

World-Class Scholars to Use Evolutionary Theory in Search for Solutions to High-Risk Adolescent Behavior

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Sep. 17, 2009 (Business Wire) -- The Evolution Institute and the University of Arizona's Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, and Families are co-hosting an invitation-only workshop at the university, Oct. 30 - Nov. 2, for world-renowned scholars who will apply evolutionary theory to the development of practical solutions for high-risk adolescent behaviors plaguing Western societies.

The workshop, "Adolescent Risk Behaviors: The Need for an Evolutionary Analysis," will address why adolescents are susceptible to drug abuse, gang membership, competition for status and respect, teen pregnancy and other risky activities that take their toll on teens, families and communities, according to Bruce J. Ellis, Ph.D., Norton Endowed Chair of Fathers, Parenting, and Families at the McClelland Institute. Participants will share their findings with southern Arizona community, health and business leaders in a public roundtable discussion at the conclusion of the workshop. That forum will take place from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., Nov. 2, at the Tucson Marriott University Park, 880 E. Second St.

"Society's usual response to such behaviors is to assume that they're the outcome of harsh social environments children have encountered during their formative years," said Ellis, who is the event organizer. "But that's not always the case. By applying our knowledge of evolutionary theory we can present alternative perspectives and shape solutions that can begin to prevent or reduce such harmful behaviors."

The Frances McClelland Institute is a catalyst for research that addresses the most critical social, emotional and physical issues facing families today. It focuses on collaborative, multidisciplinary research and community outreach in three areas: Fathers, Parenting, and Families; Adolescent Health and Development; and Health, Emotion and Relationships.

"Our mission dovetails nicely with the Evolution Institute's goal of solving real-world problems with knowledge gained through a study of evolutionary science," said Stephen T. Russell, Ph.D., director of the Frances McClelland Institute. "We're confident that participant recommendations will help reduce the pervasiveness of these self-destructive and costly problems facing our communities."

Workshop participants include: Dr. Jay Belsky, Birkbeck College, London; Dr. Anthony Biglan, Oregon Research Institute, Eugene; Dr. Ronald Dahl, University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Jacquelynne Eccles, University of Michigan; Dr. Bruce Ellis, University of Arizona; Dr. Dennis Embry, PAXIS Institute, Tucson; Dr. A.J. Figueredo, University of Arizona; Dr. Mark Flinn, University of Missouri, Colombia; Dr. Patricia Hawley, University of Kansas; **Dr. Anthony Volk, Brock University**, Ontario, Canada; Dr. Carol Worthman, Emory University, Atlanta.

To learn more about the participants and the event, please visit: [http:// theEvolutionInstitute.org/](http://theEvolutionInstitute.org/).

To participate in the post-event Community Roundtable Discussion in Tucson, please contact Ms. Carmin Chan, McClelland Institute ([http:// McClellandInstitute.arizona.edu/](http://McClellandInstitute.arizona.edu/)) 520-621-8067, cmchan@email.arizona.edu.