

**Girls at Risk:  
An Overview of Female Delinquency in the  
Fiftieth State**

**A Report of the  
Hawai'i Girls Project  
Volume One**

by  
**Meda Chesney-Lind, Principal Investigator  
Debbie Kato  
Jennifer Koo  
Katie Fujiwara Clark**

**THE CENTER FOR YOUTH RESEARCH  
Social Science Research Institute  
University of Hawaii at Manoa**

**September, 1997**

**Publication No. 392**

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## Executive Summary

In Hawaii, girls are one out of three of those arrested (38.5%) (Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division, 1996); this compares to one out of four arrests of young people in the U.S. as a whole (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1995, 226). The number of girls and boys arrested in Hawaii has climbed steadily over the past decade; but this trend is far more marked among girls. Since 1985, for example, the number of girls arrested in our state increased by 78.1% compared to an 18.8% increase among boys arrests (Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center, 1986: 76; Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division, 1996).

Despite these figures, the young women who find themselves in the juvenile justice system either by formal arrest or referral<sup>1</sup> are almost completely invisible. Our stereotype of the juvenile delinquent is so indisputably male that the general public, those experts whose careers in criminology have been built studying "delinquency," and those practitioners working with delinquent youth rarely, if ever, consider girls and their problems.

This invisibility has worked against young women in several distinct ways. First, despite the fact that a considerable number of girls are arrested, the thinking about the "causes" of delinquency explicitly or implicitly avoided theorizing about gender and its impact on delinquency and crime. It has also meant that those who worked with girls had no guidance in shaping programs or developing resources that would respond to the problems many girls experienced.

One of the girls who was until recently invisible, but who in many respects represents this trend in Aisha Tolentino. Aisha was seventeen

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<sup>1</sup> Children, unlike adults, can be "referred" to the juvenile justice system by a variety of sources, including teachers, social workers, or even parents. These sources are particularly significant in the case of girls entry into the juvenile justice system.

when she died outside a Maui condominium. She had been stabbed thirteen times, and her body dumped outside the apartment of a murder suspect and his girlfriend, Jennifer Kong.

Both Aisha and Jennifer had been at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, but in Aisha's case she was confined only for extremely minor offenses (largely but not exclusively "contempt of court"). Her grandparents, with whom she had been living, had had "difficulty controlling her behavior" (Kubota, 1997, A3) and had ultimately involved her in the juvenile justice system. There, in a structure set up largely to handle serious, violent male offenders, the "system" failed Aisha who eventually ended up seeking out her dubious "friend" from the facility for help finding work, only to end up tragically caught up in a far more serious criminal network.

Aisha's death should serve as a clarion call to all in Hawaii concerned about girl's services to do better. We should resolve to have programs, not cells, for girls who have committed no crime, so as to keep them away from more serious offenders.

This report details the challenges that lay ahead for those concerned about girls at risk for delinquency in Hawaii. We examine official arrest trends as well as self-reported delinquency in girls. These data reflect the fact that girls arrests are increasing. Self-report data go further and illustrate the types of delinquency "normal" as well as "at risk" adolescents are committing.

In general, the data indicate that among intermediate school aged youth, girl's are committing delinquent behavior, though at statistically significantly lower levels than their male counterparts. Exceptions to this generalization, though, include drug and alcohol use (where few differences were found), minor property crimes, and surprisingly, in the use of violence.

Even girls of privilege report high levels of violence, as well as extremely high levels of witnessing violence in their families and in their neighborhoods.

Turning to the youth at risk for delinquency, very few gender differences appear. We speculate that this is largely a product of the fact that the more delinquent boys are not participating in the programs addressing youth at risk, but nonetheless, the data suggest that the girls participating in delinquency prevention and intervention programs present program staff with an array of serious problems. In addition to the property crimes and drug problems reported, girls seen by local agencies report high levels of violent behavior, generally more drug offenses (especially alcohol use), and more running away from home.

When we examine juveniles at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, we again see dramatic gender differences in misbehavior (though some of these differences disappear when the girls self-report their delinquent behavior). At the most serious end of the spectrum, we see the violence that boys have committed, and we see the relative lack of violence in the offenses for which girls come to the facility. Essentially, most of the offenses for which girls are jailed are violations of the conditions of their probation (like Aisha, they are "bootstrapped" status offenders). Despite this lack of serious offending, girls serve as long at the facility as do their male counterparts charged with crimes.

This speaks to the urgent need for programs specifically tailored to Hawaii's girls. Future reports from this project will document this need further, as well as suggest the ways in which programs can be tailored to specifically meet the needs of girls. In crafting these programmatic initiatives, we will keep in mind the voices of the young girls currently at HYCF who ask to have "something to do, like a job or something," since they know that without meaningful activity "some girls go back

to the same things...if you're smart and strong enough and keep busy you can stay out of trouble." Let's help Hawaii's girls get strong and smart so that they can imagine the bright future they deserve.

