fire departments and community agencies when developing their evaluation and intervention services for firesetting adolescents. It is important for individual fire departments and community agencies to determine whether it is appropriate or necessary to offer these types of counseling programs for adolescent firesetters in their communities.

**Table 5.3**

**Counseling Programs for Adolescents**

Goals	Targets	Techniques
I. A comprehensive evaluation of firesetting and psychological history	A. Depends on the severity of the firesetting problem and the specific goals of the programs	1. Emotional graphing 2. Companion counseling 3. Individual, family and group therapy
II. The elimination of unsafe firestarting		
III. The treatment of psychological problems		

**Referral**

Fire departments and community agencies may be aware of the problem of adolescent firesetting, but they may choose not to develop specific programs for their communities. Nevertheless, because fire departments often are the point of first contact for adolescent firesetters and their families, it is important for them to know where to send these youngsters and their families for help. This minimal level of effort involves maintaining a referral network between fire departments and

those local community agencies most capable of providing services to firesetting adolescents and their families. The major goal of this approach is for fire departments to know their community resources and to be prepared, when they encounter cases of adolescent firesetting, to send youngsters to the appropriate services.

A referral network maintained by fire departments can be targeted for all types of cases of adolescent firesetting. Once youngsters with firestarting problems have either identified themselves or they have been identified by fire departments or other community agencies, it is important to know where and how they can be helped. If fire departments establish a referral network, then adolescents, families and agencies can turn to them for information on how to get help for adolescent firesetting.

The most frequent technique employed by fire departments and community agencies in building a referral network for handling cases of adolescent firesetters is the development of a list of relevant community services. This list of services will vary from community to community, fire departments must identify those agencies in their community which work with adolescents to help them stop firesetting. The majority of these agencies will be mental health services and professionals. Fire departments and community agencies can communicate by telephone or mail to confirm their willingness to work with firesetting adolescents. This listing of community programs and professionals, complete with their name, address, telephone number, name of contact person and type of service, can be maintained in writing by fire departments and distributed to the relevant local community agencies. This list provides an important linkage between fire departments and local community programs who together can work on the problem of adolescent firesetting.

Table 5.4 describes the goals, targets and techniques of establishing a referral network to help adolescent firesetters. If fire departments do not select to initiate formal programs for adolescent firesetters, because they often are the point of first contact with adolescent firesetters, they may want to consider developing a list of community agencies to whom they can refer cases of adolescent firesetting. A general listing of community agencies which typically work with adolescents and families is presented in Appendix D. Although these agencies will vary from community to community, it is likely that many of these programs will work with firesetting adolescents. Fire departments and community agencies must be prepared to answer the need of providing appropriate programs to eliminate adolescent involvement in unsafe firestarts.

**Table 5.4**

**Referral Programs for Adolescents**

Goal	Target	Technique
To know where and how to refer firesetting adolescents and their families for help in their community	All types of cases of adolescent firesetting	List of community agencies, with name, address, telephone number, name of contact person and type of service, committed to working with firesetting adolescents and their families

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## Summary

Fire departments represent the primary community agency which is looked to for its technical knowledge and assistance in working with youngsters involved in firesetting. Therefore, fire departments as well as other community agencies must be prepared to respond to the problem of adolescent involvement in unsafe firestarts. There are three major components to consider when setting-up procedures to work with adolescent firesetters. First, it is important to understand how youngsters and their families have been identified as having firesetting problems. Detection can occur voluntarily or by referral or investigation. Second, once adolescents and their families have been identified, the nature and extent of their firesetting and related psychological problems must be determined so that recommendations can be made for effective intervention. There must be a comprehensive evaluation of firesetting adolescents and their families. Finally, fire departments and community agencies can select from a number of different program options to provide effective intervention in eliminating unsafe firestarting and related psychological problems. These program options range from minimal involvement such as knowing where and how to refer adolescents and their families in the community for help to a maximum effort of providing both evaluation services as well as direct intervention procedures designed to eliminate unsafe firestarting and treat the accompanying psychological problems. Detection, evaluation and intervention are the three critical steps which can be taken by fire departments and community agencies to protect their community from adolescent involvement in unsafe firestarting.

## Module 6

# Fire Departments and Community Programs

**F**ire departments can work effectively with community agencies to provide help for firesetting adolescents and their families. It is important to understand how fire departments and community agencies can work together to provide specific kinds of services to adolescent firesetters. There are a number of community agencies which can help firesetting adolescents. The help these agencies provide often depends on the nature and severity of the firesetting behavior. Teenagers involved in accidental, single-episode firestarts may need more structure to their leisure time. There are a variety of youth services in the community which can help these youngsters. Because many adolescent firestarts occur in schools, school personnel, working in consultation with fire departments, may be able to prevent or discourage unsafe firesetting behavior. Repeated, unsupervised adolescent firestarting, which may or may not result in damaging and costly fires, can be related to mental health problems. Consequently, these youngsters must have access to the appropriate kinds of mental health services. Recurrent firesetting behavior which results in significant fires can involve the legal systems of law enforcement and juvenile justice. It is important for fire departments to understand how these legal systems handle adolescent firesetters. Fire departments can work within their network of community resources to provide comprehensive services to meet the multiple needs of firesetting adolescents and their families.

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### Fire Departments and Youth Services

A number of adolescent-set fires are the result of accidental, first-time firestarts. If the identification, evaluation or investigation of the responsible adolescents indicates the absence of psychological or criminal motivations, there still may be a need to offer some type of help to these youngsters. One explanation of adolescents becoming involved in first-time accidental firestarts is that they or their responsible adults, have failed to properly structure their free time. Therefore, youngsters and their families must be encouraged to take advantage of the various community agencies providing athletic or recreational programs for adolescents. It is expected that adolescent participation in structured activities reduces the time available for unsupervised activities which could result in accidental or unintentional destructive behavior such as fire-starting.

Adolescents involved in first-time, accidental firestarting are not the only youngsters likely to benefit from participation in structured community programs. Adolescents whose firesetting is determined to be the result of psychological or criminal motivations also can benefit from involvement in supervised athletic or recreational programs. Although these youngsters also must receive the appropriate psychological and legal interventions, their rehabilitation is likely to be more successful if they learn to structure their leisure time by participating in productive, satisfying and socially acceptable activities. It is impossible to control what adolescents do with their free time, however it is possible to offer them options and encourage their participation in supportive group programs designed to stimulate their athletic or recreational interests. In this way youngsters are both occupied as well as taught how to be a part of socially acceptable and responsible group activities.

There are a number of community programs and agencies providing athletic and recreational activities for adolescents. Because the availability of these programs varies from community to community, fire departments need to be aware of the specific offerings in their area. In general, many communities offer four major types of programs for adolescents. The first type of these programs is organized team sports. These activities typically are sponsored by such organizations as the Police Athletic League or Little League Baseball. The second type of these programs is public parks and recreational services. Here the emphasis is on both athletic as well as recreational activities. These activities often are provided for a nominal fee and are offered after school and during summers. The third type of these programs is community youth agencies and clubs. These agencies and clubs include YMCA/YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, 4H, and scouting organizations. Memberships and group identity are key elements to these programs and they provide a variety of athletic and recreational activities. The fourth type of these programs is ethnic or religious centers or clubs. These agencies, such as the Jewish Community Centers, also provide group membership as well as numerous programs for adolescents and their families. These community resources offer a wide-range of structured and supervised programs which teach youngsters how to participate in socially-acceptable group activities.

Table 6.1 summarizes the four general types of athletic and recreational programs available in communities for adolescents. Whether youngsters are involved in accidental, first-time firestarts or whether they have a recurrent problem which results in psychological or legal intervention, these firesetting adolescents can benefit from participation in organized community activities. Fire departments can encourage parents of firesetting youngsters to offer their teenagers more structure and supervision of their free time by engaging them in these types of athletic and recreational programs. Not every program is right for every adolescent, but the variety of community services available should meet the athletic and recreational needs of most youngsters. It is expected that adolescents involved in productive and satisfying group activities are less likely to become involved in antisocial and delinquent group behaviors such as firesetting.

Table 6.1

Youth Services for Adolescents

Program	Resource
I Organized team sports	A. Police Athletic League (PAL) B. Little League Baseball
II Public parks and recreation services	A. Parks B. Recreation buildings C. Day camps
III Community youth agencies	A. YMCA/YWCA B. Boys and Girls Clubs C. 4-H D. Scouting
IV Ethnic or religious centers or clubs	A. Jewish Community Centers B. Church youth groups

Fire Departments and Schools

The primary group activity and setting shared by the majority of adolescents is school. Schools also are one of the primary ignition targets for adolescents. School fires can range from small, self-extinguished trash can fires to large, building fires requiring firefighting intervention. Regardless of the size of the resulting fire, the firestart itself often is the indication of the behavior of troubled youngsters. Therefore, it is important for fire departments and schools to work together to both prevent the occurrence of adolescent involvement in school fires and to identify, evaluate and provide help for those youngsters who set school fires. Beyond routine fire drills, there are a number of different ways in which fire departments can help adolescents and their schools become fire-safe environments.

School fire education programs for adolescents are the primary mechanisms for reducing the likelihood of school-set fires. Although the majority of school fire safety and prevention programs are developed for children under twelve, Appendix D describes some educational programs for adolescents. In general, fire safety and education programs are taught by teachers as a part of the required curriculum for adolescents. The focus of these educational efforts must be on those specific situations and circumstances in which adolescents are at-risk for becoming involved in unsafe firestarts. For example, many adolescent-set fires accidentally occur in school bathrooms as the result of lighting or extinguishing cigarettes or other smoking materials. These situations must be

described and presented to adolescents in terms of their risk for resulting in significant and costly fires. There are many other types of circumstances which can be presented as fire-risks for adolescents and their schools. The presentation of this and other fire safety information can be greatly enhanced if teachers are encouraged to invite firefighters and other fire service and community leaders to deliver talks about fire prevention. Fire service educators can have a significant impact in helping to prevent adolescent-set fires in school if they can make themselves available to talk with these youngsters in their educational environments.

School fire prevention programs are designed to discourage adolescent participation in unsafe firestarts. However, once school fires have been set, fire departments can help schools understand what steps to take to identify, evaluate and help the involved youngsters. There is a critical need to train school personnel on how to assess the severity of firestarting incidents in their schools. Repeated, small, self-extinguished fires can be just as problematic as large building fires requiring firefighting intervention. Fire departments can work with schools to set up procedures for school personnel to follow once school fires occur. In addition, fire departments can provide workshops, seminars and training to teach school personnel how to identify adolescent firesetters and refer them to the appropriate community services for evaluation and treatment. Fire departments and schools can provide help to youngsters involved in firesetting.

Table 6.2 outlines the ways in which fire departments and schools can work together to reduce the number of adolescent-set fires in schools. Fire departments can help schools set-up fire safety and prevention programs to discourage adolescent involvement in unsafe firestarts. Also, fire departments can train school personnel in how to identify and refer adolescent firesetters for help. A cooperative effort between fire departments and schools can not only significantly reduce the number of youngsters involved in school fires, but such a partnership can lower the overall incidence of adolescent firesetting.

**Table 6.2**

**School Intervention for Adolescents**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Fire drills and safety procedures</b>	<b>Routine exercises on how to safely evacuate school in case of fire</b>
<b>Fire safety and prevention programs</b>	<b>Educational programs presented by teachers as part of the school curriculum with the focus on teaching adolescents how to avoid unsafe firestarts and accidental firesetting</b>
<b>Fire education training for school personnel</b>	<b>Workshops and seminars designed to teach school personnel how to identify adolescent firesetters and refer them for help</b>

## Fire Departments and Mental Health Services

The majority of adolescents involved in firesetting also experience psychological problems requiring mental health intervention. A variety of community agencies offer a wide range of mental health services. Although these services will vary from community to community, there are basic types of programs which can be described and which are available to some extent in many geographic locations. Fire departments must be aware of the mental health services offered in their community. In addition, fire departments can work with mental health programs to communicate specific information they may have about firesetting adolescents and their families. Finally, mental health professionals often can help fire departments in working with them to understand the special mental health needs of firesetting adolescents. An effective communication and referral network between fire departments and community mental health services can reduce the likelihood that firestarting behavior will be the result of unresolved psychological problems.

The type of mental health services available in most communities fall into two major categories and their use generally depends on the severity of the psychological problems accompanying firesetting behavior.

The first of these categories is outpatient services or those programs where youngsters and families participate in psychological services by hourly visits on a weekly or routine basis. Less severe psychological problems are treated in outpatient mental health programs. There are a variety of methods utilized by these outpatient services including individual and family psychotherapy. The specific techniques of psychotherapy also will vary from program to program. There are specific types of outpatient treatments designed to eliminate firestarting behavior as well as treat the accompanying psychological problems. The determination of the types of treatment employed is made by the mental health care providers in these community agencies. Fire departments must learn where and how to refer firesetting adolescents and their families to outpatient mental health services in their communities.

The second category of mental health services is inpatient treatment programs. If there is evidence of severe mental disturbance or firesetting adolescents are determined to be a danger to themselves or others, then consideration must be given to inpatient treatment. Inpatient treatment removes adolescents from their home for a specified period of time to provide intensive therapy aimed at stopping firestarting behavior and resolving major psychological conflicts. Hospitals, residential treatment programs and halfway houses are some examples of community agencies which offer inpatient treatment for adolescents. Although inpatient treatment is voluntary, if youngsters are determined to be dangerous to themselves or others, then they can be legally admitted to inpatient mental health programs involuntarily or by court order. Because of their firesetting risk, many inpatient treatment programs are reluctant to offer services to youngsters with histories of firestarting. Therefore, fire departments must find out which community institutions will accept firesetting adolescents for treatment. Finding inpatient mental health services for firestarting youngsters with severe psychological problems often is a difficult task. Appendix D provides a list of known inpatient mental health programs treating firesetting adolescents. Fire departments must be aware of the difficulties of finding inpatient treat-

ment programs to meet the mental health needs of firestarting youngsters and their families.

Fire departments can offer additional help to adolescent firesetters needing the services of community mental health programs by demonstrating their willingness to share information about these youngsters and their families. Often fire departments can provide information on specific adolescents and their families, especially if they have conducted their own interviews and evaluations. Fire departments can communicate particularly useful information on firesetting history, an area in which mental health care providers often are not knowledgeable or well-informed. The sharing of information between fire departments and mental health services will provide the best possible chance for adolescents and their families to receive appropriate help for their firesetting and mental health problems.

