

Nicole R. Lund

Graduate Student of Counseling Psychology

University of Maine, Farmington, ME

My name is Nicole Lund. I am a graduate student at the University of Maine in Farmington studying Counseling Psychology. My interest in pursuing a career as a psychological clinician stems from my lived experience as a survivor of violent crime. In my childhood home I was repeatedly abused physically and mentally by an older relative who had unsupervised access to me. I spent my entire childhood black-and-blue and living in fear. I turned to substances in middle school to cope with what I was experiencing which led to juvenile charges of theft and possession. I found myself homeless as a teenager and was abducted off the streets by a man who was recently released from Walpole. He held me against my will and I was repeatedly beaten and raped. Eventually I was able to get out of the apartment I was being held in. I never pressed charges because I believed as a homeless drug-addict society saw me as a throw-away person and I would be putting myself in greater danger.

Although the harm I suffered was significant and these experiences heavily impacted my life, I don't believe lengthy prison sentences imposed on my perpetrators would have brought closure or healing for me. The first person in my life who committed violence against me has long since reached out on his own accord and apologized profusely and sincerely for the harm he caused. He is now in his forties mentoring youth and gives presentations on anger management. He is far from the angry, violent monster I knew him to be and is now an incredible person making a positive impact on the world.

I am now in long-term recovery and it's impossible for me to not believe in a person's ability to change because I've changed immensely since my early adulthood and I've seen the people who have harmed me changed, as well. People grow up and age out of crime.

This concept of aging out of crime is not anecdotal. One of the most robust relationships in criminology is between age and crime: criminal offending increases in adolescence, peaks in the late teens and early 20s, and then continually decreases as a person ages. This relationship is the foundation for the well-known "age-crime curve," which underlies predictions and risk assessments about future offending. (Lofstrom et al., 2023)

Jeffery Arnett, PhD coined the term *emerging adulthood* following a study which he began in 1995. Arnett interviewed people ages 18 to 29 in cities around the country and concluded that this age group is its own distinct category of development. Inhibitory control, a primary executive function, affects a person's ability to stop themselves from an automatic response and think through the consequences of an action. Arnett's research has shown young adults lack the same level of inhibitory control as older adults.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today. I have seen first-hand evidence that when people are allowed the resources and community support they need, they can change, grow and heal.

Thank you for your time. I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD648.

References:

Lofstrom, Magnus. Martin, Brandon. Premkumar, Deepak. Skelton, Andrew. (2023) Are Younger Generations Committing Less Crime?. Public Policy Institute of California