### **Trends in Girls' Arrests: Local and National Trends**

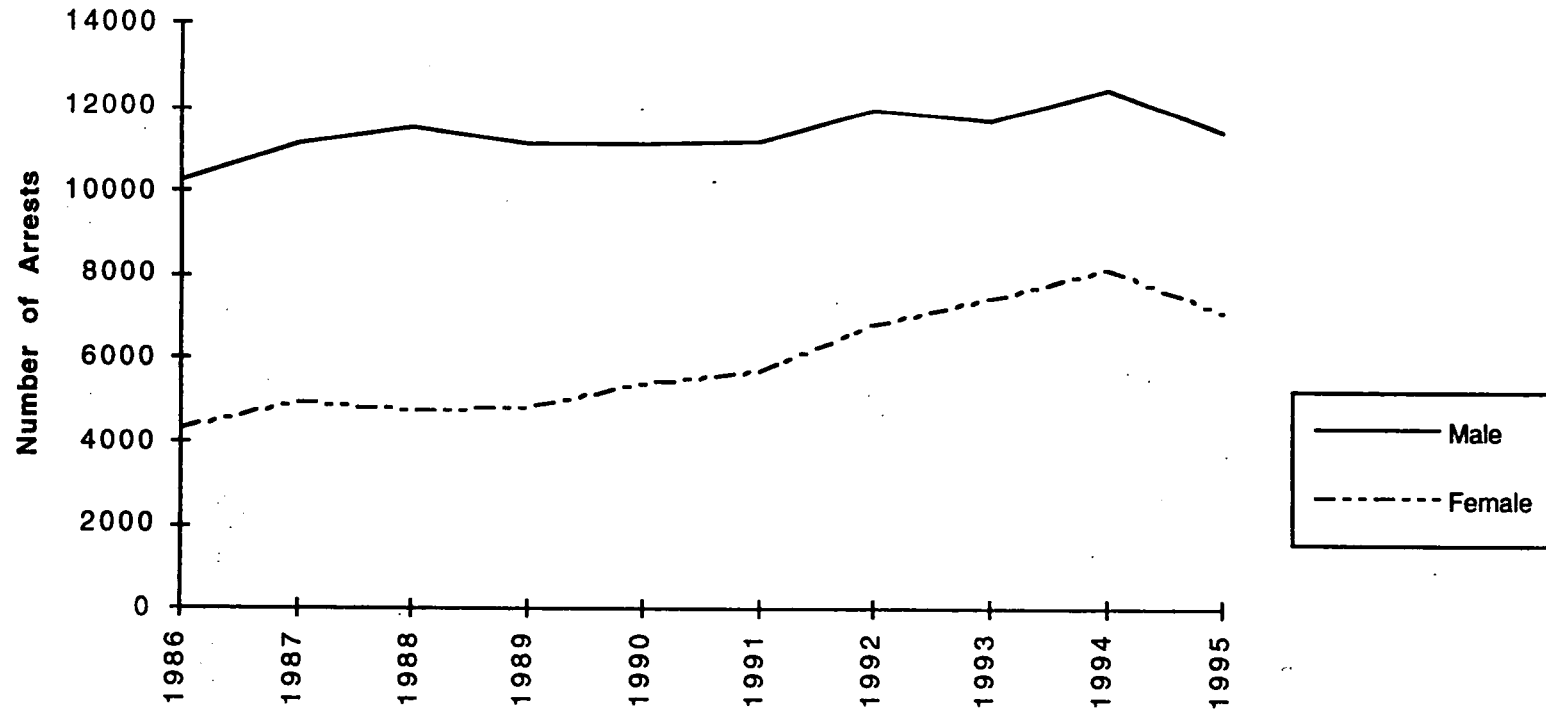
The number of girls and boys arrested in Hawaii has climbed steadily over the past few years, and the increase is the most marked among girls (see Chart 1). Since 1985, for example, the number of girls arrested in our state increased by 78.1% compared to an 18.8% increase among boys arrests (Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center, 1986: 76; Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division, 1996). In 1995, there were over seven thousand girls arrested in Hawaii. This report details some of the problems that bring them into custody.

Why are the girls we arrest so invisible when, in 1995, they accounted for 25.6 percent of all juvenile arrests nationally and over one in three locally (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1996, 213; Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division, 1996: 107-109)? Much of this has to do with the sorts of delinquent acts that girls commit, and this is particularly true in Hawaii.

Though many may not realize it, youth can be taken into custody for both criminal acts and a wide variety of what are often called "status offenses." Status offenses, in contrast to criminal violations, permit the arrest of youth for a wide range of behaviors which are violations of parental authority: "running away from home," "being a person in need of supervision," "minor in need of supervision," being "incorrigible," "beyond control," truant, in need of "care and protection". While not technically crimes, these offenses can result in a youth's arrest and involvement in the criminal justice system. Juvenile delinquents, as a category, includes youths arrested for either criminal or non-criminal status offenses. Finally,



**CHART 1 Hawaii Juvenile Arrest Trends, 1986-1995**



as this report will show, status offenses play a major role in girls' delinquency; they also explain the dramatic increase in girls arrests seen in our state.

Examining the types of offenses for which youth are actually arrested, it is clear that most youths are arrested for the less serious criminal acts and status offenses. Of the roughly two million youth arrested in 1995, for example, only 5.6 percent of these arrests were for such serious violent offenses as murder, rape, robbery, or aggravated assault (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1996, 213). In contrast, about one fifth (19%) were arrested for a single offense (larceny theft), much of which, particularly for girls, is shoplifting (Shelden and Horvath 1986).

While less serious offenses dominate both male and female delinquency, trivial offenses, particularly status offenses and larceny theft (shoplifting), are more significant in the case of girls' arrests. For example, in 1995, well over half of girls' arrests were for either status offenses (27.5%) or larceny theft (23.8%); boys' arrests were far more dispersed.

Status offenses play a significant role in girls' official delinquency and this is especially accurate of Hawaii's female arrests. Status offenses nationally accounted for over a quarter of all girls' arrests in 1995, but less than ten percent of boys' arrests--figures that remained relatively stable during the last decade (and over previous decades) (see Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1997). This stability is somewhat surprising since dramatic declines in arrests of youth for these offenses might have been expected as a result of the passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in 1974. This act, among other things, encouraged jurisdictions to divert and de-institutionalize youth charged with non-criminal offenses.

**Table 1. Hawaii Juvenile Trends In Arrest, 1986 & 1995**

Offense	MALE				FEMALE			
	1986	% of Total	1995	% of Total	1986	% of Total	1995	% of Total
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,304</b>		<b>11,474</b>		<b>4,323</b>		<b>7,202</b>	
murder & nonnegligent manslaughter	9	0.1	18	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
forcible rape	17	0.2	13	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
robbery	92	0.9	193	1.7	4	0.1	26	0.4
aggravated assault	54	0.5	106	0.9	12	0.3	12	0.2
burglary	873	8.5	375	3.3	100	2.3	70	1.0
larceny-theft	2,366	23.0	1,695	14.8	858	19.8	1,051	14.6
motor vehicle theft	416	4.0	355	3.1	87	2.0	132	1.8
arson	10	0.1	19	0.2	2	0.0	1	0.0
<b>violent crime</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>all violent offenses (Includ. other assaults)</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>property crime</b>	<b>3,665</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>2,444</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>1,047</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>1,254</b>	<b>17.4</b>
other assaults	675	6.6	1,018	8.9	139	3.2	384	5.3
forgery & counterfeiting	17	0.2	12	0.1	7	0.2	9	0.1
fraud	25	0.2	26	0.2	14	0.3	16	0.2
embezzlement	0	0.0	3	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
stolen property; buy, receive, possess	59	0.6	31	0.3	4	0.1	3	0.0
vandalism	603	5.9	649	5.7	97	2.2	95	1.3
weapons; carrying, possessing, etc.	101	1.0	96	0.8	7	0.2	3	0.0
prostitution & commercialized vice	5	0.0	5	0.0	15	0.3	1	0.0
sex offenses (except forcible rape & prostitution)	37	0.4	75	0.7	3	0.1	13	0.2
drug abuse violations	593	5.8	640	5.6	181	4.2	164	2.3
gambling	60	0.6	9	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
offenses against family & children	7	0.1	96	0.8	3	0.1	45	0.6
driving under the influence	68	0.7	50	0.4	9	0.2	8	0.1
liquor laws	456	4.4	295	2.6	171	4.0	91	1.3
disorderly conduct	55	0.5	78	0.7	19	0.4	32	0.4
all other offenses (except traffic)	2,148	20.8	2,841	24.8	1,039	24.0	1,375	19.1
curfew & loitering law violations	807	7.8	537	4.7	389	9.0	369	5.1
runaways	751	7.3	2,239	19.5	1,162	26.9	3,301	45.8
<b>Status Off. (Incl. curf., loit., &amp; runaway)</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>2,776</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>1,551</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>51.0</b>

SOURCE: Compiled from Crime In Hawaii (1986,p.79-80 and 1995, p.107-109).