Finally, mental health care professionals and agencies may be able to provide fire departments with specific types of information to help them work with firesetting adolescents and their families. If fire departments want to set-up prevention programs, evaluation and referral services or counseling programs, mental health care providers can consult on various aspects of program planning, firefighter training and direct service delivery. Mental health care professionals can work within or along side of fire departments to offer specialized psychological services for firesetting adolescents and their families.

Table 6.3 describes how community mental health services can benefit adolescent firesetters and their families. There are a number of services available from outpatient to inpatient programs. In addition, fire departments can share valuable information about firesetting adolescents and their families with community mental health programs. Mental health care professionals also can help fire departments to plan programs to serve the needs of adolescent firesetters. A solid, working relationship between fire departments and community mental health agencies can only strengthen the effectiveness of those services provided to youngsters and families to eliminate firesetting behavior and the accompanying psychological problems.

**Table 6.3**

**Community Mental Health Services For Adolescents**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
<b>Outpatient Services</b>	<b>Individual, family and group psychotherapy on routine visits</b>
<b>Inpatient Services</b>	<b>Hospital or residential therapy on a voluntary or involuntary basis</b>
<b>Fire Department Networking</b>	<b>Fire departments sharing identification and evaluation information with mental health agencies relating to firesetting history and behavior</b>
<b>Mental Health Consultation</b>	<b>Program planning, firefighter training and direct service delivery by mental health professionals in fire departments</b>

## Fire Departments, Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice

Adolescents involved in recurrent, unsafe firestarts increase their likelihood of becoming involved with the systems of law enforcement and juvenile justice. The greater the number of unsafe firestarts the greater the probability of damaging and costly fires. Consequently, if adolescents participate in repeated firesetting which goes unobserved or untreated, their firestarting behavior is likely to result in a significant fire. These fires can be labelled arson and investigations can identify youngsters as perpetrators of criminal behavior. In many communities fire departments are partially or totally responsible for arson investigations and they can be the law enforcement personnel responsible for interrogating and arresting adolescents who set fires. Once the law enforcement procedures of investigation and arrest have been executed, adolescents enter the juvenile justice system. Adolescents can be tried, sentenced and institutionalized for arson crime within the juvenile justice system. It is important for fire departments to understand how the procedures of both law enforcement—investigation and arrest—and juvenile justice—trial, sentencing and institutionalization—work to handle adolescents involved in criminal firesetting.

Law enforcement procedures involve the investigation of arson as well as the eventual arrest of those responsible for the criminal behavior. Occasionally police departments are responsible for arson investigations, sometimes fire departments conduct them, and there are circumstances where an arson task force, comprised of both police and fire department personnel, execute the procedures of investigation and arrest. The process of investigation can include interviewing, counsel and release, and interrogation. Arson investigators interview victims, witnesses, suspects and other relevant people associated with fires. If interviewing identifies specific adolescents responsible for a firestart, and there is no previous record of firesetting behavior, arson investigators can administer counsel and release. Counsel and release refers to arson investigators talking with adolescents about the dangers of firestarting, describing the criminal-legal procedures such as arrest, conviction and institutionalization, that could result if firesetting continues, warning youngsters not to engage in further firesetting, and releasing adolescents from further legal obligation or commitment. However, if interviewing results in the collection of convincing evidence leading to the identification of specific criminal behaviors, and adolescents have a known history of firesetting, then questioning will be pursued relating to their participation in the crime of arson. This is the process of interrogation. Frequently the interrogation of adolescents ends in their arrest for arson.

The arrest of adolescents for arson can result in three possible actions. First, arson investigators can release these youngsters from further legal action. Second, adolescents can be issued a citation to appear before the probation officer at juvenile court. Third, adolescents can be taken in custody directly to the probation officer. The decision to introduce cases to the probation officer represents the entry of adolescents into the juvenile justice system. The probation officer investigates cases, which includes reviewing the incident reports of arson investigators and evaluating the prior criminal activities or records of adolescents. The probation officer then decides to either carry the cases no further or to refer matters to the district attorney for institution of formal juvenile court proceedings. At this point the probation officer will either release

adolescents to their families on a form of house arrest with a promise to appear in court at a later date or keep these youngsters in custody because of special circumstances such as their being a danger to themselves or others. The district attorney then decides to either reject cases as factually or legally unsound or to file petitions to begin proceedings in juvenile court.

Once the district attorney files petitions to begin juvenile court proceedings, and adolescents are in custody, then they have the right to an immediate hearing to decide whether they must remain in custody pending trial. If adolescents are detained in custody at that hearing, then they generally have a right to a quick re-hearing, at which time a preliminary case against them must be established through the presentation of evidence. If, after this hearing, adolescents remain in custody, they are entitled to a speedy trial. The trial is not a criminal proceeding, but the judge must be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that adolescents committed the crime of arson. Module 2 reviews the criteria for demonstrating motive and intent necessary to prove firesetting is arson. If the judge determines that adolescents participated in arson crime, then these youngsters are not convicted for purposes of a criminal record, but the judge has the power to invoke a variety of methods of retribution or punishment.

The sentencing procedure begins once the judge determines that adolescents have committed an arson crime. The judge will read social studies of adolescents, usually prepared by the probation department, a review of the relevant evidence will take place and a decision will be made regarding the most appropriate intervention. The judge has a wide range of alternatives in the equivalence of sentencing from declaring adolescents wards of the court to releasing them on probation. If adolescents are declared wards of the court, they can be removed from the custody of their parents and physically confined or placed in foster care. The maximum length that adolescents are in the custody of the court varies from state to state. In California, the maximum length that adolescents are in the custody of the court is limited to the maximum length of the prison or jail term adults receive for the same offense. If adolescents are released on probation, they are likely to be released in the custody of their parents. These adolescents may be ordered by the judge to pay restitution. In addition, parents may be held civilly responsible for costs and losses resulting from the arson fire as well as for court expenses, such as attorney fees.

If the judge decides that adolescents are to be wards of the court, then the judge must decide on the type of institutionalization required for these youngsters. The range of facilities includes day camps, which offer a maximum number of privileges, to prisons which offer no liberties or freedoms. Many of the less restrictive custodial facilities will not accept adolescents with firesetting histories. During the specified period of institutionalization, adolescents participate in the routine programs which are offered, but few, if any, of these programs are therapeutic and aim to reduce future involvement in firesetting or treat the accompanying psychological problems. At the end of the period of institutionalization, adolescents are released back into the community either to their parents or to foster care families. This represents the final contact between adolescents and the juvenile justice system unless, while under the age of 18, these youngsters participate in another arson crime or other type of delinquent activity.

Table 6.4 outlines the law enforcement and juvenile justice proce-

dures set-up to work with adolescents involved in criminal firesetting. Law enforcement officials conduct investigations and can utilize the methods of interviewing, counsel and release and interrogation. If there is convincing evidence, including indications of motive and intent, adolescents can be arrested for the crime of arson. The probation officer reviews individual cases and recommends whether they should be brought to trial. The district attorney presents adolescent firesetting cases before juvenile court and the judge determines whether youngsters participated in arson crime. If the judge decides that an arson crime has occurred, the judge has the power to invoke a variety of interventions including retribution and institutionalization. Not all firesetting adolescents commit arson crime. However, for those youngsters whose firestarting represents a serious criminal behavior, fire departments must be prepared to work with law enforcement and juvenile justice to provide the most appropriate type of intervention for these adolescents.

**Table 6.4**

**Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice Procedures For Adolescents**

Program	Activity
I. Law Enforcement	A. Investigation 1. Interview 2. Counsel and release 3. Interrogation
	B. Arrest 1. Probation officer
II. Juvenile Justice	A. Trial 1. Custody/Probation 2. Hearing
	B. Sentencing 1. Ward of the court 2. Custody/Probation
	C. Institutionalization 1. Day camp 2. Prison

**Summary**

Each fire department must decide on its own level of involvement with adolescent firesetters and their families. Often firesetting is only one of several problems for which these youngsters need attention and help. Regardless of who or how these adolescents are identified, their needs must be evaluated and an effort must be made to find programs which will eliminate the occurrence of future firesetting behavior and treat the variety of psychological and other types of problems. Toward this end fire departments can develop information about a community network of agencies which are willing or designated to work with these

youngsters and their families. There is a wide range of community agencies including youth programs, schools, mental health services, law enforcement and juvenile justice. Together with fire departments these community agencies can provide a comprehensive network of programs designed to meet the special needs of adolescent firesetters and their families.

## Module 7

# Working With Adolescents— Social and Legal Responsibilities

**F**ire departments and community agencies committed to working with adolescent firesetters must understand the social and legal responsibilities which occur as a result of providing services to this special population of youngsters. There are three major areas of concern for fire departments and community agencies. The first area of concern has to do with the nature of the relationship between adolescents and those providing help to them. Youngsters and their families as well as those offering evaluation and intervention services will want to know the degree of confidentiality that exists within their relationships. For example, can specific verbal or written communications be shared in confidence? Who has access to the written records of adolescents? Can and should firesetting adolescents and their families identify themselves to the media? In addition to concerns about confidentiality, fire departments and community agencies may select to become involved in activities in which they represent or advocate on behalf of firesetting adolescents or their families. For example, communities may notice alarming increases in adolescent-set fires, however there may be no programs available to handle the problem. Fire departments may want to initiate community awareness groups to promote the idea of developing evaluation and intervention services for firesetting adolescents. There are a number of ways in which fire departments and community agencies can advocate or help adolescent firesetters receive appropriate treatment for their specific problems. Finally, fire departments and community agencies must understand that there are certain liability concerns which occur as a result of working with firesetting adolescents and their families. The three major liability issues to be considered by fire departments and community agencies are legal, financial and insurance matters. For example, if fire departments are evaluating an adolescent who subsequently sets a damaging and costly fire, who is responsible for the retribution? Legal, financial and insurance concerns will be addressed as they relate to the responsibilities of fire departments and community agencies. It is important to be aware of the variety of confidentiality, advocacy and liability questions which arise and which must be met, analyzed and resolved so that effective evaluation and intervention programs for firesetting adolescents can operate within communities.

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## Confidentiality

There are three primary concerns regarding confidentiality which must be taken into consideration when working with adolescent firesetters. The first area of concern has to do with the degree of confidentiality in the verbal communications occurring between those providing services in fire departments and community agencies and firesetting adolescents. The second area of concern deals with the rules of confidentiality which apply to the written records kept on behalf of adolescents. The third area of concern relates to the disclosure of the identity of firesetting adolescents and their families to publications and the media. Each of these three situations regarding confidentiality is likely to arise for those providing services to adolescent firesetters and their families.

### Verbal Communications

The first area of concern is the confidentiality of verbal communications which occur between firesetting adolescents and their families and those who work with them in fire departments and community agencies. For example, if fire department personnel are conducting evaluation interviews with adolescents, these youngsters may want to confide in the interviewers and tell them things they do not want to tell their parents. In addition, parents may put pressure on interviewers to tell them all about what their youngsters have said, or, parents may want to share information they do not want their adolescents to know. Given these circumstances, it is important to understand how to build a reasonable trust between interviewers and adolescents.

A reasonable trust is established when youngsters and their families agree that some thoughts and feelings may be shared in confidence. The idea must be communicated that everyone has a right to private thoughts and feelings, and that confidential communications will not be disclosed unless it is in the best interest of adolescents or their families. In addition, it must be agreed that disclosure of confidences will not occur without the person's knowledge. Therefore, if information is shared in confidence, the trust will be kept unless there is an important reason, such as a threat to participate in an arson crime, to break the trust. Before such a trust is broken, the adolescents or family members whose confidence is being broken should be so informed and the reasons why should be communicated. Complete confidence in any relationship is unrealistic, but building a reasonable trust lays the groundwork for an effective working relationship.

Once a reasonable trust has developed, the next step is to protect the confidence. Firesetting often is an embarrassing and painful event in the lives of adolescents and their families. The majority of citizens living in the community, including relatives and close friends of families, do not easily understand or accept firesetting behavior. Therefore, there are circumstances in which adolescents and their families may want their privacy protected. For example, if during the process of an evaluation interview it is necessary to contact the school to obtain accurate information on behavior or academic performance, it is necessary to first speak with parents about this and obtain written permission from them regarding the release of the information. Issues of whether school authorities know about the firesetting behavior and whether they "should" or "need" to know all must be discussed with parents. Al-

though open communication channels are helpful to everyone, the potential risk is that disclosure of certain types of information, such as a history of firestarting, may negatively "label" adolescents and deprive them of future learning or work opportunities that are far removed from their current difficulties. Therefore, in each instance in which there is potential to disclose information regarding the firesetting behavior of adolescents, parents need to be informed, and issues of privacy and confidentiality must be carefully considered on behalf of adolescents and their families.

### Written Records

Along with the importance of establishing reasonable trust in verbal communications, written records also become a focus for the rules of confidentiality. The records kept on behalf of firesetting adolescents are likely to be sensitive because they contain information on a variety of behaviors, some of which may include criminal activities. Therefore, it is important to know the specific circumstances which may cause fire departments and community agencies to disclose their written records.

There are two frequently occurring circumstances of disclosure regarding the written records of adolescent firesetters. The first circumstance has to do with the records being subpoenaed by a court of law. If a subpoena is received regarding a certain set of records on adolescent firesetters, to comply with the law, these records must be turned over to the requesting authorities. The contents of these records then become the property of the court. The second circumstance of disclosure has to do with a request by other community agencies or professionals to obtain and review the written records. Because, in most instances, these are records of minors, parental permission is necessary before the information contained in these records can be disclosed. The idea of disclosing a particular portion or all of the record must be discussed with the parents of firesetting adolescents. In addition, it is advisable to obtain their permission, if they agree to disclose their record, in writing. In general, the information in these files should be disclosed when there are a specific set of circumstances and reasons suggesting that the disclosure will be in the best interest of the firesetting adolescents and their families.

### Publications and the Media

The final area of confidentiality which deserves attention is the disclosure of the identity of firesetting adolescents and their families in publications and to the media. Fire departments, community agencies and professionals are likely to face this question as a result of their involvement in such activities as writing, attending meetings and conferences and participating in newspaper, television and radio interviews. In addition, because adolescent firestarting can result in damaging and costly fires within communities, the media becomes interested and concerned with describing the stories of fires. Given these circumstances, there are likely to be requests to disclose the identity of adolescent firesetters and their families for a variety of reasons including attempts to describe the problem of juvenile arson by case example, providing case material to the interested readers of newspapers and magazines and offering interviews with firesetting youngsters and their families to demonstrate the participation of juveniles in the crime of arson. Although there may be a number of convincing reasons why the identity of adolescent firesetters and their families should be disclosed, there are a num-

ber of reasons why careful consideration must be given before the decision is made to reveal identities.

