

ABSTRACT

Durst, J. S., Klump, K. L., & Frank, S. J. (2004). Successful Psychopathy” is not an oxymoron: A review of the relevant literature. Unpublished manuscript, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Historically, the concept of psychopathy has been confounded with criminal and antisocial behavior. In the revisions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, psychopathy was absorbed into the more behavior-based syndrome of Antisocial Personality Disorder. Research on psychopathy has also focused mainly on criminal populations. This manuscript presents evidence for the divergence of psychopathy and Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) and argues for the importance of distinguishing *successful* psychopaths (i.e., those high in psychopathy who have committed crimes and avoided incarceration or have attained socially-acceptable status) from psychopaths with a history of incarceration. Successful psychopaths exist; often included in studies of psychopathy along with psychopaths with criminal records, but rarely are the sole or primary focus of investigation. The study of successful psychopaths is critical for a complete understanding of the essential nature of psychopathy and also can help to identify factors that protect individuals with psychopathic traits from participating in antisocial behavior.