In Hawaii, status offenses loom large in our delinquency problem as Table 1 clearly indicates. In the last decade, we have seen a nearly 200% increase in runaway arrests for both males and females. Runaway arrests account for the majority of all arrests of girls in Hawaii and are substantially higher than male arrests for runaways. Table 3 indicates that runaway arrests for girls in Hawaii account for almost 50% of their total arrests, compared to 20% for boys. Nationally, female arrest for runaways constitute only 21% of their total arrests.

The disparity between local and national runaway statistics may be explained by Hawaii's heightened tendency to arrest juveniles for this offense; particularly problematic is the necessity to arrest youth so that they, and their parents, can participate in the Honolulu Police Department's AKAMAI program. It could also be that parents in Hawaii tend to report their children missing more than on the mainland. Finally, society's differential treatment of young females leads to less tolerance of any perceived deviance from girls. Thus, police often take a more paternal and protective approach with girls since they are regarded to be in greater need of supervision. Research also shows that female runaways are more likely to be reported by their parents than male runaways (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1997).

A variety of studies link runaways with other types of victimless crimes like petty theft, curfew violations, truancy, and loitering (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1997; Molidor, 1996; Gilmartin, 1996). Chesney-Lind (1978) believes that many girls runaway to escape physical and sexual abuse occurring in their own homes. Statistics show that over 70% of girls residing on the streets have been abused in some form or another. In order to survive, many young women resort to petty theft, panhandling, and occasional prostitution for income (Chesney-Lind, 1978).

But what of crimes of violence? Hawaii's arrest data from 1995 indicate that violent crime has increased since the past decade. Fortunately, violent crime

comprises only a small proportion of youth arrests, and this is particularly true of girls' arrests. Finally, though they have increased, Hawaii's problems with youth violence is considerably less than those reported nationally. In 1995, violent crime made up less than 2% (2.9% of male arrests and .5% of female arrests) of total juvenile arrests, compared to the national rate of 6% (6.5% of male arrests and 3.2% of female arrests). Though these numbers are small, they are still cause for some concern, so this report will focus on other measures of youth violence in the state, as well as a related problem, gang delinquency; given the focus of this report, attention will be given to gender and ethnic differences in these behaviors.

### **Gender Differences in Arrests**

Tables 2 and 3 illustrates girls' and boys' most frequent arrest categories both nationally and locally for the last decade. From this, it can be seen that while less serious offenses dominate both male and female delinquency, trivial offenses, particularly status offenses and larceny theft (shoplifting), are more significant in the case of girls' arrests. For example, the five offenses listed in Table 2 accounted for roughly three-quarters of both female (82%) and male arrests (71%) during the two periods reviewed. Table 3 indicates that such a concentration is particularly marked in Hawaii; in fact, nearly half of all girls' arrests in 1995 (45.8%) were for a single offense--runaway.

Looking at these tables, it is again clear that status offenses play a significant role in girls' official delinquency--both nationally and locally. While the number of youth arrested for status offenses did drop considerably in the 1970's (arrests of girls for these offenses fell by 24 percent, and arrests of

**TABLE 2. US Rank Order of Adolescent Male and Female Arrests, 1986 & 1995**

Male				Female			
1986 Arrests	% of Total	1995 Arrests	% of Total	1986 Arrests	% of Total	1995 Arrests	% of Total
(1) Larceny-theft	20.2	(1) Larceny-theft	17.1	(1) Larceny-theft	25.7	(1) Larceny-theft	23.8
(2) Other Offenses	16.8	(2) Other Offenses	15.8	(2) Runaway	20.7	(2) Runaway	21.1
(3) Burglary	9.3	(3) Drug Abuse	8.3	(3) Other Offenses	15.1	(3) Other Offenses	13.2
(4) Liquor Laws	6.2	(4) Other Assaults	7.6	(4) Other Assault	5.0	(4) Other Assault	8.4
(5) Vandalism	6.1	(5) Vandalism	6.0	(5) Curfew & Loitering	4.6	(5) Curfew & Loitering	6.4
		(5) Burglary	6.0				

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**Table 3. HI Rank Order of Adolescent Male and Female Arrests, 1986 & 1995**

Male				Female			
1986 Arrests	% of Total	1995 Arrests	% of Total	1986 Arrests	% of Total	1995 Arrests	% of Total
(1) Larceny-theft	23.0	(1) Other Offenses	24.8	(1) Runaway	26.9	(1) Runaways	45.8
(2) Other Offenses	20.8	(2) Runaway	19.5	(2) Other Offenses	24.0	(2) Other Offenses	19.1
(3) Burglary	8.5	(3) Larceny-theft	14.8	(3) Larceny-theft	19.8	(3) Larceny-theft	14.6
(4) Curfew & Loitering	7.8	(4) Other Assaults	8.9	(4) Curfew & Loitering	9.0	(4) Other Assault	5.3
(5) Runaway	7.3	(5) Vandalism	5.7	(5) Drug	4.2	(5) Curfew & Loitering	5.1

boys fell by an even greater amount--66 percent) (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1980, 191), this trend was reversed in the 1980's. Between 1985 and 1994, for example, girls' runaway arrests increased by 18.0 percent, and arrests of girls for curfew violations increased by 83.1 percent. (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1995, 222).

Locally, the dramatic increase in girls' and boys' arrests for status offenses largely explains the entire increase in youth arrests, since these arrests increased by 132% between 1985 and 1995; arrests of youth for running away from home increased by a startling 234% during that period (Chesney-Lind, et al, 1997: 20).

For many years, statistics showing large numbers of girls arrested for status offenses were taken to be representative of the different types of male and female delinquency. However, self-report studies of male and female delinquency (which ask school age youth if they have committed delinquent acts) do not reflect the dramatic differences in misbehavior found in official statistics. Specifically, it appears that girls charged with these non-criminal status offenses have been, and continue to be, significantly over-represented in court populations.