The responsibility of deciding to reveal the specific identity of adolescent firesetters and their families rests with the parents of the families. However, it is the responsibility of fire departments and community agencies to inform these adolescents and their families about the potential risks of revealing their identities. Because these adolescents are likely to have been involved in firesetting incidents, the public identification of these adolescents and their families within their own community could result in negative consequences and reactions from friends, associates, and those providing services to these families.

Firesetting remains a potentially threatening behavior to many and, as such, places a stigma on those who have been identified as participating in the activity. The families, with the help of fire departments and community agencies, must decide whether they want to assume these risks by disclosing their identities. The potential benefit derived from disclosing identities is that other adolescents and families, suffering from problems related to firesetting, may come forth and seek the necessary help as a result of seeing or reading about families experiencing similar difficulties.

If, after careful consideration of the risks and benefits of disclosing identities for purposes of written material, interviews, or other activities where adolescents and their families will be personally identified with the problem of firesetting, the decision is made not to self-identify, then this decision must be respected. No materials regarding these cases should be disclosed. However, permission may be granted by the families for the case material to be used, if the adolescent and families are not personally identified. In these instances, a written agreement is useful between fire departments and community agencies and these families stating exactly how the identity of the adolescents is to be protected. In addition, if families agree to identify themselves or their adolescents with the problem of firesetting, then written permission must be obtained releasing the information. Although the parents of adolescent firesetters must decide whether they want their families publicly identified with the social issue of firesetting, it is the responsibility of fire departments and community agencies to guide them as to weighing the risks versus the potential benefits in such an important decision-making process.

Table 7.1 summarizes the primary concerns of confidentiality as they relate to working with adolescent firesetters and their families. Establishing and maintaining a reasonable degree of trust regarding verbal communications, protecting the privacy of written records within legal requirements and safeguarding the identities of adolescents and families with respect to publications and the media represent the major concerns of confidentiality for fire departments and community agencies. Questions of confidentiality are important to be reviewed and analyzed so that decisions can be made in the best interest of both helping firesetting adolescents and their families as well as providing for fire-safe communities.

**Table 7.1**

**Confidentiality Concerns When Working With Adolescent Firesetters**

Concern	Consideration
I. Verbal communication	A. Reasonable Trust 1. Conditions for breaking
II. Written communication	A. Written Records 1. Subpoena 2. Sharing information and parental permission
III. Publications and the media	A. Disclosure of Identity 1. Risks and benefits

**Advocacy**

Fire departments and community agencies which determine that there is a need to develop services for firesetting adolescents and select to organize and operate such programs, become part of the helping network for these youngsters and their families. The organization of services for firesetting adolescents can be viewed as advocacy efforts on behalf of these youngsters. Although the goal of these programs is to help these adolescents eliminate their firesetting behavior and resolve their psychological problems, there is the additional benefit of helping to maintain fire-safe communities. Therefore, on both these accounts, on behalf of adolescents and their communities, it is important for fire departments and community agencies to understand the role they play as advocates for a safe and secure living environment.

There are two major functions fire departments and community agencies serve in their role as advocates. The first is that they often become responsible for making their community aware of the problem of adolescent firesetting. This is accomplished through contact with the local media, such as newspapers, radio and television. Once communities become aware of the problem of adolescent firesetting, fire departments and community agencies can develop community advisory boards, task forces or other organized group activities focused on what can be done about adolescent firesetting in their community. The result of these organized community groups is frequently a plan to develop and implement a comprehensive set of services to help firesetting adolescents and their families. Thus fire departments and community agencies can take on significant leadership roles in their communities to advocate for the services necessary to eliminate adolescent involvement in firesetting.

The second advocacy function for fire departments and community agencies is their involvement in political and social activities focused on examining and resolving the problem of adolescent firesetting. There are a number of these types of activities taking place at federal, state and local levels. For example, several states have initiated special arson task forces and some states even have established juvenile arson task forces. These groups work to identify specific topics which need attention and study, including those related to juvenile involvement in ar-

son. Local government participation also can help stimulate interest and mobilize resources to help eliminate firesetting behavior in youngsters. In addition, federal and state agencies also support research and program efforts aimed at helping to stop adolescent firestarting. Fire departments and community agencies must seek the participation of various government as well as private organizations to distribute resources for finding solutions to the problem of adolescent firesetting.

Table 7.2 describes the advocacy activities in which fire departments and community agencies can participate on behalf of adolescents and their communities. The general public must be educated about the problem of adolescent firesetting. To accomplish this fire departments and community agencies can engage in community awareness activities including working with the local media, organizing community action groups and developing plans for the delivery of necessary services to adolescents and their families. The problem of adolescent firesetting will not be resolved without the support of federal, state and local agencies. Fire departments and community agencies can participate in political and social activities including the organization of state or local juvenile arson task forces and the development of research and program efforts designed to help adolescent firesetters and their families.

**Table 7.2**

**Advocacy Activities on Behalf of Adolescent Firesetters**

Activity	Significance
I. Community awareness	A. Media contact B. Organized community action groups
II. Political and social programs	A. Special arson task forces B. Support for research and program development

**Liability**

There are numerous benefits to be achieved by setting up programs to work with adolescent firesetters. However, along with the benefits of any such effort come risks or liabilities. The three major areas of risk to fire departments and community agencies are those dealing with legal, financial and insurance matters. Because of the frequency with which adolescent firesetting is associated with the criminal behavior of arson, there are several situations which require legal advice and consultation. In addition, because of the devastation caused by adolescent-set fires, whether they are accidental, intentional or criminal, questions arise as to who is financially responsible for the resulting damages. Finally, when fire departments and community agencies set-up programs to help adolescent firesetters there are certain considerations regarding their own specific insurance coverage. These legal, financial and insurance concerns must be addressed before fire departments and community agencies make the commitment to serve firesetting adolescents and their families.

## **Legal**

There are two primary questions regarding legal matters which must be considered by fire departments and community agencies. The first is what are the situations in which fire departments and community agencies are likely to interface with the legal system? The second is to whom do fire departments and community agencies turn for legal advice? The answers to each of these questions provides the framework for understanding the majority of legal concerns which are likely to surface when working with adolescent firesetters.

There are three situations where fire departments and community agencies are likely to interface with the legal system when working with adolescent firesetters. The first situation is arson investigation and arrest. The specific legal considerations which can arise during this situation are when and how to interrogate and Mirandize adolescents. The second situation is when professionals in fire departments and community agencies are called to testify in court, either for the prosecution or for the defense, regarding the nature and extent of the firesetting behavior of adolescents. There are a number of legal concerns surrounding these circumstances including the conditions under which both verbal and written communications occurring between adolescents and those providing services to them are disclosed to attorneys and the courts. Finally, fire departments and community agencies can provide rehabilitation services to adolescents for whom the courts have assigned a probationary status for their firesetting. The legal considerations which surface under these conditions are the extent of the responsibilities fire departments and community agencies can take for the behavior of these adolescents and what consequences occur if these youngsters fail to meet the requirements of these programs designed to eliminate their firesetting problems. These three situations and their legal implications raise the question of who fire departments and community agencies turn to for advice and consultation regarding how to resolve these concerns.

Although conditions vary from community to community, fire departments and local agencies working with adolescent firesetters must know how to obtain legal advice and consultation. Many fire departments and community agencies are part of the public network of services offered by their local municipalities or governments. Therefore, they can take advantage of the offices of the district attorney for their city or state. Those private agencies offering services to adolescent firesetters may have to consult private attorneys for their legal advice. All agencies must be sure they know how and where to get expert legal consultation before they begin their efforts to help adolescent firesetters.

Table 7.3 summarizes the three most frequently occurring situations in which legal concerns surface regarding firesetting adolescents. Arson investigation and arrest, testifying in court and working with adolescents on probation bring with them specific conditions requiring legal advice and consultation. Fire departments and community agencies must know when and how to seek the counsel of attorneys who will fairly represent the point of view of those providing services to adolescent firesetters.

Table 7.3

Legal Concerns When Working With Adolescent Firesetters

Concern	Consideration
I. Arson investigation and arrest	A. Interrogation B. Mirandize
II. Testifying in court	A. Confidentiality of verbal communications B. Confidentiality of written records
III. Adolescents on probation	A. Responsibilities for behavior B. Consequences of failures

Financial

The obvious financial liability of adolescent firesetting is the cost of damages from the resulting fires. Depending on the size of the fires and the amount of the costs, there have been a number of different actions taken to recover losses. In several cases where the fires have been relatively small and the related costs have been within the financial means of the responsible families, courts have ordered adolescents and their parents to pay retribution for the damages of the fires. In other cases victims of adolescent-set fires have filed civil and criminal suits against responsible parents to recapture the losses incurred by the fires. Often what results from these cases is that two insurance companies, one representing the victims of the fires and one representing the accused parents, settle for damages outside of court before going to trial. In general, questions of who is responsible for the resulting costs of adolescent-set fires is accomplished on a case-by-case basis, sometimes by the courts and often by attorneys and insurance companies.

There is a particular financial situation which can be of concern to those fire departments and community agencies working with adolescent firesetters. It involves fires set while adolescents are receiving services for their firesetting problems from these programs. The parents of these youngsters or the victims of the fires may think that these agencies are partially responsible for their misfortune. There may be resulting law suits to regain the costs incurred by the parents of adolescents or the victims of the fires. The question of the financial responsibilities of fire departments and community agencies as they relate to adolescents who set fires while under their services deserves careful consideration. It may be necessary for fire departments and community agencies to have specific types of insurance coverage to guard against potential financial liability.

Insurance

Although financial liability resulting from adolescent-set fires is

one type of insurance need, there are other situations in working with adolescent firesetters which may require an examination of insurance coverage. For example, what if adolescents set fire to materials or parts of buildings in which they are receiving services? The majority of fire departments and community agencies are likely to already have some type of current insurance coverage. Often the current coverage is adequate. However, questions must be addressed as to the degree and type of coverage that is available and whether it applies to these and other situations involved with providing services to adolescent firesetters. If additional insurance coverage is necessary, then these costs must be weighed against the benefits of helping to reduce adolescent-set fires. It is important to protect the financial ability of fire departments and community agencies to provide services to high-risk groups of youngsters, such as adolescent firesetters, who perhaps are in the most need of effective programs to prevent further costs and related hardships to themselves, families and their communities.

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### Summary

There are a number of significant responsibilities which must be considered when working with adolescent firesetters. The first of these responsibilities has to do with the degree of confidentiality in the verbal and written communications which occur between adolescents, their families and those providing services to them. In addition to these issues of confidentiality, there are a number of concerns about if, when and how the identity of adolescent firesetters and their families can be disclosed in publications or the media. The second of these responsibilities relates to those activities in which fire departments and community agencies become involved in advocating on behalf of both fire-safe adolescents as well as fire-free communities. These activities include community awareness efforts and political, social and research programs. Finally, along with the variety of benefits which result from working with adolescent firesetters and their families come some important risks or potential liabilities. Fire departments and community agencies must understand the legal, financial and insurance implications which go along with developing services to prevent or eliminate adolescent involvement in firestarting. Fire departments and local agencies must weigh the liabilities incurred by providing these services against the benefits created by maintaining communities free of adolescent-set fires.

# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ADOLESCENCE**

**APPENDIX B ADOLESCENT AND FAMILY INTERVIEW  
SCHEDULES**  
— PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE  
— INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCORING CATEGORY  
PROFILE SHEET

**APPENDIX C EXAMPLES OF ADOLESCENT FIRESETTER  
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**APPENDIX D DESCRIPTION OF ADOLESCENT FIRESETTER  
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**APPENDIX E JUVENILE MIRANDA RIGHTS**

**APPENDIX F DIRECTORY OF JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAMS**

## Appendix A

# The Psychology of Adolescence

The focus of this appendix is a psychological explanation of how the majority of youngsters experience their adolescence. A description of the normal events making-up adolescence helps to understand how abnormal or deviant behavior such as firesetting develops in youngsters. Adolescence is both a psychological period of growth as well as a time of significant psychological change for youngsters. Adolescence is presented as one of three major life periods, sandwiched between childhood and adulthood. It consists of three growth ages—puberty, enlightenment and choice—through which youngsters must pass on their way to achieving their personal identity. If these growth ages are realized, significant psychological changes also occur in the physical, cognitive, emotional and social functioning of youngsters. Successful movement through the growth ages of adolescence means normal psychological development. Unsuccessful movement through these growth ages may signal the emergence of abnormal or deviant behavior.

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### Adolescence: A Psychological Period of Growth

Literature and research describe adolescence as one of three major life periods. Adolescence begins with puberty and stretches over five to seven years. It is sandwiched between childhood and adulthood. Therefore, it is not only important to understand the major psychological growth occurring during adolescence, but it is necessary to describe the psychological development occurring during all three major life periods—childhood, adolescence and adulthood. First, the general psychological phases are explained which make-up the three major life periods. Second, the developmental tasks are described specific to the period of adolescence. What emerges is an overview of the psychological phases characteristic of human development as well as an understanding of the significant psychological growth occurring during adolescence.

### The Psychological Phases

Early psychological theory stresses the importance of development during the first five years of life. Later theories recognize the psychological growth occurring throughout the life span. These later theories

provide an explanation of psychological development during the three major life periods—childhood, adolescence and adulthood. It must be emphasized that psychological theories are based on insight and observation. They attempt to explain what happens during the major periods of life in terms of psychological phases. While they represent a particular viewpoint or school of thought, they also provide a context for understanding the psychological development of human behavior. What is presented here is one theory describing the psychological phases of the three major life periods. The intention is to offer a framework for explaining the psychological growth occurring throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

Erik Erikson outlines eight phases of psychological development occurring from childhood through adulthood. There are four phases making-up childhood, one phase of adolescence and three phases of adulthood. All eight phases have a primary psychological focus. Normal psychological development occurs when individuals master the major concern comprising each of the eight phases. Movement through these eight phases signifies psychological growth from childhood through adolescence and adulthood.

The four phases making up childhood are in this order: 1. Trust versus Mistrust, 2. Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, 3. Initiative and Responsibility versus Guilt Functioning and 4. Industry versus Inferiority. These four phases represent the psychosocial conflicts occurring between children and their parents. Each phase is mastered when the positive pole is achieved. For example, well adjusted youngsters will first gain trust between themselves and their parents, move to a phase of establishing their independence, go on to assert their initiative and learn to become accomplished and productive. According to Erikson, all of these personal characteristics are obtained prior to adolescence.

During adolescence the primary psychological concern is identity. Adolescents focus on comparing how they feel about themselves, versus how they believe others feel about them. Successful development during this phase leads to the basis of a clear adult identity. Unsuccessful development during this phase leads to a scattered and uncertain sense of who they are. The adolescent phase sets the stage for entering adulthood.

