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CJ 3001: Kids Who Kill

17 September 2015

Response #3: Violent Juvenile Offender Profile - Lily

At age 15, Lily has just been charged with her first criminal offense. She got into a fist fight in the hallway at school with a classmate over a boy. The girl she fought with had to go to the emergency room and was found to have internal bleeding in her brain. Lily was expelled from school. Additionally, the school called the police and she was charged with simple assault.

Lily began showing signs of future criminal behavior at a young age. When she was 8 years old, her parents walked in on her strangling the family’s pet cat, holding it up in the air by its neck. From that point on, Lily continued to abuse and, occasionally, kill the family pets. As is common psychological knowledge, severe animal abuse (especially at young ages) is often a warning sign of emotional instabilities that can lead to future violent behavior towards people and property. However, neither of Lily’s divorced parents went to college, so they were not aware of the literature that suggested Lily’s behavior was a problem.

Because Lily’s parents split due to her mother’s drug and alcohol issues, Lily has never used drugs or alcohol. Instead, she copes with stressors by getting into fights and hurting others. She typically finds fault in her victims and feels that they are blocking her from someone or something that she wants. Most of Lily’s friends have been suspended for fighting before. But none of her friends have never sent someone to the emergency room with injuries.

Lily originally scored an 18 on the Disposition section of the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS). This categorized her as a moderate risk juvenile offender with a suspected recidivism rate of 34%. But I chose to override the original score because Lily began her violent behavior very early (though never previously arrested/caught) and shows no remorse for her actions. One point was added to her score, bringing her total to 19 and categorizing her as a high risk violent offender with an expected recidivism rate of 61% (please see the attached OYAS for score breakdown). Lily does not seem to want to change her behavior; however, as part of her “sentence,” she is scheduled to participate in a 12-week anger management program and participate in 100 hours of community service, which may be more helpful than incarceration.