Teilmann and Landry (1981) compared girls' contribution to arrests for runaway and incorrigibility with girls' self-reports of these two activities, and found a 10.4 percent over-representation of females among those arrested for runaway, and a 30.9 over-representation in arrests for incorrigibility. From this data, they concluded that girls are "arrested for status offenses at a higher rate than boys, when contrasted to their self-reported delinquency rates" (Teilmann and Landry 1981, 74-75). These findings were confirmed in another recent self-report study. Figueira-McDonough (1985) analyzed the delinquent conduct of 2,000 youths and found "no evidence of greater

involvement of females in status offenses" (Figueira-McDonough 1985, 277). Similarly, Canter (1982b) found in a National Youth Survey that there was no evidence of greater female involvement, compared to males, in any category of delinquent behavior. Indeed, males in this sample were significantly more likely than females to report status offenses. Because of research findings like these, this report will focus on local self-reported delinquency as well.

Both Table 2 and Table 3 indicate that boys and girls are arrested frequently for "other assaults:" a finding that has caused some concern. "Other assaults" arrest is the only type of arrest that involves physical violence against another person. In 1995, this arrest category became the fourth most common arrest category for females in Hawaii, comprising 5.3% of their total arrests, only slightly lower than males' 8.9% figure. Unfortunately, media hype has sensationalized these trends to produce a public pandemonium over a supposed new breed of violent girls. In actuality, studies reveal that "female arrests for 'other assaults' are relatively non-serious in nature and tend to consist of being bystanders or companions to males involved in skirmishes, fights, and so on" (Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1980, 70).

In 1995, larceny-theft comprised nearly 15% of total arrests in Hawaii for girls. Larceny-theft is a common category of arrest because it does not distinguish between less than \$50 and more than \$50 worth of stolen goods. Because females are under considerable pressures to be attractive and fashionable, girls from disadvantaged backgrounds will sometimes resort to shoplifting clothes, accessories, and cosmetics in order to "keep up" with their peers (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1997).

Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, nevertheless, contend that female larceny-theft is not as grievous a problem as cold statistics depict, since



"the majority of arrests of females for larceny are for shoplifting, that most arrests for shoplifting are for petty theft, that shoplifting (as well as other petty thefts) is regarded as a relatively nonserious crime by the general public, and that the increase in arrests of females for larceny is due chiefly to larger numbers of females being arrested for shoplifting" (Steffensmeier & Steffensmeier, 1980, p. 71-72).

The majority of girls' arrests are for nonviolent, non-criminal behavior, and this is particularly true for Hawaii's girls. Moreover, crimes that can be considered criminal, such as larceny-theft and prostitution, have been correlated to basic survival on the streets. Clearly, though, with so many girls being arrested for these offenses, Hawaii agencies must develop appropriate and non-punitive programs to address the needs of these girls, without further inserting them in the criminal justice system.

### **Self-reported Delinquency of Intermediate School Youth**

Arrest data alone cannot give us the full picture of girl's problems locally. For that reason, this report has also analyzed data on the self-reported delinquency of Hawaii youth. Researchers have long utilized self-report surveys to gain information about the extent of juvenile delinquency. The surveys reveal that female delinquency is more common than arrest statistics indicate and that there are more similarities than official statistics suggest between male and female juvenile delinquency. They also show males are more involved in delinquency, especially the most serious types of offenses. These findings point to some possible gender biases operating within the juvenile justice system because the picture of female delinquency that emerges from the self-report data shows about as many boys as girls committing status offenses.

Self-reported data were gathered from 376 intermediate school aged youth enrolled in five geographically and economically disparate intermediate schools on Oahu during the 1995-1996 school year (Aiea Intermediate, Ilima Intermediate, Kailua Intermediate, Kalakaua Intermediate, and Niu Valley Intermediate). The youth surveyed were enrolled in the PAGE (Positive Alternative Gang Education) program--a gang prevention curriculum for intermediate school students run jointly by the Police Department and the Department of Education. The curriculum provides information about the consequences of gang membership as well as alternatives to gang involvement. Overall results of the survey indicate that boys have engaged in more delinquent activities than girls in the past 12 months. However, surveyed girls also report surprising levels of delinquency as well (see Table 4).

First to the similarities: the data indicate that both boys and girls steal (especially shoplifting). The survey found that 42% of the boys and 36% of the girls stole or tried to steal something worth less than \$50; a difference was not statistically significant. Fifteen percent of boys and 9% of girls report that they stole or attempted to steal something more than \$50. Interestingly, only a slightly higher proportion of males admit to stealing and statistically these numbers show no significant difference between genders.

Another area of similarity between genders is in drug and alcohol use. The survey indicates little difference in alcohol and marijuana use. Table 4 shows that 31% of males and females report using alcohol. Seventeen percent of males used marijuana, compared to 13% of girls, and 5% have used ice, compared to 4% of girls. Statistically, the only significant difference is shown in the selling of marijuana (13% of boys and 6% of girls), which is, nevertheless, still small.

**Table 4. Self Reported Delinquency of Intermediate School Youth (PAGE Sample)**

In the past 12 months have you done any of the following?	Male (N=191)	Female (N=181)	Level of Signifi- cance
<b><u>Delinquency Offenses</u></b>			
<b>Stolen or tried to steal</b>			
goods worth more than \$50	15.2%	9.4%	
goods worth less than \$50	42.3%	35.9%	
bought, sold, held stolen goods	25.7%	13.8%	**
motor vehicle	8.9%	3.3%	*
<b>Damaged property</b>	43.9%	32.0%	*
<b>Weapon</b>			
used to hurt, threaten, or self defense	30.0%	11.0%	***
seen minor w/ real gun	31.4%	23.2%	
carried to school	4.7%	1.1%	*
carried a gun	20.9%	3.9%	***
<b>Drugs</b>			
used alcohol	31.9%	30.4%	
used marijuana	17.3%	12.7%	
used ice	5.2%	4.4%	
sold marijuana	12.6%	5.5%	*
<b>Run away</b>	14.1%	11.6%	
<b>Lied about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, or get into a bar</b>	9.4%	6.1%	
<b>School</b>			
suspended	20.5%	11.6%	*
cheated on test	41.4%	43.6%	
<b>Violence</b>			
hit or threatened to hit a person	59.5%	42.0%	**
attacked person w/ idea of hurting or killing	22.0%	16.0%	
gang fight	13.6%	8.3%	

\* Statistical Significance at .05 \*\*Statistical Significance at .01 \*\*\*Statistical Significance at .001

Boys, however, are far more likely to have stolen a car or to have attempted to sell stolen goods. They are also considerably more likely to have damaged property. Lastly, boys engage in more violent behavior. According to these youth, boys are more likely to carry (21%) and use a weapon (30%); as well as hit or threaten to hit another person (60%). Interestingly, there is no statistical difference in gender for attacking a person with the idea of hurting or killing them (22% of males and 16% of females) or participating in gang fights (14% of males and 8% of females). This, however, may be due to the fact that females sometimes regard verbal arguments to be a form of "fighting" and face slapping to be a form of "hitting." Consequently, the similarities in numbers may not be justification for assuming girls are equally violent.