The three phases of adulthood are: 1. Intimacy versus Isolation (young adulthood), 2. Generativity versus Stagnation (middle adulthood) and 3. Ego Integrity versus Despair (late adulthood). During young adulthood, the psychological emphasis is on developing close and meaningful relationships. In middle adulthood a struggle emerges as one's own immediate concerns are balanced with those of children and others. Finally, in late adulthood, the decrease in one's social and biological roles must be accepted. Erikson believes that sound psychological movement through the phases of childhood and adolescence maximized the experience of adulthood.

The purpose of dividing the life span into psychological phases is to understand the critical times marking the development of specific personality characteristics. Successful movement through these phases means normal psychological development. Unsuccessful movement through these phases means that children, adolescents and adults are likely to have specific types of psychological problems. A detailed focus on the adolescent phase of development outlines the psychological

tasks specific to this significant phase of life. In addition, the types of psychological conflicts are described which are likely to emerge when youngsters have difficulty in resolving the tasks of their adolescence.

### The Adolescent Phase

Erikson suggests the major psychological theme during adolescence is the development of an identity. This is a somewhat general psychological concern. A more specific question is what are the tasks making up this search for an identity? How can we describe the movement toward establishing an identity? Given these questions, it becomes necessary to delineate the actual developmental tasks comprising the phase of adolescence.

Muller suggests three primary ages of growth during adolescence. Each of these three ages are made up of developmental tasks. Taken together, successful completion of these tasks results in the development of a strong and secure identity. Unsuccessful completion of these tasks leads to conflict, confusion and maladjustment. The adolescent who has difficulty with these developmental tasks is likely to demonstrate psychological problems and become involved in abnormal or deviant behavior.

The first growth age of adolescence is puberty. This growth age is characterized by a flurry of bodily activity in which both masculine and feminine features are changed dramatically. The reproductive system and the secondary sexual characteristics mature in both sexes. For example, in boys the shoulders become broader, the voice changes and strongly pigmented hair appears. In girls, the hips become broader, the breasts develop, pigmented hair appears and the skin is slightly filled out by fatty tissues. At the end of these physiologic changes, girls begin their menstrual cycles and boys experience their first seminal emission.

Puberty consists of two major developmental tasks. The first task is the capacity to recognize behavioral possibilities and the second task is to begin new human relationships. During adolescence, youngsters become aware of what is actually possible in many aspects of their lives including the development of their body, their ability to attract the opposite sex, their intellectual aptitude and their individual talents for various activities. Youngsters begin to define the boundaries of their behavior. In addition, adolescents begin to distinguish between different types of relationships as well as between different levels of intimacy. They begin to differentiate sexual relationships from friendships and they begin to understand differences between their feelings for family members, friends and confidants. Puberty is a time for exploring behavioral capabilities as well as understanding the realm of human relationships.

The second growth age of adolescence is one of enlightenment. Muller describes this as a period of time when youngsters identify with their peer group and together they open up to their surrounding environment. The two major developmental tasks of this age are the achievement of emotional independence and the choice of a significant partner. The achievement of emotional independence often is expressed through attitudes of negativism and rebellion. Youngsters are beginning to assert themselves through independent behavior, while at the same time they remain dependent on their families for some of their needs. In addition, adolescents begin to experience a new depth and emotional bond-

ing to friends, often singling out one special partner. Their growth age of enlightenment brings to adolescence a sense of emotional and interpersonal maturity.

The third growth age of adolescence is one of making vital choices. Youngsters who feel and express personal maturity become acknowledged by external social signs such as the right to vote, to be elected to public office and to serve in the military. Their sense of personal maturity is accompanied by an awareness of how they fit into their family, community and, in general, into society. The two developmental tasks of this growth age are the choice of a career and the formation of a personal philosophy. The choice of a career brings about economic independence. Also, entrance into the work force enables participation in helping to move forward society and the social structure. In addition, the formation of a personal philosophy allows for the adaptation of specific behavior patterns to a defined set of ethical values. These processes begin in adolescence, but are considered to continue throughout adulthood. They represent the major contributions individuals make to their community and to their culture.

Table A.1 summarizes Erikson's description of eight psychological phases comprising the three major life periods—childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The childhood phases consist of trust, autonomy, initiative and industry. The adolescent phase is comprised of a search for identity. Adulthood focuses on intimacy, generativity and ego integrity. Successful movement through these developmental phases means normal psychological adjustment. Table A.2 outlines Muller's description of the adolescent phase of life, where the search for identity is comprised of three major growth ages and corresponding developmental tasks. The first growth age of puberty is marked by the recognition of behavioral possibilities and the beginning of new human relationships. The second growth age of enlightenment brings about emotional independence and the choice of a significant partner. The third growth age of adolescence is that of vital choices and from this emerges the choice of a career as well as the choice of a personal philosophy. These growth ages describe normal psychological development during adolescence. Abnormal or deviant behavior occurs when these growth ages are unrealized or unresolved. Particular psychological problems such as firesetting and other delinquent behavior surface as a result of failure to move successfully through these growth ages of adolescence.

**Table A.1**

**Erikson's Psychological Phases of Life**

Period	Phase
I. Childhood	A. Trust/Mistrust. B. Autonomy/Shame. C. Initiative and Responsibility/ Guilt Functioning. D. Industry/Inferiority.
II. Adolescence	E. Identity/Role Diffusion.
III. Adulthood	F. Intimacy/Isolation. G. Generativity/Stagnation. H. Ego Integrity/Despair.

Table A.2

Muller's Growth Ages and Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

Growth Age	Developmental Task
I. Puberty	A. Recognition of behavioral possibilities. B. Development of new human relationships.
II. Enlightenment	C. Achievement of emotional independence. D. Choice of a significant partner.
III. Choice	E. Choice of a career. F. Choice of a personal philosophy.

A Profile of Adolescent Behavior

Describing adolescence as one period of life consisting of developmental tasks provides an explanation of the psychological growth of youngsters. In addition to developmental tasks, adolescence is marked by specific features which characterize the behavior and functioning of youngsters. These features are divided into physical, cognitive, emotional and social characteristics. The descriptions of these four characteristics provide a profile of the behavior and functioning of youngsters during adolescence.

Adolescence is a time of rapid physiological change in both sexes. A growth spurt occurs between the ages of 8 and 15 for girls, and 11 and 16 for boys. Girls generally achieve their adult height and stature at about 15 to 18 years. Boys may not finish growing until age 20. Today, both girls and boys are taller and sexually more mature at an earlier age than adolescents in the past. Puberty begins about a year or so after the growth spurt and signals the maturation of the reproductive system and secondary sexual characteristics. During this time of complex physical changes, many youngsters become dissatisfied and even preoccupied with their new physical presentation. Nevertheless, after a reasonable period of adjustment, the majority of adolescents come to accept their new physical appearance as the beginning of a new and exciting time of change and growth.

In addition to physical change, a dramatic shift in cognitive or thinking capabilities occurs during adolescence. Concrete thinking, characteristic of childhood is replaced by abstract thinking. There are two major elements describing this new way of thinking for adolescents. First, youngsters become capable of thinking about all the possible outcomes which might occur in a given situation. Whereas childhood thought is guided by what is actually presented, adolescent thought encompasses both what is presented as well as what might be created. Second, youngsters become capable of flexible thinking. Their problem-solving skills become more versatile and they are able to adopt them to new and unique situations. These newly developed cognitive characteris-

tics allow youngsters to think about ideas in a creative and flexible manner.

Adolescence is a time when emotional experiences increase in their depth, intensity and complexity. While significant hormonal changes which occur may be linked to changes in emotional characteristics, it also is likely that youngsters become more aware of how they feel about themselves and toward others. This combination of physical and cognitive changes allows youngsters to experience deeper and more intense emotional excitement. In addition, it is a time when new relationships are formed based on both emotional feeling as well as physical attraction. The complex relationship and delicate balance between physical, cognitive and emotional growth is a continuous challenge during adolescence.

Perhaps the greatest arena for observing the delicate balance between physical, cognitive and emotional functioning is that of social relationships. All of these features operate in the relationships youngsters develop with one another. Adolescence is a time of gradual decrease in influence and control by the family and gradual increase and control of the peer group. Decision-making and risk-taking are the two major characteristics which both influence and are influenced by social relationships. Adolescents make decisions based in part on what their friends say and do. In turn, friendships are formed because there is some agreement amongst youngsters about how they think and feel. Risk-taking or becoming involved in new and potentially dangerous behavior also initiates as well as bonds human relationships. Social relationships during adolescence provide the context for youngsters to acquire decision-making and risk-taking capabilities which are responsible and mature.

A description of the physical, cognitive, emotional and social features characterizing adolescence are summarized in Table A.3.

Table A.3

Profile of Adolescent Behavior

Feature	Characteristic
Physical	A growth spurt occurs for both sexes after which follows the onset of puberty. Puberty marks the maturation of the reproductive system and secondary sexual characteristics.
Cognitive	A shift from concrete to abstract thinking occurs in which youngsters become capable of creative and flexible thought.
Emotional	A significant increase in the depth, intensity and complexity of experienced feelings.
Social	Peer relationships become the arena for decision-making and risk-taking.

These four features present a profile of normal adolescence. Physically there is a growth spurt for both sexes which is followed by the onset of puberty. There is a shift from concrete to abstract thinking which is marked by creative and flexible cognitive capabilities. Emotional experiences tend to grow in depth, intensity and complexity. Social relationships become an arena for decision-making and risk-taking. The period of adolescence is one in which significant patterns of change occur in each of these areas of functioning. These are expected changes which take place in the majority of youngsters. For many these changes are accompanied by turmoil and conflict. However, from these struggles there emerges competent and responsible young adults.

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## **Adolescence—The Total Picture**

Adolescence has been described both as the result of a psychological phase of growth which occurs as well as a function of certain features which undergo dramatic change during this period of life. The integration of these two perspectives is important in understanding the significance of adolescence.

The primary phase of psychological growth occurring during adolescence is the search for an identity. Personal identity is achieved as the result of moving through the three specific growth ages of adolescence—puberty, enlightenment and choice. This movement is accomplished by completing the developmental tasks corresponding to each of the three growth ages. Once these developmental tasks have been realized, noticeable changes are observed in the four areas of physical, cognitive, emotional and social functioning. For example, as the growth age of enlightenment is achieved, youngsters gain their emotional independence and become capable of choosing a significant partner. Consequently, noticeable changes in emotional functioning, such as increased depth and intensity of feeling, will be observed. As each of the developmental tasks is accomplished and the three growth ages realized, the corresponding changes in functioning and behavior occur which characterize the profile of normal adolescence.

Personal identity is achieved through the specific psychological changes which occur during adolescence. Successful movement to young adulthood depends on successful movement through the growth ages of adolescence. Unsuccessful movement through these growth ages results in abnormal psychological development. Abnormal or deviant psychological behavior surfaces because of an inability to realize the developmental tasks of adolescence.

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## **Summary**

Adolescence is the time of both psychological growth as well as significant psychological change. This period of life consists of three primary growth ages—puberty, enlightenment and choice—through which youngsters must pass on their way to discovering their personal identity. If psychological growth is achieved, significant psychological changes also will occur in the physical, cognitive, emotional and social functioning of youngsters. Successful movement through the growth ages of adolescence means normal psychological growth and change. Unsuccessful movement through these growth ages means that youngsters are likely to have specific types of psychological problems during their adolescence.

## **Appendix B**

# **Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules**

### **Contents:**

- (1) Adolescent Interview Schedule**
- (2) Family Interview Schedule**
- (3) Parent Questionnaire**
- (4) Instructions for Scoring the Interview Schedules  
and Parent Questionnaire**
- (5) Category Profile Sheet**

## **ADOLESCENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE** **ADOLESCENTS 14-18 YEARS OF AGE**

In order to establish rapport with adolescents, ask as many of the following questions as necessary.

1. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

Your age? \_\_\_\_\_ What grade are you in? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you think of your school? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think of your teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you do for fun, do you have hobbies? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What kind of music do you like? \_\_\_\_\_ What groups? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you have a favorite TV program? \_\_\_\_\_ What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who is your favorite person in the show? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you like him/her? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What do you like to do with your friends? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **I. QUESTIONS RELATED TO FIRESETTING HISTORY**

1. Have your friends ever set fires? \_\_\_\_\_

**Adolescent Firesetter Handbook**  
**Ages 14 - 18**

2. How many fires have you set? \_\_\_\_\_

Tell me the different things you have set on fire \_\_\_\_\_

One fire \_\_\_\_ (A-1) More than one fire \_\_\_\_ (A-2)

- \_\_\_ Paper (A-1)
- \_\_\_ Adolescent's own property (A-1/A-2)
- \_\_\_ Other person's property (A-1/A-2)
- \_\_\_ Trash (A-2)
- \_\_\_ Leaves (A-1)
- \_\_\_ Self, animals, other people (A-3)
- \_\_\_ Adolescent's room (A-2)
- \_\_\_ Forest, grassland (A-3)
- \_\_\_ Inhabited dwelling (A-3)
- \_\_\_ Other

(Explain) \_\_\_\_\_

3. How did you start the fire? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Where did you get the material to start the fire? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Found it \_\_\_ Went out of way to acquire it (explain above) (A-2)

5. Who was with you when you started the fire? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you think made you want to start the fire? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Don't Know
- \_\_\_ Another adolescent told (A-2)
- \_\_\_ To see it burn (A-2)
- \_\_\_ To hurt someone (A-2/A-3)
- \_\_\_ To destroy something (A-2) (explain above)
- \_\_\_ To get attention (A-2)

7. Was the fire set after any of the following?

- \_\_\_ Family fight (A-2)
- \_\_\_ Being angry at brother or sister (A-2)

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- Being angry at a friend (A-2)
- After getting "loaded" (A-2)
- Being angry with school authority (A-2)
- Being angry with boss (A-2)

8. Did the fire or fires you have started make you happy or make you laugh?  
 Yes? (A-3)  No
9. Do you dream about fires at night?  Yes (A-2 or A-3)  No
10. Do you think about fires in the day?  Yes (A-2 or A-3)  No
11. Can fire do magical things?  Yes (A-2 or A-3)  No

**B. QUESTIONS REGARDING SCHOOL, PEERS, OR JOB**

(Please feel free to elaborate on these areas if you feel that there is significant information to be obtained.)

