Lia Ahonen holds an MA in Psychology and is a researcher at the School of Law, Psychology and Social work at Örebro University, Sweden. She is a member of the Center for Criminological Research (CKF) at Örebro University, and has previous experience of working with severe behavioral problems in juveniles, and with drug treatment in coercive institutional care for adults. She has also worked with patients with differing psychiatric dysfunctions. Her main research area is the development of effective interventions for behavioral problems and disorders. She mainly teaches the planning/execution of treatment, scientific communication, scientific methods, evidence-based practice, and organizational theory.

For juveniles, an institutional placement involves far more than just participating in a program or specific treatment sessions for a few hours a week. The focus of this dissertation is on how the individual develops psychologically and morally through interactions with other people. It is also an attempt to describe the complexity of juvenile institutional care and some of the factors that promote and hinder positive change in the individual juvenile, on a personal as well as an organizational level. It also discusses whether we are focusing on the right mechanisms in treatment, or if we need to redirect our attention somewhat to promote behavioral change and prevent recidivism and a return to negative behaviors. Some of the factors examined are how staff members work to prevent juveniles from learning negative behaviors and morals from each other, and overall staff functioning as a group.