National data support the notion that girls' and boys' violence tend to be quite different--particularly when examined more closely. Specifically, a summary of two recent studies on self-reported aggression (see Table 5) also reflects that while about a third of girls report having been in a physical fight in the last year, this was true of over half of the boys in both samples (OJJDP 1996, 13). Girls are far more likely to fight with a parent or sibling (34 percent compared to 9 percent), whereas boys are more likely to fight with friends or strangers. Finally, boys are twice to three times more likely to report carrying a weapon in the past month (OJJDP 1996, 13).

While, as we saw in a previous section, girls constitute the bulk of arrests made for running away, this sample population reports virtually no difference in this area (14% of males and 12% of females). Other studies also show little difference between male and female propensities to run away (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1997; Bartollas, 1993). Young female runaways are arrested at greater rates because they are regarded to be more delinquent and vulnerable than their male

**Table 5. Actual and Potential Involvement in Physical Violence.**

	Females %	Males %	Source
<b>Involved In:</b>			
Physical fight in past year	34	51	Adams et al.
(same question as above)	32	51	Kann et al.
Four or more physical fights in the past year	9	15	Adams et al.
<b>Fought With:</b>			
Stranger	7	15	Adams et al.
Friend	24	46	Adams et al.
date/romantic partner	8	2	Adams et al.
parent/sibling	34	9	Adams et al.
other	4	6	Adams et al.
several of the above	24	26	Adams et al.
<b>Carried a Weapon:</b>			
In the past month	7%	17	Adams et al.
	9	34	Kann et al.

Adams et al. (1995: ages 14-17, 1992 data) and Kann et al. (1995: grades 9-12, 1993 data) in *Girls, Inc.* 1996.

counterparts. Ironically, society's measures to protect these young women by arresting them often backfire. Because the juvenile justice system is egregiously ill-equipped to meet female needs, girls are often placed inappropriately within the system; critics contend that this may cause further degeneration and delinquency.

Table 6 explores ethnic differences among the self-reported delinquency of Oahu girls. In general, the data reveal marked differences in delinquent activity by ethnicity. Specifically, girls of Hawaiian and Filipino ancestry engage in more delinquent activities than girls of Caucasian and Asian ancestry; such differences are particularly salient with reference to drug use.

Nevertheless, high levels of delinquency for all girls are reported in many areas. For example, between a third and a half of the girls surveyed had committed larceny theft (which for girls is largely shoplifting): nearly 36% of Hawaiian girls (N=31), 44% of Filipino girls (N=55), 24% of Caucasian girls (N=39), 26% of Asian

**Table 6. Girls' Self-Reported Delinquency by Ethnicity (PAGE Sample)**

In the past 12 months have you done the following?

<u>Delinquent Offenses</u>	<u>Hawn.</u> <u>(N=31)</u>	<u>Filipino</u> <u>(N=55)</u>	<u>Cauc.</u> <u>(N=29)</u>	<u>Asian</u> <u>(N=38)</u>	<u>Others</u> <u>(N=25)</u>	
<b>Stolen or tried to steal</b>						
goods worth more than \$50	12.9%	10.9%	6.9%	0.0%	12.0%	
goods worth less than \$50	35.5%	43.6%	24.1%	26.3%	40.0%	
bought, sold, held stolen goods	19.4%	10.9%	13.8%	7.9%	16.0%	
motor vehicle	6.5%	3.6%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%	
<b>Damaged property</b>	35.5%	38.2%	24.1%	23.7%	28.0%	
<b>Weapon</b>						
used to hurt, threaten, or self-defense	16.1%	14.5%	6.9%	7.9%	8.0%	
seen minor w/real gun	29.0%	27.3%	17.2%	13.2%	28.0%	
carried to school	3.2%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
carried a gun	9.7%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
<b>Drugs</b>						
used alcohol	41.9%	32.7%	24.1%	23.7%	24.0%	
used marijuana	25.8%	14.5%	6.9%	5.3%	4.0%	.05
used ice	12.9%	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	.0
sold marijuana	16.1%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	.01
<b>Run away</b>	16.1%	18.2%	6.9%	2.6%	8.0%	
<b>Lied about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, or get into a bar</b>	16.1%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	.05
<b>School</b>						
suspended	19.4%	10.9%	6.9%	2.6%	16.0%	
cheated on test	45.2%	36.4%	48.3%	42.1%	52.0%	
<b>Violence</b>						
hit or threatened to hit a person	54.8%	40.0%	31.0%	28.9%	56.0%	
attacked person w/idea of hurting or killing	9.7%	21.8%	10.3%	10.5%	20.0%	
gang fight	16.1%	9.1%	3.4%	0.0%	12.0%	.05

girls (N=38), and 40% of girls from "other" ethnicities (N=25) had stolen small amounts in the last year. Likewise, 55% of Hawaiian girls, 40% of Filipino girls, 31% of Caucasian girls, 29% of Asian girls, and 56% of "other" girls report either hitting or threatening to hit another person. Similarly high rates are also reported on damaging property, alcohol consumption, and cheating on tests.

Statistically significant differences between girls were especially prominent in the areas of using marijuana and ice, selling marijuana, lying about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, and participating in gang fights. The data indicates that 16% of Hawaiian girls and 5.5% of Filipino girls admit to selling marijuana in the past 12 months. Ice usage was reported by 13% of Hawaiian girls and 7% of Filipino girls. And finally, participation in gang fights was reported by 16% of Hawaiian girls, 9% of Filipino girls, 3% of Caucasian girls, and 12% of "other" girls.

### **Self-Reported Gang Membership**

Youth were also asked if they belonged to a gang, knew people in gangs, or had friends or family members in gangs (See Table 7). The data here showed less gender difference than one would have anticipated. In fact, though very small numbers are involved, slightly more girls than boys reported current gang membership (4% compared to 2%). However, slightly more boys than girls reported "ever" having been in a gang (12.6% compared to 9.2% for girls). Virtually no difference was found when broader measures of contacts with gangs were examined; nearly half of both genders had friends in gangs and about one in five had a family member in a gang.