1. Tell me about any problems you may have with your friends. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(-)=A-2
2. Tell me about any problems you may have in school. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(-)=A-2
3. Tell me about any problems you may have with a job. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(-)=A-2
4. Tell me about plans you have for jobs or a career as you get older. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(-)=A-2
5. Tell me a little about how you get along in dating or with girls (boys) who you would like to get closer to.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(-)=A-2
6. Have you recently been told that you hang around too much with kids who are a bad influence on you?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(-)=A-2

## II. QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

### A. QUESTIONS ABOUT HOME AND FAMILY

1. Do you see your mother a lot, or is she gone a lot? \_\_\_\_\_  
Gone \_\_\_\_ (P-2)
2. Do you see your father a lot, or is he gone a lot? \_\_\_\_\_  
Gone \_\_\_\_ (P-2)
3. Tell me about your parents, what are they like? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (-)\*=P-2
4. Tell me about your brothers or sisters, what are they like? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (-)\*=P-2
5. What do you do together with your family? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (-)\*=P-2
6. Do you fight a lot with your brothers or sisters? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes=P-2
7. Do you fight a lot with your mother? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes=P-2
8. Do you fight a lot with your father? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes=P-2
9. Do your parents fight a lot with each other? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes=P-2
10. How do your parents punish you when you do something wrong? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What do they usually punish you for? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you feel they punish you more than they should? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes=P-2
11. Has anything bad happened at your house lately? \_\_\_\_\_ A2-3, P2-3

### **III. QUESTIONS OR OBSERVATIONS RELATED TO SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

These questions and observations *do not* have to be asked directly to adolescents. However, it is important that interviewers are aware that the special circumstances of severe mental disturbance, physical or sexual abuse and the criminal behavior of arson or other acts of juvenile delinquency which can surface during these interviews. Therefore, the following questions are included so that if interviewers are faced with these circumstances, they can use these questions as guidelines for their interviews.

#### **A. Severe Mental Disturbance**

1. **The presence one or more of the following conditions are indicators of of psychosis.**
  - a. Disorganized thoughts, such as the inability to complete a sentence when speaking during an interview.
  - b. Altered perceptions, such as the inability to tell whether the weather outside is hot or cold.
  - c. Dramatic mood changes, such as withdrawal, (inability to answer simple questions), or highly excitable (inability to sit still or listen to direction).
2. **The presence of one or more of the following conditions are indicative of of depression.**
  - a. Tearfulness or spontaneous crying, especially without being provoked or in response to minor or inappropriate events.
  - b. Excessive irritability or anger, including temper outbursts or aggressive actions (hitting, spitting, hair-pulling), which occur frequently or inappropriately.
  - c. Withdrawn, including staying in bed all day or in their room, not participating in family or peer group activities and failure to talk with friends or family.
3. **The presence of one or more of the following conditions are indicators of suicide risk.**
  - a. Repeated thoughts of death or of hurting or harming themselves.
  - b. Specific plan of hurting or harming themselves including a time, place, weapon and other details.

#### **B. Physical or Sexual Abuse**

1. Victims of physical abuse are likely to display one or more of the following characteristics: unexplained bruises, welts, bite marks, burns, fractures, lacerations, abdominal injuries, hair loss and upper body injuries.
2. Perpetrators of physical abuse are likely to display one or more of the following behaviors: temper outbursts and physical attacks against property or person.
3. Victims of sexual abuse are likely to display one or more of the following characteristics: genital trauma, venereal disease, sleep disturbance, bedwetting, abdominal pain, appetite disturbance and dramatic weight loss.

4. Perpetrators of sexual abuse are likely to display one or more of the following behaviors: a sophisticated knowledge of sex, promiscuity and prostitution.

### **C. Firesetting as Juvenile Delinquency**

There are three factors which must be present to classify firesetting as criminal or juvenile delinquent behavior. These three factors and their description are listed here to provide interviewers with guidelines to determine whether the current firesetting behavior they are evaluating might be classified as an arson crime. If these factors are all present in the firesetting incidents then interviewers must take specific steps, such as Mirandizing, to begin the appropriate legal procedures.

1. Youngsters must attain the age of accountability or responsibility. This age varies from state to state, therefore fire departments must be aware of the minimum age for which youngsters can be legally charged with criminal behavior.
2. Motive must be present and must include one or more of the following reasons: firesetting accompanies or covers other crimes; it is the result of malicious mischief; there is no concern for the consequences, or it is the expression of an affect such as anger.
3. Intent must be established and must include all of the following conditions: youngsters must be mentally alert; they must be physically capable, they must act voluntarily; their behavior must be goal-directed, rational and willful.

## FAMILY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF PARENTS ADOLESCENTS 14-18 YEARS OF AGE

INTERVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

JUVENILE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SEX \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

ETHNICITY/RACE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL ATTENDED \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MARITAL STATUS \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Single \_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_ Widow/Separated

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY \_\_\_ BIRTH ORDER OF JUVENILE \_\_\_

#### I. QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE ADOLESCENT'S FIRESETTING HISTORY

1. Was this the first fire? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Yes (A-1) \_\_\_ No (A-2)

If "no," how many others set? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What was set on fire?

\_\_\_ Paper, trash, leaves (A-1 or A-2)

\_\_\_ Adolescent's own property (A-2)

\_\_\_ School (A-2)

\_\_\_ Forest (A-3)

\_\_\_ Occupied Dwelling (A-3)

\_\_\_ Other property (A-2)

\_\_\_ Other

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Materials used to start fire:  Matches  Lighter  Flares  Other

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How did adolescent get material to start fire?  Found it

Went out of his way to acquire it (A-2)  Other

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the adolescent's curiosity about fire  Mild (A-1)  Moderate (A-2)  Extreme (A-3)

6. Was adolescent pressured or coerced into firesetting behavior by his peers?  Yes (A-2)  No

7. Was the fire in question an accident?  Yes (A-1)  No (A-2)

8. Was the adolescent attempting to do harm or destroy property by setting the fire?

Yes (A-2)  No

9. Was the adolescent part of a group, or with another adolescent when the fire was set?

Yes (A-2)  No

10. Did the adolescent plan the setting of the fire?  Yes (A-2)  No

11. Did the adolescent lie about his involvement in fire?  Yes (A-2)  No

12. Was the fire set because the adolescent was incapable of understanding what he was doing?

Yes (A-2 or A-3)  No (A-1)

13. Does the adolescent know proper use of matches and/or fires?  Yes  No (A-2)

14. Did the adolescent panic when the fire got out of control?  Yes (A-1)  No (A-2)

15. Did the adolescent attempt to get help?  Yes (A-1)  No (A-2)

16. Was anyone with the adolescent when the fire was set?  Yes  No

If yes, who \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, Address) (Phone)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Is there an indication that the fire was precipitated by family difficulties or family arguments?

Yes (P-2 or P-2)  No

18. Is there an indication that the fire was started after the adolescent became angry at another person

or himself?  Yes (A-2)  No

19. Is there an indication that the fire was set primarily to destroy something or someone?  
 Yes (A-3 or A-2)  No
20. Is there an indication that the fire was set primarily because the adolescent was told that he could not use fire?  Yes (A-2)  No
21. Is there an indication that the adolescent sees magical qualities in fire?  Yes (A-2)  No
22. Does the adolescent deny interest in fire if information to the contrary is available?  
 Yes (A-2)  No
23. Does the fire appear to be a "cry for help" from the adolescent?  Yes (A-2)  No
24. Does the fire appear as positive or funny to the adolescent?  Yes (A-3)  No

## **II. QUESTIONS RELATED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **A. QUESTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Is adolescent on medication?  Yes  No If yes, what type? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Has adolescent been considered to be hyperkinetic as child or have neurological dysfunction?  
 Yes (A-2)  No
3. Is this your own child?  Yes  Foster  Adopted
4. Does the adolescent have a physical ailment? (Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is the adolescent physically immature for age?  Yes (A-2)  No

### **B. QUESTIONS DEALING WITH HOME AND FAMILY**

1. Has there been a recent change in family structure?  Divorce (P-2)  Recent marriage (P-2)  
 Death of relative (P-2)  Other  
(Explain) \_\_\_\_\_
2. How do you normally discipline the adolescent?  Whip  Isolate  Withdrawal of privileges  
 Yell  Ground (i.e., home restriction)  Other  
(Explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How often is the discipline applied? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Does mother overprotect adolescent?  Yes (P-2)  No
5. Is father frequently absent?  Yes (P-2)  No
6. Does it appear that it has been necessary for father or mother to be away from the adolescent frequently?  Yes (P-2)  No
7. Does adolescent show good moral values?  Yes  No (A-2)
8. Is adolescent attempting to show independence from family in appropriate ways?  
 Yes  No (A-2)
9. Does adolescent indicate that he/she has career or job plans for the future?  
 Yes  No (A-2)
10. Does adolescent indicate that he/she wishes to at some point in the future start a family?  
 Yes  No (A-2)
11. Does adolescent show gender appropriate masculine or feminine characteristics?  
 Yes  No (A-2)

**C. QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE ADOLESCENT'S PEERS AND SCHOOL**

(Please feel free to elaborate upon these questions if you feel there are significant difficulties in these areas.)

1. Has the adolescent had significant difficulties in getting along with peers in school or in your neighborhood?  Yes (A-2)  No (A-1)
2. Has the adolescent had significant difficulties in learning or with behavior at school?  
 Yes (A-2)  No (A-1)
3. Does the adolescent show appropriate affection or sexual behavior towards opposite sex peers?  
 Yes  No (A-2)
4. Does adolescent spend too much time with group or "gang" which is a bad influence?  
 Yes (A-2)  No

### **III. QUESTIONS RELATED TO SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

These questions and observations *do not* have to be asked directly to parents. However, it is important that interviewers are aware that the special circumstances of severe mental disturbances, physical or sexual abuse, and the criminal behavior of arson or other acts of juvenile delinquency which can surface during interviews. The first two special circumstances—severe mental disturbance and physical and sexual abuse—can apply to both adolescent as well as parental behavior. For example, a parent may display signs of severe mental disturbance or admit to physical abuse of their youngsters. Therefore, during the course of interviewing parents, information about these twin special circumstances may not only relate to the behavior of adolescents, but they may relate to the behavior of parents. Regardless of who is exhibiting the problem behaviors, the appropriate steps must be taken to resolve the special circumstances. These steps are outlined in detail in Module 5. The following questions are included so that interviewers have guidelines to identify these special circumstances in both adolescents as well as parental behavior.

#### **A. Severe Mental Disturbance**

1. **The presence one or more of the following conditions are indicators of of psychosis.**
  - a. Disorganized thoughts, such as the inability to complete a sentence when speaking during an interview.
  - b. Altered perceptions, such as the inability to tell whether the weather outside is hot or cold.
  - c. Dramatic mood changes, such as withdrawal, (inability to answer simple questions), or highly excitable (inability to sit still or listen to direction).
2. **The presence of one or more of the following conditions are indicative of of depression.**
  - a. Tearfulness or spontaneous crying, especially without being provoked or in response to minor or inappropriate events.
  - b. Excessive irritability or anger, including temper outbursts or aggressive actions (hitting, spitting, hair-pulling), which occur frequently or inappropriately.
  - c. Withdrawn, including staying in bed all day or in their room, not participating in family or peer group activities and failure to talk with friends or family.
3. **The presence of one or more of the following conditions are indicators of suicide risk.**
  - a. Repeated thoughts of death or of hurting or harming themselves.
  - b. Specific plan of hurting or harming themselves including a time, place, weapon and other details.

#### **B. Physical or Sexual Abuse**

1. Victims of physical abuse are likely to display one or more of the following characteristics: unexplained bruises, welts, bite marks, burns, fractures, lacerations, abdominal injuries, hair loss and upper body injuries.

2. Perpetrators of physical abuse are likely to display one or more of the following behaviors: temper outbursts and physical attacks against property or person.
3. Victims of sexual abuse are likely to display one or more of the following characteristics: genital trauma, venereal disease, sleep disturbance, bedwetting, abdominal pain, appetite disturbance and dramatic weight loss.
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3. Intent must be established and must include all of the following conditions: youngsters must be mentally alert; they must be physically capable, they must act voluntarily; their behavior must be goal-directed, rational and willful.

## PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

### ADOLESCENTS 14-18

PARENT(s): Please fill out this form as soon as possible. Circle the answer "never," "sometimes," or "frequently," that best describes your adolescent for every question. Ask any questions you have. We want to know if the adolescent exhibits the following behaviors. When marking the form consider all parts of the adolescent's life (at home, at school, etc.) where these behaviors might be present.

BEHAVIOR	NEVER	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY
Lack of concentration	A1	A1	A2
Learning problems (home or school)	A1	A2	A2
Behavior problems in school	A1	A2	A2
Unresponsive to school authorities	A1	A2	A2
Impulsive (acts before he/she thinks)	A1	A1	A2
Impatient	A1	A1	A2
Truancy	A1	A2	A2
Runs away from home or school	A1	A2	A2
<hr/>			
Fighting with siblings	A1	A1	A2
Family discord	P1	P2	P2
Father or mother absent	P1	P2	P2
Family has moved (with adolescent)	P1	P1	P2
He/she has seen a therapist	A1	A2	A2
Other family member has seen a therapist	P1	P2	P2
Parent has serious health problem	P1	P2	P2
Marriage is unhappy	P1	P2	P2
Mother's discipline is effective	P2	P1	P1
Father's discipline is effective	P2	P1	P1
Makes attempts at age appropriate independence from parents	A2	A1	A1
Shows age appropriate interest in having own family in the future	A2	A1	A1
Shows age appropriate interest in future jobs/career	A2	A1	A1

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BEHAVIOR	NEVER	SOMETIMES	FREQUENTLY
Constipation	A1	A1	A2
Diarrhea	A1	A1	A2
Convulsions or "spells"	A1	A2	A2
Stomach aches	A1	A1	A2
Sleep of waking problems	A1	A2	A2
Self-imposed diets	A1	A1	A2
Stuttering	A1	A2	A2
Sleep walking	A1	A2	A2
Accidents	A1	A2	A2
Vomiting	A1	A1	A2
Aches and pains	A1	A1	A2
Excessive weight loss	A1	A2	A2
Losses appetite	A1	A1	A2
Excessive overweight	A1	A1	A2
<hr/>			
Need for security	A1	A1	A2
Need for affection	A2	A1	A2
Knows good moral behavior	A2	A1	A1
Feels good about self	A2	A1	A1
Comfortable with own body	A2	A1	A1
Likes overall looks	A2	A1	A1
<hr/>			
Destroys own property	A1	A2	A2
Disobeys	A1	A1	A2
Long history of severe behavioral difficulties	A1	A2	A2
Expresses anger by damaging the property of others	A1	A2	A2-3
Temper tantrums	A1	A1	A2
<hr/>			
Easily led by peers	A1	A1	A2
Cruelty to children	A1	A2	A2-3
Fighting with peers	A1	A1	A2
Withdrawing from peers	A1	A1	A2
He/she is a poor loser	A1	A1-2	A2
Doesn't socialize with peers	A1	A2	A2
Shows off	A1	A1	A2
He/she is good at sports	A2	A1	A1
Sexual activity with others	A1	A1	A2
Shows appropriate peer affection	A2	A1	A1
If boy, shows clear preference for male activities; if female, shows clear preference for female activities	A2	A1	A1
He/she is alone a lot	A1	A1	A2

Lying	A1	A1	A2
Excessive and controlled anger	A1	A2	A2
Violence	A1	A2	A2
Stealing	A1	A2	A2
Cruelty to animals	A1	A2	A2-3
Is in a gang	A1	A2	A2
Was in cult	A1	A2	A2
Uses drugs or alcohol	A1	A2	A2
Has been in trouble with police	A1	A2	A2
<hr/>			
Unusual fantasies	A1	A2	A3
Strange thought patterns	A1	A2	A3
Speech bizarre, illogical, or irrational	A1	A3	A3
Out of touch with reality	A1	A3	A3
Strange quality about adolescent	A1	A2	A3

## Instructions for Scoring the Interview Schedules

The information contained in the Interview Schedules and the Parent Questionnaire can be scored to obtain a numerical rating as to the severity of firesetting behavior and related problems. The formal scoring of the Interview Schedules and Parent Questionnaire is usually completed at the conclusion of the interview. However, during the interview, it is possible to quickly evaluate the severity of the current problems by paying attention to the number and type of scores obtained on individual questions. Once the formal scoring procedures have been completed, determination can be made as to whether adolescents are at little, definite or extreme risk for involvement in future firesetting behavior. Once these risk levels have been established, recommendations can be presented as to how to help firesetting adolescents and their families.

### Procedures

There are three separate forms which must be scored. They are the Adolescent Interview Schedule, the Family Interview Schedule and the Parent Questionnaire. Once these forms are scored, the scores are transferred to the Category Profile Sheet (This sheet follows these Instructions). There are three major steps to be completed in scoring these forms. The following paragraphs describe each of these three steps.

1. Review the Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules and the Parent Questionnaire to make sure all questions have been answered and assigned either a A1, 2, or 3; or a P1, 2, or 3. Answers that relate to adolescent behavior are classified as A1, 2, or 3, while answers that relate to the parent are classified as P1, 2, or 3.

Most of the answers are assigned a score; however, sometimes the interviewer will have the option of scoring the response as either a 1, 2, or 3, depending on the content of the answer. Remembering that a 3 score indicates a serious problem, you will

need to use judgment in making this determination. For, example, "Do you think about fires in the day? \_\_\_Yes (A-2 or A-3)". An A-2 answer might be, "Sometimes I think it might be exciting to see a fire." An answer indicating that frequent thoughts of fire coupled with excitement or anticipation might be classified as an A-3. Once all questions are answered, you are ready to transfer them to the Category Profile Sheet.

2. Next, transfer P's and A's from the Interview Schedule and Parent Questionnaire to column 1, 2, or 3 on the Category Profile Sheet. Answers related to the adolescent are represented by A's. These are placed in column 1, 2, or 3. So, for example, A-1 means place an A in column 1; A-2 means place an A in column 2; A-3 means place an A in column 3. Answers that relate to the parents or the adolescent's home environment are represented by a "P." P-1 means place a "P" in column 1, P-2 means place a "P" in column in 2; P-3 means place a "P" in column 3. In a few questions on the Interview Schedule, the interviewer has the option of a P-2 or A-2. This means that the interviewer puts down whether they think the problem is more parent (P) or adolescent (A) focused. At the end of this step, all of your answers should be transferred to the Profile Sheet.
3. Finally, add the number of P's and A's in each column and enter the totals at the bottom. Note where the majority of the responses fall:
  - Column 1—Those of little concern
  - Column 2—Those of definite concern
  - Column 3— Those of extreme concern

If the majority (over 80%) of the responses are in Column 1, educational interventions probably are appropriate. If the majority are in columns 2 or 3, referral to a mental health agencies or community intervention programs probably are appropriate. Modules 4, 5, and 6 detail how, when and where to make appropriate interventions.

### Example of How to Use Profile Sheets

The following are examples of questions on the Interview Schedules and how they would appear on the profile sheet.

1. Has your adolescent set more than one fire? \_\_\_Yes (A-2) \_\_\_No  
If the answers is "Yes," place an "A" in column 2. If "No," you need not mark—or you may place an "A" in column 1.
2. Does you adolescent have behavior problems at school? \_\_\_Yes (A-2) \_\_\_No If the answer is "Yes," place an "A" in column 2.
3. Do you have great difficulty in getting along with your spouse? \_\_\_Yes(P2) \_\_\_No

If the answer is "Yes," place a "P" in column 2.

4. Does your adolescent lose contact with reality when watching a fire? \_\_\_Yes (A3) \_\_\_No  
 If the answer is "Yes," place an A in column 3.

**CATEGORY PROFILE SHEET**

	1. Little Concern	2. Definite Concern	3. Extreme Concern
		A (from Q1) A (from Q2) P (from Q3)	A (from Q4)
Total A	0	2	1
Total P	0	1	0
Total A & P	0	3	1

The adolescent should be referred for professional mental health help to appropriate intervention programs because of the number of A's and/or P's in squares 2 and/or 3.

**CATEGORY PROFILE SHEET**

<b>1. Little Concern</b> (Educational Intervention)	<b>2. Definite Concern</b> (Educational and Psychological Intervention)	<b>3. Extreme Concern</b> (Psychological Intervention)
Total A		
Total P		
Total A + P		

## Appendix C

# Adolescent Firesetter Evaluation Reports

The following two case reports, David's Evaluation and Michael's Evaluation, are summarized from information obtained from Adolescent and Family Interview Schedules. These reports are presented for the purpose of demonstrating how to write concise summaries of case material. Often it is important to present written case material to other professionals who may want to learn more about or help these firesetting adolescents and their families.

## David's (D's) Evaluation

### Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to ascertain the severity of the firesetting incidents in which D was involved and recommend an appropriate intervention strategy to remediate the behavior. One two-hour interview was conducted alone with D and an additional one-hour interview with Mr. and Ms. D.

### D's Psychosocial History

D progressed smoothly over all physical and developmental milestones as a young child. Of particular interest is an event which occurred at age three, which coincides with the time youngsters begin to express their interest in fire. D and his family were celebrating the fourth of July with fireworks and a sparkler accidentally broke off hitting D in the neck. D suffered second-degree burns and wore a bandage for several weeks. As a consequence, in the subsequent few years D expressed a fear of fire and would not go near it, even to light or blow out the candles on his birthday cakes. Therefore, just during the age when D was supposed to be learning about the appropriate use of fire, because his initial experience was so frightening, he refused to learn the "normal" behaviors such as lighting a match safely, etc. This retardation of normally developing experiences such as acquiring mastery over fire indeed had a negative effect on D's future behaviors.

### Family Background

D is the third-born of a four-child family. This is the first marriage for both parents who have an 18-year-old son leaving for the Air Force Academy, a 16-year-old daughter with a history of psychological problems, and a two-year-old son.

The beginning of D's behavioral problems are intimately connected with several events which negatively impacted his family. This family has experienced several major stresses which severely influenced the psychological well being of D. Two major geographic moves, significant financial difficulties, serious illnesses within the family, including deaths within the family, and the birth of a new sibling within a five-year period all contributed to an unstable environment for D. As a result of these family difficulties, D became somewhat introverted, his self-esteem and confidence were extremely low, he had difficulty making new friends and was slow to adjust to his new surrounds. These psychological conditions made D vulnerable to becoming involved in behaviors which can be interpreted as a "cry" for attention.

### D's Firesetting

D's antisocial activities and, in particular, his firesetting all occurred within a one-year period immediately following the aforementioned family problems. He became close friends with another adolescent and, "as partners-in-crime", they became involved in mischievous activities.

D has no known previous firesetting incidents prior to the two fires

in question. There appears to be no malicious intention on D's part to go out and set either of the two fires. It seems as if the fires were set as an afterthought to the illegal entry into the buildings. There also does not appear to be any apparent motives of revenge or arson-for-profit. It is interesting to note that both fires were set in close proximity to the local fire department and that D heard the engines respond to the fire as he was running away. In addition, D stopped firesetting on his own accord, not as a result of social pressure.

D's firesetting is a result of several factors. Of significance is his initial negative experience of being badly burned at an age when he should have been developing mastery over the use of fire. In addition, the severe family difficulties and stresses inhibited the development of his self-confidence and slowed his adjustment to his peer group and school environment. The firesetting incidents themselves can be viewed as a "cry" for attention and perhaps the only method D had at his disposal to express his emotional discontent about destroying property. He understands how terrible his actions were and he is not proud about his activities. It appears as if the origins of D's firesetting reside in psychological maladjustment rather than in a malicious intention to incinerate, as defines the legal definition of arson.

### **Recommendations**

The most critical intervention for D at this point in his life is for him to understand why he became involved in these destructive activities. His activities were motivated by psychological and family difficulties which left him extremely vulnerable. Intensive psychiatric treatment designed to help D understand his motivations is the primary method that will improve his current problems. Detention without psychological intervention will destroy what little self-confidence and ego development has achieved and severely inhibit his potential to grow in a healthy direction.

D has all the characteristics which make him an excellent candidate for psychiatric treatment. In particular, he is verbally intelligent and willing to talk about himself. Since this is the major treatment modality in psychotherapy, D's prognosis for responding to this type of intervention is extremely good. In addition, D himself has expressed a need for this type of help.

Because of D's age and his current psychological and family situation, it is of critical importance that he receive psychiatric attention now. Also, it is imperative that his parents and other family members be included in the treatment because the family unit has had such a tremendous impact on D's behavior. Because conditions in D's family have stabilized over the past several months, it is an excellent time for D and his parents to look back on the last several years and together achieve an understanding of what led to D's destructive behaviors. Psychiatric treatment must be focused on reconstructing the family unit so that a supportive environment can be developed in which D's needs are acknowledged and attended. It appears as if the family is willing to make this type of commitment to D and to themselves.

In summary, intensive psychiatric treatment is recommended for both D individually as well as for D and his family as a unit. It is critical that this treatment take place now for both D's development and for rebuilding and maintaining his relationship to his family. If

this type of psychiatric treatment does not take place, there is a chance of destroying D's individual potential as well as weakening his family relationship. The prognosis for both D and his family, given this type of treatment, is excellent. Without treatment, D's goals for himself, of going to college, and having a decent career and family may never be realized.

## **Michael's (M's) Evaluation**

### **Interview**

Both M and his mother, L, were separately interviewed, each for forty-five minutes.

### **Psychosocial History**

M is a sixteen year old first-born child currently living with his mother, one fourteen year old brother and one younger stepbrother. M's mother has been divorced twice and is currently living with a man and her sons. M's father has remarried and lives with his wife and daughter. M's parents divorced when he was three and M sees his father on occasion.

M's nickname is \_\_\_\_, and he and his mother prefer to use it. M's mother reports a normal and uneventful early childhood. During M's grammar school years his mother describes him as a well-adjusted and happy child. However, during the onset of puberty, M's mother noticed significant changes in her son's behavior. From grade seven, there followed a string of antisocial and explosive behaviors which portrayed M as a conflicted and confused adolescent.

The first of such behaviors occurred in the seventh grade of a private school while M was residing with his mother and stepfather. M's mother reports that when things aren't going well for him he is likely to exhibit somatic complaints which may or may not be true or he may act impulsively. M became very involved in his school, identifying with the teacher and staff more so than with his peers. The school began to have financial difficulties, and it became evident that they would have to close their doors. M became upset and acted out by vandalizing a classroom. He was obviously distressed and angry and lashed out at a perceived target of rejection.

Shortly after this incident M expressed a desire to live with his father, his father agreed with the arrangement and M went to live in the Los Angeles area. Here, too, M exhibited additional behavior problems. He secretly removed an antique gun from his grandparents' home, hid it in his school locker and showed it off to friends. One of his peers reported him, and he was subsequently expelled from school. In this and other incidents M's initial intention is to gain attention and approval from friends by exhibiting a noticeable gesture or behavior. His actions are unfortunately inappropriate, causing attention of a negative type and leading him directly to a confrontation with authority. Hence, what begins presumably as a way for M to become recognized and gain affection and attention, ultimately ends in negative consequences and rejection from those whom he had hoped to win approval.

During his adolescent years, M can be characterized as having a high need for social acceptance. However, his skill at forming and maintaining significant interpersonal relationships is poor and he is quick to feel alienation and rejection. When this occurs he becomes angry, but with few coping skills and poor emotional expression, he compensates by acting out in socially undesirable ways to gain previously thwarted affection and attention.

## Firesetting Behavior

There appears to be no evidence of early childhood fireplay or fire-setting. The first known firesetting incident occurs concurrently with other behavior problems M is experiencing and with the onset of adolescence.

The initial firesetting episode began shortly after M entered boarding school. M reports that his friends were "mad" at him and he wanted to win back their allegiance. Therefore, he intentionally set fire to a storage room, waited a few moments, and returned to the scene. He immediately rang the fire alarm and proceeded to extinguish the fire himself. He was congratulated by staff and friends and perceived himself as the school hero. However, two weeks later, when things again weren't going well between he and his friends, M set another intentional fire in a shed containing highly combustible materials. As with the first fire he was the first to report it and the first to arrive at the scene to help extinguish it. His apparent proximity to the fires led school officials to suspect his involvement and they asked that he and his parents seek psychiatric assessment.

M returned to live with his mother and brothers and enrolled in a local school. He again complained that he was having difficulty getting along with some of his friends and that a couple of guys were out to get him. M reports feeling angry and depressed and decided to intentionally set a "small" fire on the back porch of his house. He then made it appear as if others had set the fire by convincing his younger siblings that he had seen some kids in their backyard and by writing a derogatory phrase on the back wall of the house. This small fire on the porch destroyed the entire house. However, during this fire, too, M helped evacuate his family, call the fire department and appear as if he was both the victim and the hero at the scene.

M's firesetting behavior is consistent with the other behavior problems he is experiencing during his rather tumultuous adolescent years. There is little doubt that he intentionally sets fires for recognition and attention. However, he does not appear to set them for a malicious intent to destroy person or property, to seek revenge on others or for personal profit or gain. M's firesetting can be viewed as a way for him to achieve immediate recognition both as the victim or "as someone to feel sorry for" as well as the "hero" or "look how I helped save everyone from disaster." When M is questioned about his reactions to the firesetting he expresses fear and remorse and firmly states that he will never again become involved in intentional firesetting.