**Table 7. Self-Reported Gang Membership by Gender (PAGE Sample)**

	Percent of Males (N=191)	Percent of Females (N=173)
Youth who were ever in a gang	12.6%	9.2%
Youth who have family member(s) in a gang	18.3%	17.3%
Youth who have friend(s) in a gang	45.5%	43.4%
Youth who know people in their neighborhoods who are gang members	58.6%	49.7%
Youth who are currently in a gang	2.1%	4.0%

Gang membership, though, is definitely involved with delinquency (see Table 8) in both boys and girls. High numbers of these seventh graders report all manner of delinquency with girls considerably more likely than boys to report having been involved in a gang fight (66.7% compared to 39.1%). Virtually all of these youth (87% of both groups) have hit other youth, and about the same proportion (80% of both genders) have committed property damage. Boys tend to pull away from girls when it comes to carrying guns to school, while girls are more likely than boys to drink alcohol, use "ice," and run away from home.

Finally, girls and boys report joining gangs for many of the same reasons: gangs are "cool," their friends pressured them to join, and their families neglect or abuse them. The latter two categories, though, were mentioned by slightly more girls than boys. Boys were more likely than girls to say they joined gangs for protection or back up or because they were bored.



**Table 8. Self-Reported Delinquency by Current and Former Gang Youth (PAGE Sample)**

In the past 12 months have you done any of the following?	Male (N=23)	Female (N=15)	Level of Signifi- cance
<b><u>Delinquency Offenses</u></b>			
<b>Stolen or tried to steal</b>			
goods worth more than \$50	34.8%	33.3%	
goods worth less than \$50	73.9%	73.3%	
bought, sold, held stolen goods	60.9%	33.3%	
motor vehicle	17.4%	6.7%	
<b>Damaged property</b>	82.0%	80.0%	
<b>Weapon</b>			
used to hurt, threaten, or self defense	52.2%	33.3%	
seen minor w/ real gun	56.5%	73.3%	
carried a gun to school	17.4%	6.7%	
carried a hidden weapon like a gun or knife to school	43.5%	20.0%	
<b>Drugs</b>			
used alcohol	52.2%	80.0%	
used marijuana	47.8%	46.7%	
used ice	8.7%	20.0%	
sold marijuana	43.5%	26.7%	
<b>Run away</b>	21.7%	60.0%	.05
<b>Lied about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, or get into a bar</b>	17.4%	33.3%	
<b>School</b>			
suspended	43.5%	33.3%	
cheated on test	43.5%	60.0%	
<b>Violence</b>			
hit or threatened to hit a person	87.0%	86.7%	
attacked person w/ idea of hurting or killing	34.8%	40.0%	
gang fight	39.1%	66.7%	

## Self-reported Delinquency of Agency Youth

In 1996, a survey of 237 youth<sup>2</sup> enrolled within seven selected Youth Gang Response System programs (serving youth at risk for delinquency and gang behavior on Oahu, Maui, and the Island of Hawaii) was conducted. Table 9 reviews the findings of this survey. Most notable is the fact that, unlike the self-report data from the intermediate school aged youth, this data reflect little, if any gender differences, in the amount of self-reported delinquency.

If anything, the data indicates that girls are slightly more delinquent in some areas. Contrary to the intermediate school youth survey where girls are equal to boys in runaways, girls in the agency survey report more runaways (28%) than boys (13%). Another area where girls report more delinquency is in the area of alcohol consumption; 46% of girls and 32% of boys say they have used alcohol. Statistically, girls show no significant difference from boys in drug use with 37% of girls admitting to marijuana use and 13% to ice use. Similarly, 29% of boys have used marijuana and 7% have used ice. When asked if they have ever sold marijuana, nearly 21% of both males and females answered affirmatively.

Property crime questions reveal that a quarter of the males and slightly more females (28%) claim to have damaged property in the last year. About one out of every ten males and females report motor vehicle theft. Females also report stealing as much as males (12% compared to 17% for property worth more than \$50 and 30% compared to 25% for property worth less than \$50).

Similar numbers are reported on violence questions, with over 43% of both girls and boys admitting to hitting or threatening to hit a person. About 20% of

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<sup>2</sup> The Agency youth sample includes 237 youth (ages 10 to 19) from 7 agencies (Boys and Girls Club of Honolulu-Waianae, Kaimuki-Waiālae YMCA, YMCA Outreach of Honolulu, Leeward Branch YMCA, Maui Youth and Family Services, Kona Interim Home, and Kokua Kalihi Valley Center) within the Youth Gang Response System. This sample represents a cross-section of neighborhoods with low, medium, and high risk youth in YGRS prevention and intervention programs.

**Table 9. Agency Self Reported Delinquency**

In the past 12 months have you done the following?	Male (N=127)	Female (N=106)	Level of Signifi- cance
<b><u>Delinquent Offenses</u></b>			
<b>Stolen or tried to steal</b>			
goods worth more than \$50	17.3%	12.3%	
goods worth less than \$50	25.2%	30.2%	
bought, sold, held stolen goods	23.8%	16.2%	
motor vehicle	13.4%	10.4%	
<b>Damaged property</b>	24.4%	27.6%	
<b>Weapon</b>			
used to hurt, threaten, or self defense	15.7%	11.3%	
seen minor w/ real gun	29.1%	26.4%	
carried to school	6.3%	4.7%	
carried a gun	18.3%	11.3%	
<b>Drugs</b>			
used alcohol	31.5%	46.2%	*
used marijuana	29.1%	36.8%	
used ice	7.1%	13.2%	
sold marijuana	20.5%	20.8%	
<b>Run away</b>	13.4%	28.3%	**
<b>Lied about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, or get into a bar</b>	17.3%	21.7%	
<b>School</b>			
suspended	26.0%	32.1%	
cheated on test	35.4%	43.4%	
<b>Violence</b>			
hit or threatened to hit a person	42.5%	45.3%	
attacked person w/ idea of hurting or killing	18.1%	20.0%	
gang fight	24.4%	18.9%	

\* Statistical Significance at .05 \*\*Statistical Significance at .01 \*\*\*Statistical Significance at .001

males and females report having attacked someone in the past year. Being involved in a gang fight also showed no statistical variation. Eleven percent of females and 18% of males admit that they carried a weapon, while 16% of the males and 11% of the females report that they used a weapon.

Given that national and local rates of arrest are higher for males, the similarities in delinquency rates reported in this particular survey seem puzzling. However, these figures may be explained by the possibility that boys with higher rates of delinquency are not participating in these agencies. Likewise, researchers note that female gang members are taking on a more aggressive role in gang violence, particularly with other girls, over the years (Molidor, 1996). Again, this may elucidate the relatively high rates of female violent activity in this population sample.