## Recommendations

The motivations behind M's firesetting do not appear to be of criminal intent, but rather are a part of a cry for attention and social acceptance. Unfortunately, he possesses few skills which will help him initiate and maintain significant interpersonal relationships and which will support and encourage a more positive and productive way of channeling his needs for recognition and affection.

During the next few years it is crucial that M experience a stable and consistent family and social atmosphere. There should be a long-term commitment from his significant support network to work with

him. This can be achieved by M and his family agreeing to a plan for his psychosocial development over the rest of his high school year.

First, M should be enrolled in a school which is consistent with his vocational goals as well as his personality and social needs. Because of his apparent difficulty in making and keeping friends, the school atmosphere should be carefully considered. He needs to feel socially comfortable so that he can settle down to achieve some sense of competence and achievement in a school setting.

Second, there should be a long-term commitment to individual counseling for M and to family therapy for at least M and his mother. M has difficulty expressing his feelings, especially when things begin to take a wrong turn for him interpersonally or socially. He must work on his skills at communicating, particularly when he is feeling angry, alienated and unwanted. Individual counseling will ensure that M has a place where he can work on improving his ability to know himself. However, there also appears to be unresolved conflicts between M and his mother which must be identified and worked through. An understanding must be achieved as to the boundaries of their relationship, M's needs for attention and affection must be acknowledged and his mother's ability to guide and direct her son's behavior must be reinforced. The primary family unit must be strengthened.

Lastly, the Firehawk Program can facilitate M's reentry into the community in a socially acceptable manner. M can be assigned a firefighter companion who can dispel any further interest M may have in firesetting (which by the current evaluation appears to be minimal at present). The firefighter companion will monitor M's overall progress and encourage him to become involved in additional community activities to promote a sense of self-confidence as well as to make a positive contribution to his environment. The major goals of the relationship between M and the firefighter companion will be to confirm no further fire activity and to initiate and maintain social adjustment within the community.

## Appendix D

# Description of Adolescent Firesetter Programs

The following is a partial list of programs which provide services specifically to adolescents involved in firesetting. The first section outlines programs which operate primarily in or by fire departments. Some of these programs also may operate in schools. The second section details mental health programs or professionals who have special expertise in working with adolescent firesetters.

### I. Fire Department Programs

#### A. Education Programs.

1. Program: The St. Paul Fire Education Program  
Source: National Committee on Property Insurance (1984). Juvenile Firesetters Programs, Boston National Committee on Property Insurance.  
Contact: The St. Paul, Minnesota Insurance Companies.  
*Description*  
The goal of this program is to teach fire safety and crime prevention to eighth and ninth graders and to build their self-confidence by utilizing them as role models and teachers of fire prevention to fourth and fifth graders. This program includes a documented curriculum and lesson plan plus participation of community officials representing law enforcement and juvenile justice in teaching activities.
2. Program: Firebusters  
Source: Crawford, J. (1987). Fire Safety Feedback. *Fire Engineering*, 140, 33-38.  
Contact: Jim Crawford  
Office of Community Relations  
Portland Fire Bureau  
Portland Oregon  
*Description*  
The fire department in cooperation with schools, local television and a popular restaurant chain produced a successful fire prevention effort. A five-part series of fire education information was presented by the local television news for one week. Fire departments and schools distributed a checklist to evaluate the information youngsters learned from the presentations by the news media. These checklists were returned to schools in exchange for one free meal at the local restaurant chain. In addition, a grand

prize was offered based on excellence in answering items on the checklist.

3. Program: Project Open House  
Source: Marinucci, R. A., Garr, M. R. and Kurzeja, W. M (1987). Fire on Display, *Fire Engineering*, 140, 28-30.  
Contact: Richard A. Marinucci  
Farmington Hills Fire Department  
Farminton Hills, Michigan

*Description*

A training burn was conducted and the entire event, from ignition to suppression, was videotaped. The videotape of the training burn was witnessed by middle school students. After the training burn, students were allowed to tour the remains of the building used for the training burn.

## **B. Evaluation and Referral Programs**

1. Program: Fire Related Youth Program  
Source: Cole, R. E., Laurentis, L. R., et. al (1984). *Juvenile Fire-setter Intervention. A report of the Rochester, New York, Fire Department Fire Related Youth Program Development Project*, Rochester, N.Y.: The New York State Department of State Office of Fire Prevention and Control.

Contact: Jerold Bills  
Investigator, Rochester Fire Department  
Room 306, Public Safety Building  
Civic Center Plaza  
Rochester, New York 14614

*Description*

The goals of this program are to identify youngsters who have set at least one unsupervised firestart, assess their risk for recidivism and need for services and prevent future firestarts. An evaluation is conducted by trained fire investigators to assess the firesetting risk level of youngsters, educational materials are distributed and adolescents and their families are referred for the necessary services.

2. Program: San Jose's Juvenile Firesetters Program  
Source: Perkins, Don (1986). Description of the Juvenile Firesetter Program for San Jose. Unpublished Paper.

Contact: Captain Don Perkins  
Arson Unit, San Jose Fire Department  
Four North Second St., Suite 1100  
San Jose, California 95113-1305

*Description*

The goal of this program is to substantially reduce the incidence of juvenile firesetters and the rate of recidivism among juvenile firesetters. The methods of intervention include evaluation and assessment of firesetting risk level, a brief (three session) educational seminar on fire safety and referral to mental health or other necessary and appropriate services.

3. Program: Portland's Juvenile Firesetter Program  
Source: Muir, Steve (1985). Portland's Juvenile Firesetters Program - The Key Elements. Unpublished Paper.

Contact: Steve Muir  
Juvenile Firesetters Program

Public Information Office  
55 S. W. Ash Street  
Portland, Oregon 97204

*Description*

The goal of this program is to screen, evaluate and refer adolescent firesetters so as to prevent the recurrence of their firestarting and other problematic behaviors. Youngsters are evaluated and offered educational instruction including films, fire safety exercise and in some instances they are shown the result of fires. Adolescents then are referred to mental health, juvenile justice or other services to help eliminate firestarting and the related psychological problems.

### C. Counseling Programs

1. Program: Houston's Juvenile Firesetters Program  
Source: McKinney, C. D. (1983). Houston Juvenile Firesetter Prevention Program. Unpublished Report.  
Contact: C. Don McKinney, D.S.W.  
Program Director  
Office of the Fire Marshal  
410 Bagby  
Houston, Texas 77002  
*Description*  
The goal of this program is to interrupt and terminate recurrent firesetting and associated behavioral problems by evaluating, educating and treating adolescents and their families. Interventions include a complete psychosocial evaluation, educational materials encouraging compliance with fire safety, short term family psychotherapy and work with Big Brothers and Sisters.
2. Program: Dallas' Juvenile Firesetters Program  
Sources: Rodrigue, G. (1982). Kid Torches: Babes That Burn Firehouse, 7, 49-52.  
Bumpass, E. et. al. (1985). A Community-Based Program for Juvenile Firesetters. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, 36, 529-532.  
Contact: Captain Douglas Preston  
Dallas Fire Department  
2014 Main Street, Room 402  
Dallas, Texas 75201  
*Description*  
The goal of this program is to stop firestarting activity and provide adolescents with an intervention designed to prevent its recurrence as well as control the feelings and impulses associated with firesetting. Firefighters and fire investigators are trained in the technique of emotional graphing. Within three to six sessions adolescents learn to recognize their urge to firestart, interrupt the behavior before it starts and substitute socially appropriate types of behavior.
3. Program: Prince George's Country's Juvenile Firesetter Program  
Contact: Albert J. Simms  
Fire Inspector  
Bureau of Fire Prevention and Investigation  
4318 Rhode Island Ave  
Brentwood, Maryland 20722  
(301) 699-2940

Source:  
Los Angeles Grand Jury

*Description*

The goal of the program is to provide comprehensive intervention to eliminate recurrent firesetting and adjust the accompanying behavior problems. The primary interventions include a comprehensive psychosocial evaluation, educational seminars, a partnership with a trained firefighter companion and referral for necessary or additional special services.

#### **D. Referral Programs**

Those fire departments which select not to develop specific programs for adolescent firesetters at the very least will need to know where and how to refer these youngsters when they come to their attention. Fire departments must identify the agencies and professionals in their community which work with firesetting youngsters. Although this is likely to vary from community to community, in general public mental health service for children and mental health professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and counselors, are likely to be among those who work with firesetting adolescents. Fire departments can identify these agencies and professionals by telephone contact or in writing. Once the specific service providers have been located, fire departments can maintain a written list which includes names, addresses, telephone numbers, types of programs, etc. so that immediate and successful referral can be made to help adolescent firesetters and their families.

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## **II. Mental Health Programs and Professionals**

These mental health programs and professionals have been identified as having expertise in working with adolescent firesetters.

### **A. Outpatient Services**

1. Paul Boccumini, Ph.D.  
Director, Clinical Services  
Probation Department  
900 East Gilbert Street  
San Bernardino, California 92404  
(714) 383-1876
2. Eugene Bumpass, M.D.  
Juvenile Firesetter Psychotherapist  
3318 Duchess Trail  
Dallas, Texas 75229
3. Kenneth R. Fineman, Ph.D.  
Director  
Family and Child Mental Health Center  
17822 Beach Boulevard, #437  
Huntington Beach, California 92647  
(714) 842-9377
4. Jessica Gaynor, Ph. D.  
Consulting Psychologist  
630 St. Francis Blvd.  
San Francisco, California 94127  
(415) 753-3060

5. Michael Geffen, Ph. D.  
1126 W. Foothill Blvd.  
Suite 260  
Upland, California 91786  
(714) 981-2938
6. Barbara Jo Kirshbaum, M.D.  
1221 W. Foothill Blvd.  
Suite B  
Upland, California 91786
7. E. John Kuhnley, M. D.  
Juvenile Firesetter Psychotherapist  
125 Convention Dr.  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23462

## **B. Inpatient Programs and Professionals**

1. CPC Hospitals
  - a. CPC Alhambra Hospital  
4619 N. Rosemead Blvd.  
Rosemead, California 91770  
(818) 286-1191  
Joseph Dadourian, Ed. D.
  - b. CPC Cedar Hills Hospital  
10300 S.W. Eastridge  
Portland, Oregon  
(503) 297-2252
  - c. CPC Horizon Hospital  
566 N. Gordon St.  
Pamona, California 91768  
(714) 629-4011  
Michael Geffen, Ph. D.
2. Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic  
Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
3811 O'Hara Street  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-2593  
David Kolko, Ph. D.
3. J. Douglas Myers, Ph. D.  
9450 S.W. Barnes Rd.  
Suite #280  
Portland, Oregon  
(503) 297-1301

## Appendix E

# Juvenile Miranda Rights

The following are a set of Juvenile Miranda Rights developed by the Los Angeles Grand Jury and recommended for use in the state of California. These are presented here as guidelines. Each fire department must check with their own state to determine the appropriate application of the Miranda Rule.

1. You don't have to talk with us or answer our questions if you don't want to.
2. If you decide to talk with us you have to understand that anything you say can be used against you. We can tell the Probation Officer and the Judge what you tell us.
3. You can talk to a lawyer now if you want to and you can have him with you when we ask our questions.
4. If you want to have a lawyer but you don't have enough money to hire your own, then we will get the judge to get one for you and it won't cost you anything.

### Waiver Questions

1. Do you understand what I have said?
2. Do you want to ask me anything?
3. Do you want to talk with me now?
4. Do you want to have a lawyer, or not?

**APPENDIX F**

**Directory of Juvenile  
Firesetter Programs and  
Professionals**

## DIRECTORY OF JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAMS

**\*NOTE:** This list also includes professionals from a variety of fields including medicine, mental health, law enforcement, etc. who have expertise in working with juvenile firesetters.

AZ	Bullhead	Lt. Gary L. Miller Bull Head City Fire Department P.O. Box 56 Bullhead, AZ 86430 602-758-3971
AZ	Mesa	Capt. Meli Epps Mesa Fire Department 13 West First Street Mesa, AZ 85201 602-834-2102
AZ	Phoenix	Ms. Carol Gross Phoenix Fire Department 520 W. Van Buren Phoenix, AZ 85003 602-262-6910
AZ	Phoenix	Ms. Elaine Hutchings Phoenix Fire Department 520 W. Van Buren Phoenix, AZ 85003 602-262-6910
AZ	Phoenix	Chris Monaco, Ph.D. Juvenile Firesetter Therapist 8426 N. 17th Drive Phoenix, AZ 85021
AZ	Tucson	Mr. William Halpin Route 9, Box 19 Tucson, AZ 85743 602-791-2480
AZ	Tucson	Capt. Hugh Reilly Tucson Fire Department 265 S. Church/P.O. Box 27210 Tucson, AZ 85701 602-791-4502
CA	Bakersfield	Mr. S. T. Wallace Chief Investigator Kern County Fire Department, Arson Unit 1025 Golden State Avenue Bakersfield, CA 93301 805-861-2581

CA Fountain Valley Ms. Lynne Michaelis  
Fire Marshal  
Fountain Valley Fire Department  
10200 Slater Avenue  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708  
714-963-8321

CA Huntington Beach Kenneth R. Fineman, Ph.D.  
Director  
Family and Child Mental Health Center  
17822 Beach Boulevard, #437  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647  
714-842-9377

CA Huntington Beach Mr. Richard B. Grunbaum  
Investigator  
Huntington Beach Fire Department  
P. O. Box 190  
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

CA Los Angeles Mr. Joe B. Day  
18080 Galatina Street  
Rowland Heights, CA 91748  
818-964-2034

CA Los Angeles Charles M. Finkel, Esq.  
2953 Club Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90064  
213-839-9194

CA Oakland Mr. Ariel Bryant  
Inspector  
Oakland Fire Department, Bureau of Fire  
No. 1 City Hall Place  
Oakland, CA 94612  
415-273-3851

CA Orange County Ms. Caryl Modrinski  
Executive Director  
Orange County Burn Association  
101 The City Drive  
Route 345-10  
Orange, CA 92668  
714-634-1199

CA Pasadena Good & Novack, Attorneys at Law  
35 S. Raymond Ave., Suite 200  
Pasadena, CA 91105  
213-440-0000

CA Sacramento Mr. Tim Huff  
State Department of Forestry  
1416 9th Street, Room 653  
Sacramento, CA 95814

CA Sacramento Mr. Larry M. Marshburn  
University of California, Davis  
Medical Center  
2315 Stockton Boulevard  
Sacramento, CA 95817  
916-453-3036