Table 10 reviews ethnic differences among girls in the at risk population; here, the survey data indicate fewer ethnic differences than were found in the school sample. Notably, the data indicate high levels of violent activity among all the girls of all ethnic groups; 52% of Hawaiian girls (N=44), 44% of Samoan girls (N=16), 33% of Asian girls (N=6), 25% of Caucasian girls (N=4), 32% of Filipino girls (N=19), and 56% of girls of "other" ethnicities (N= 16) report hitting or threatening to hit another person. Statistically significant differences, however, are indicated in gang fight participation, with 44% of Samoan girls, 16% of Hawaiian girls, 25% of "other" girls, and 5% of Filipino girls admitting involvement.

Girls of Asian ethnicities report the highest level of stealing goods worth less than \$50 (50%), followed by Hawaiian girls (32%), Samoan girls (31%), Caucasian and "other" girls (25% each), and Filipino girls (21%). Goods worth more than \$50, on the other hand, were stolen by 19% of Samoan and "other" girls and 16% of the Hawaiian girls surveyed. Alcohol and marijuana consumption was reported to be high for all girls, ranging from 25% to 75% of the population sample. While the

Table 10. Agency Girls' Self-Reported Delinquency by Ethnicity						
In the past 12 months have you done the following?						
	Cauc.	Asian	Filipino	Other	Samoan	Hawn.
<b>Delinquent Offenses</b>	<b>(N=4)</b>	<b>(N=6)</b>	<b>(N=19)</b>	<b>(N=16)</b>	<b>(N=16)</b>	<b>(N=44)</b>
<b>Stolen or tried to steal</b>						
goods worth more than \$50	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	18.8%	15.9%
goods worth less than \$50	25.0%	50.0%	21.1%	25.0%	31.3%	31.8%
bought, sold, held stolen goods	25.0%	16.7%	0.0%	31.3%	26.7%	11.4%
motor vehicle	25.0%	16.7%	5.3%	12.5%	12.5%	6.8%
<b>Damaged property</b>						
	25.0%	0.0%	21.1%	43.8%	25.0%	29.5%
<b>Weapon</b>						
used to hurt, threaten, or self-defense	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	31.3%	12.5%	11.4%
seen minor w/real gun	25.0%	66.7%	15.8%	25.0%	25.0%	27.3%
carried to school	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	12.5%	2.3%
carried a gun	25.0%	16.7%	0.0%	18.8%	12.5%	9.1%
<b>Drugs</b>						
used alcohol	75.0%	66.7%	42.1%	31.3%	25.0%	54.5%
used marijuana	50.0%	50.0%	21.1%	25.0%	25.0%	47.7%
used ice	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	18.8%	6.3%	18.2%
sold marijuana	25.0%	33.3%	10.5%	31.3%	6.3%	22.7%
<b>Run away</b>						
	50.0%	0.0%	26.3%	37.5%	18.8%	31.8%
<b>Lied about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, or get into a bar</b>						
	0.0%	33.3%	15.8%	18.8%	25.0%	22.7%
<b>School</b>						
suspended	25.0%	33.3%	15.8%	31.3%	37.5%	36.4%
cheated on test	50.0%	66.7%	47.4%	25.0%	37.5%	45.5%
<b>Violence</b>						
hit or threatened to hit a person	25.0%	33.3%	31.6%	56.3%	43.8%	52.3%
attacked person w/idea of hurting or killing	25.0%	16.7%	16.7%	18.8%	18.8%	20.5%
<b>gang fight</b>						
	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	25.0%	43.8%	15.9%

small number of Asian and Caucasian girls surveyed urges caution, the dramatic ethnic differences in delinquent and gang behavior seen among girls in general begin to fade when the girls actually at risk for these behaviors are examined.

### **Girls, Gangs and Delinquency in the At Risk Population**

Gang membership is predictably higher in this group of youth (see Table 11). About one in five boys, and one in ten girls in the agency sample were current gang members; about a quarter of the girls (22.9%) and about the same number of boys (28.1%) reported former gang membership. Higher figures were also seen for having friends in gangs (about 62% of boys and 75% of girls) and knowing people in their neighborhoods who are gang members (about 76% of both groups). Finally, more girls (38%) than boys (24%) reported having family members in gangs.

**Table 11. Self-Reported Gang Membership by Gender (Agency Sample)**

	Percent of Males (N=128)	Percent of Females (N=105)
Youth who were ever in a gang	28.1%	22.9%
Youth who have family member(s) in a gang	24.4%	38.5%
Youth who have friend(s) in a gang	62.0%	74.5%
Youth who know people in their neighborhoods who are gang members	76.7%	76.2%
Youth who are currently in a gang	19.5%	10.5%

Again, gang membership is associated with delinquency in this group. As Table 12 indicates, large numbers of boys and girls in this group of current and former gang members engaged in an array of delinquent behaviors in the last year. Notably, there is virtually no gender difference in the destruction of property (reported by 41% of the boys and 47% of the girls). Likewise, an identical proportion (16.7%) of girls as well as boys report carrying a gun to school.

Gender differences still appear with reference to running away from home (reported by 46% of the girls but only 19% of the boys), and in the area of drug usage (girls are consistently higher). With reference to violent behavior, boy gang members now report more participation in gang fights than their female counterparts. This is in contrast to the PAGE gang sub-sample (where girl gang members reported more involvement in gang fights), and may reflect the fact that girls tend to age out of violent behavior earlier than boys (Chesney-Lind, 1997).

### **Violence and Delinquency for a Private School's Girls**

In an effort to further explore the role of violence and delinquency in the lives of girls in Hawaii, we elected to expand the survey population. Generally, the data involved in this study have been drawn from youth either in public schools or from youth involved in agencies directed to serve the economically and politically marginalized populations of the state. Given that Hawaii has one of the largest proportions of youth enrolled in private schools, how representative are these problems in the lives of girls from less impoverished backgrounds?

To answer this question, both questionnaire and focus group data were gathered from 22 girls (grades 10 through 12) enrolled in an Oahu private school. This data show that violence and delinquency are highly prevalent in their lives, despite class privilege (see Table 13). In general, statistics on the delinquent activity

**Table 12. Self-Reported Delinquency by Current and Former Gang Youth (Agency Sample)**

In the past 12 months have you done any of the following?