CA San Jose Capt. Don Perkins  
Arson Unit  
San Jose Fire Department  
Fourth North Second Street  
Suite 1100  
San Jose, CA 95113-1305

CA San Bernardino Paul Boccumini, Ph.D.  
Director  
Clinical Services/Probation Department  
900 E. Gilbert Street  
San Bernardino, CA 92404  
714-383-1876

CA San Diego Inspector Kenneth Guyer  
San Diego Fire Department  
1222 First Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92407  
612-270-207

CA San Diego Ms. Carol J. Kramer  
Director, The Burn Institute  
California Heritage Bank Bldg., Ste. 206  
3737 Fifth Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92103  
714-291-4764

CA San Francisco Jessica Gaynor, Ph.D.  
630 St. Francis Boulevard  
San Francisco, CA 94127  
415-753-3060

CA San Francisco Mr. Andrew McGuire  
Director, The Burn Council  
Trauma Center - Building 1  
San Francisco General Hospital  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
415-821-5135

CA San Francisco Mr. Thomas Nyhan  
San Francisco Fire Department  
260 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
415-861-8000

CA	Sunnyvale	Ms. Carol Connor Representative for Parents Task Force on Juv. Arson and Firesetting 1209 Navlet Court Sunnyvale, CA 94087
CA	Upland	Ms. Barbara Jo Kirshbaum 1221 West Foothill, Suite B Upland, CA 91786
CO	Upland	Dr. Michael Geffen 1126 W. Foothill Boulevard Suite 260 Upland, CA 91786 714-981-2938
CO	Breckenridge	Virgil Davis Rural, White and Blue Fire Department Box 1705 Breckenridge, CO 80424 303-453-2474
CO	Crested Butte	The Hon. W. Mitchell Box 39 Crested Butte, CO 81224 303-349-5338
CO	Denver	Ms. Wendy Carroll Univ. of Colorado Health Science Center Box B212/4200 E. 9th Avenue Denver, CO 80220
CO	Fort Collins	Mr. Michael Gavin Poudre Fire Authority 505 Peterson Fort Collins, CO 80524
CO	Fort Collins	Mr. Ralph L. Kettle Poudre Fire Authority 505 Peterson Fort Collins, CO 80524
CO	Fort Collins	Mr. Robert Poncelow Poudre Fire Authority 505 Peterson Fort Collins, CO 80524
CO	Grand Junction	Mr. James McLanahan 656 Douglas Place Grand Junction, CO 81504 303-434-6060

CO Littleton Ms. Nancy Hoffman  
Fire Prevention Officer  
Littleton Fire Department  
7684 S. Gilpin Court  
Littleton, CO 80122

CT Gales Ferry Mr. Nicholas Delia  
Public Education  
Poquonock Bridge Fire Department  
967 Long Cove Road  
Gales Ferry, CT 06340

CT Groton Mr. Peter A. Johnson  
Public Education  
Poquonock Bridge Fire Department  
13 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340

CT Hartford Mr. Carl G. Booker, Sr.  
Fire Marshal  
Hartford Fire Department  
275 Pearl Street  
Hartford, CT 06103  
203-525-3123

CT Meriden Mr. George Luther  
State Fire Commission  
294 Colony Street  
Meriden, CT 06450  
203-238-6587

DC Washington Mr. Cliff Karchmer  
Police Executive  
Research Forum  
2300 M Street, NW, Suite 910  
Washington, DC 20037

DC Washington Mr. Raymond J. White  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington  
P.O. Box 39063  
Washington, DC 20016  
202-462-4438

DE Christiana Mr. John Lattomus  
Firefighter  
Christiana Fire Department  
21 S. Old Baltimore Pike  
Christiana, DE 19702  
302-738-5199

DE Wilton, New Castle Ms. Barbara Jo Thorpe  
9 Marlborough Court  
Wilton, New Castle, DE 19720  
302-322-1210

FL	Hampton	Mr. Lewis E. Marney, Jr. Star Route 1, Box 755 Hampton, FL 32044 904-468-1840
FL	Hollywood	Mr. Robin P.E. Gutmann Public Information and Education Spec. Juvenile Firesetters Program 3401 Hollywood Boulevard Hollywood, FL 33021 305-921-3208
FL	Largo	Mr. Dan Fries Deputy Chief Largo Fire Department P. O. Box 296 Largo, FL 33540 813-585-4688
FL	Largo	William Sabino, M.S. Largo Fire Department P. O. Box 296 Largo, FL 33540 813-585-4688
FL	Sarasota	Mr. Dennis Sargent Battalion Chief Sarasota Fire Department 1445 Fourth Street Sarasota, FL 33577
FL	Seminole	Mr. Thomas E. Warren Inspector Seminole Fire & Rescue 11195 70th Avenue, N. Seminole, FL 33542
GA	Marietta	Mr. Donald Ethridge Program Specialist Georgia Fire Academy 1112 Clay Street Marietta, GA 30060
IA	Ute	Mr. Dale Seieroe Box 224 Ute, IA 51060 712-885-2671
IA	Waukon	Mr. David D. Snitker RD 1 Waukon, IA 52172 319-535-7481

IL Addison Lt. Michael Puntillo  
Addison Fire Department  
133 E. Lake Street  
Addison, IL 60101  
312-834-1616

IL Antioch Mr. Wayne Parthun  
Antioch Fire Department  
847 Main Street  
Antioch, IL 60002  
312-395-5511

IL Antioch Mr. Jim Quedenfeld  
Antioch Fire Department  
874 Main Street  
Antioch, IL 60002

IL Bensenville Mr. Guy Trayling  
Inspector  
Bensenville Fire Department  
500 York Road  
Bensenville, IL 60106  
312-766-0755

IL Bolingbrook Mr. Vincent Calcagno  
Fire Marshal  
Bolingbrook Fire Department  
375 West Briarcliff Road  
Bolingbrook, IL 60439  
312-759-0440

IL Bolingbrook Sgt. Richard Darrah  
Bollingbrook Fire Department  
Fire & Arson Investigation Unit  
375 West Briarcliff Road  
Bolingbrook, IL 60439  
312-759-0440

IL Chicago Ms. Michele McBride  
5455 North Sheridan/No. 2908  
Chicago, IL 60640  
312-989-8362

IL Chicago Patricia Mieszala, RN  
President  
Burn Concerns, Inc.  
4218 North Pulaski Road  
Chicago, IL 60641

IL Chicago Lt. Thomas O'Connell  
Bureau of Fire Prevention  
Chicago Fire Department  
444 N. Dearborn Street  
Chicago, IL 60610  
312-744-6691

IL Deerfield Capt. Thomas Wilson  
Deerfield Fire Department  
839 Deerfield Road  
Deerfield, IL 60015  
312-945-4066

IL Des Plaines Mr. Joe Poitras  
Inspector  
Worth-Maine Fire Department  
9301 Potter  
Des Plaines, IL 60016

IL Evanston Mr. Robert Schumer  
Assistant Chief  
Evanston Fire Department  
702 Madison Street  
Evanston, IL 60202

IL Galesburg Insp. John P. Cratty  
Galesburg Fire Department  
150 S. Broad Street  
Galesburg, IL 61401

IL Galesburg Capt. Theodore Hoffman  
Galesburg Fire Department  
150 S. Broad Street  
Galesburg, IL 61401

IL Glenview Lt. George K. Michehl  
Glenbrook Fire Department  
1901 Landwehr Road  
Glenview, IL 60025  
312-724-2142

IL Grayslake Lt. Don Mobley  
Grayslake Fire Protection District  
P.O. Box 81  
Grayslake, IL 60030

IL Gurnee Capt. Don Komers  
Gurnee Fire Department  
4580 Grand Avenue  
Gurnee, IL 60031

IL Kankakee Mr. Bill Foster  
Inspector  
Kankakee Fire Department  
385 E. Oak Street  
Kankakee, IL 60901

IL Lake Forest Mr. Mike Beatty  
Firefighter  
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## CHILD, ADOLESCENT AND ADULT FIRESETTING: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

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#### EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS ON FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY

- Allstate Insurance (1985). *The Firehawk® Children's Program* video, Allstate Insurance.
- Burger King Fire Safety Program (K-6). Write: Robert Landau Associates Inc., The Chrysler Building, 405 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10174.

Boy Scouts of America. Merit Badge Pamphlet No. 3317 Firemanship (4-high school). Write: Supply Division Midwestern Distribution Center, Midwestern Distribution Center, 1930 N. Manheim Road, Melrose Park, IL 60160.

Channing L. Bete Co. Inc. Publishers of Scriptographic Booklets, 200 State Road, South Deerfield, MA 01373. (Children fire prevention literature).

Children's Television Workshop (1982). *Sesame Street Fire Safety Resource Book*. New York: The Children's Television Workshop.

Fireprecan. Write: Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Inc. 1590-7 Liverpool Court, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1B 4L2. (Extensive selection of fire prevention education materials for children to adults.)

*Fire Safety for the Rest of Your Life: A Fire Safety Program for Secondary Schools*. (1983) Edited and distributed by the National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA.

Gaynor, Jessica, Ph.D. (1985). Child and adolescent fire setting: detection and intervention. *Feelings and their medical significance*, 27, 1-10; Geico Insurance in cooperation with National Firehawk® Foundation.

Geico Insurance (1985). *Fire at their Fingertips* video, Communications Department, GEICO, GEICO Plaza, Washington, DC 20076. Specify VHS, Beta, 3/4.

Hartford Insurance Group. Junior Fire Marshal Program (K-3). Write: Director, Fire Safety Education, Hartford Insurance Group, Hartford, CT 06115.

Institute for Burn Medicine. California Heritage Bank Building, 3737 Fifth Avenue, Suite 206, San Diego, CA. 92103. How to Make Your Home and Family Safe From Fire. A pamphlet for youngsters and all family members.

National Crime Prevention Council. McGruff. Write: National Crime Prevention Council. The Woodward Building, 733 15th Street NW., Washington, DC 20008. (Arson and fire prevention information featuring McGruff, the crime prevention dog.)

National Fire Protection Association (1979). *Learn Not To Burn*. Quincy: National Fire Protection Agency, (K-8).

National Fire Protection Association. Babysitters Handbook and other pamphlets. National Fire Protection Association, Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02269.

National Fire Protection Association. Project Burn Prevention (4-18). Write: National Fire Protection Association, Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02269.

National Firehawk® Foundation. Child Arson: Symptoms & Solutions. A Slide Presentation.

National Smoke, Fire and Burn Institute, Inc., 90 Sargent Road, Brookline, MA 02146. Fire Safety Questionnaire for Schools (Grades 7-12). Questionnaire for students on fire prevention at school and in the home.

Shriners Burn Institute. A Match Is a Tool. Write: Matt Maley, Shriners Burn Institute, 202 Goodman Street, Cincinnati, OH 45219.

US Department of Forestry. Smokey the Bear, program. Write: Smokey the Bear, Smokey the Bear Headquarters, Washington, DC 20252 (Children's fire prevention materials.)

## FILMS AND SLIDES ON FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY

Cornet/MPI (800) 621-2131. (Formerly Film Communicators). *Our Most Costly Crime*. A public awareness film on arson. 16 minutes.

*The Babysitter Series I, II, III*. Understanding and planning for fire with babysitters. Three films: 11, 13 and 16 minutes.

*Kids Playing with Fire: The Clarke Family Tragedy*. The true story of a juvenile firesetting case and the counseling approach used to help the child and the family.

*Matches*. Demonstrates the need for common sense safety regarding matches. 9 minutes.

*Our Obligation*. The fire prevention of a disastrous fire in school. 26 minutes.

National Fire Protection Association. (NFPA) (1981). *Challenge of EDITH Superstars*. This educational film entertainingly shows children the ins and outs of EDITH (Exit Drills in the Home). The film is a take-off of a TV celebrity sports event and mixes fun and excitement with serious fire safety information. Winner of the Blue Ribbon, 1981 American Film Festival. 13 minutes, 16 mm.

*Don't Get Burned*. Provides lessons in home fire prevention, including babysitting, home fire escape plans and false alarms. 22 minutes, 16 mm.

*Fire Sleuths*. Bonnie, Michelle and Liz go to work for Sparky the Fire Dog to stop public enemy No. 1—carelessness with fire. This humorous take-off of the TV program "Charlie's Angels" sees the sleuths hunt down fire hazards and teach their families and neighbors how to "put the bite" on home fires. 25 minutes, 16 mm, 8 mm or video cassettes.

*Fire Concepts and Behavior*. Excellent teaching tool for science classes, features experiments that teach principles of fire science. 20 minutes, 16 mm.

*Learn Not To Burn*. Dick Van Dyke, the funny man playing it straight with firesafety, points out potential fire hazards in the home and gives lifesaving advice on planning an escape. 9 minutes, 16 mm.

*Liquids Can Burn*. Teaches the misuse of flammable liquids is a major cause of injury to children. Illustrates proper storage, use, and labeling of flammable liquids—preventive lessons are clear. 12 minutes, 16 mm.

*Playing With Fire*. Through a child's eyes, children and parents learn the consequences of playing with fire through lifesaving messages for every youngster over six and adults. Teaching aids included. 16 minutes, 16 mm.

*Stop School Fires.* For teachers, parents and school administrators seeking assistance in controlling the serious and growing problem of incendiary school fires. 80 full-color slides (35 mm), cassette tape.

*When Your Clothing Burns.* Timely film with broad appeal for young and old examines the problem of clothing fires and what we can do to best protect ourselves and families from death and injury by fire. Colorful marionettes act out the real life experiences of burn victims. Won Silver Medal, International Film Festival, 1976.

National Smoke Fire and Burn Institute, Inc., 90 Sargent Road, Brookline, MA 02146. *Two Steps to Survival.* This film emphasizes the importance of detection, alarm and prompt evacuation. It has won the "Best Education Film of the Year Award" from the Public Relations Society of America. It has saved the life of the superintendent of schools in Bucksport, Maine. 28 minutes, 16 mm.

Shriners Burn Institute. Cincinnati, Ohio 45219. *Burn Awareness.* The focus is carelessness in and around the home. Burn victims are shown to impress upon the viewers the need for awareness. 17 minutes, slide and cassette program.

*Exit Drill in the Home.* This program teaches children how to exit a burning building. Slides.

*It Costs an Arm and a Leg.* The Eugenia Pina story has an impact on children, showing the the dangers of high voltage wires and electrical burns. Slide and Cassette Program.

*Let It Ring.* This film alerts students age 12 through adult regarding the dangers of leaving infants and children in danger zones of home to answer the telephone. A must for young girls, mothers and babysitters. 18 minutes, slide and cassette program.