<u>Delinquency Offenses</u>	<u>Male (N=36)</u>	<u>Female (N=24)</u>
<b>Stolen or tried to steal</b>		
goods worth more than \$50	38.9%	29.2%
goods worth less than \$50	30.6%	62.5%
bought, sold, held stolen goods	48.6%	41.7%
motor vehicle	27.8%	33.3%
<b>Damaged property</b>	41.7%	47.8%
<b>Weapon</b>		
used to hurt, threaten, or self defense	44.4%	29.2%
seen minor w/ real gun	55.6%	41.7%
carried a gun to school	16.7%	16.7%
carried a hidden weapon like a knife or gun to school	42.9%	33.3%
<b>Drugs</b>		
used alcohol	63.9%	79.2%
used marijuana	61.1%	75.0%
used ice	11.1%	37.5%
sold marijuana	52.8%	58.3%
<b>Run away</b>	19.4%	45.8%
<b>Lied about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, or get into a bar</b>	36.1%	45.8%
<b>School</b>		
suspended	36.1%	66.7%
cheated on test	44.4%	58.3%
<b>Violence</b>		
hit or threatened to hit a person	69.4%	66.7%
attacked person w/ idea of hurting or killing	41.7%	45.8%
gang fight	61.1%	45.8%



of these particular girls are higher in all areas than the intermediate school aged youth, except for their use of physical violence, and their involvement in gangs. This may be attributed to the age of the particular sample. However, it is still noteworthy that their high levels of delinquency does not draw them to gang membership (none had been in a gang or had an interest in being in a gang).

The questionnaires revealed that 36% of the girls have used drugs before and 86% have consumed alcohol. In addition, half of the girls admit stealing in the past. Roughly 18% of these young females have been involved in a fist fight. And a staggering 31% have run away from home. Many of them acknowledged that girls run away to flee violence from family members or boyfriends.

These girls report disconcertingly high levels of abuse. About 40% have suffered sexual and or physical abuse, primarily from family members; however, two girls report having been abused by friends and another two girls report having been abused by strangers. In addition, two of these young women felt that they had

**Table 13. Girls' Self-Reported Delinquency and Victimization (Private School Sample)**

	<b>Percent of Girls (N=22)</b>
Girls who have run away from home	31%
Girls who have used drugs (marijuana or ice)	36%
Girls who have used alcohol	86%
Girls who have stolen	50%
Girls who have been involved in a fist fight	18%
Girls who have been in a gang or were interested in being in one	0%
Girls who have been abused (physical and or sexual)	41%
Girls who have been assaulted	22%
Girls who have been raped (date rape)	9%
Girls who have been sexually harassed	73%
Girls who have seen someone being abused (physical and or sexual)	55%
Girls who have seen someone being assaulted	68%

been the victims of date rape. At least half of these girls have seen someone being abused physically or sexually. Over 70% report having experienced sexual harassment, primarily from strangers, but sometimes from peers. One of the surveyed females claimed to have been harassed by a teacher. Lastly, 22% report being the victims of some form of physical assault.

Overall, a high proportion of these young women report delinquent behavior in alcohol and drug consumption, theft, and running away. They are, on the other hand, less likely to be physically violent than the other youths surveyed. Ultimately, this survey reveals that all girls, regardless of class background, are susceptible to abuse and delinquency.

### **Girls in a Hawaii Youth Institution**

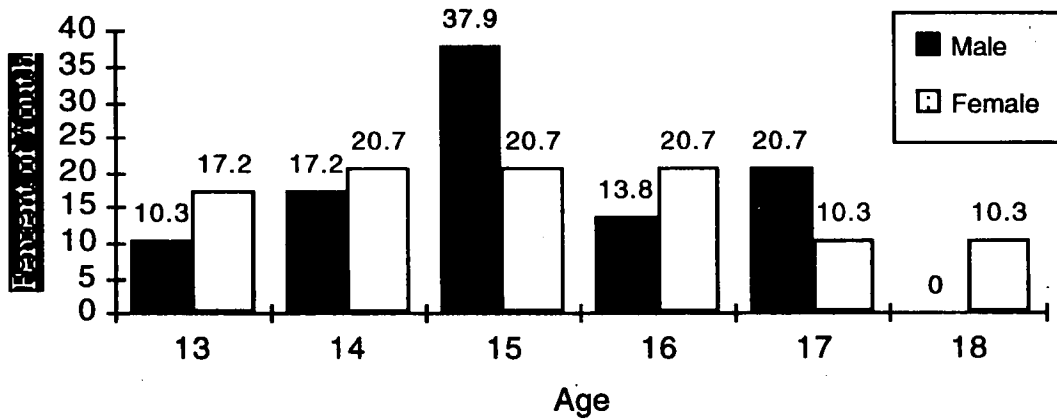
The following section focuses on girls who are in the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility. As we shall see, the data collected here indicates striking gender disparity. On average, girls are sentenced for less serious offenses and longer sentence periods than boys. They are also more likely to be harshly penalized for their misconducts while in the institution.

This particular sample consists of 58 youth (29 males and 29 females)<sup>3</sup> admitted to a Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility. Although the majority of youth placed in the institution are male and the sample size is rather small, there were few gender differences in demographic makeup among the youth in this study; no statistically significant differences were observed in age, ethnic composition, or the district in which they were prosecuted. As shown in Chart 2, both females and

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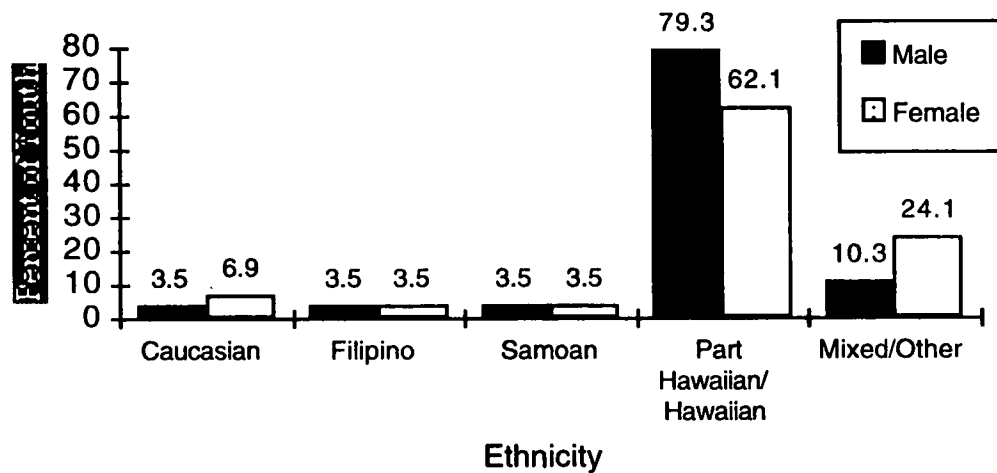
<sup>3</sup> A sample of boys was randomly selected from a daily attendance list totaling 167 boys to match the population of girls between July 1, 1995 and June 30, 1996. Data gathered on each subject were taken from file cards and case files compiled at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility. Information included self-reported data, psychological reports, staff reports, and court records. Only information that was consistent and pertinent to the focus of gender disparity was used.

males range in age from 13 to 18 years old, with a mean age of about 15 years old when first committed to the facility.



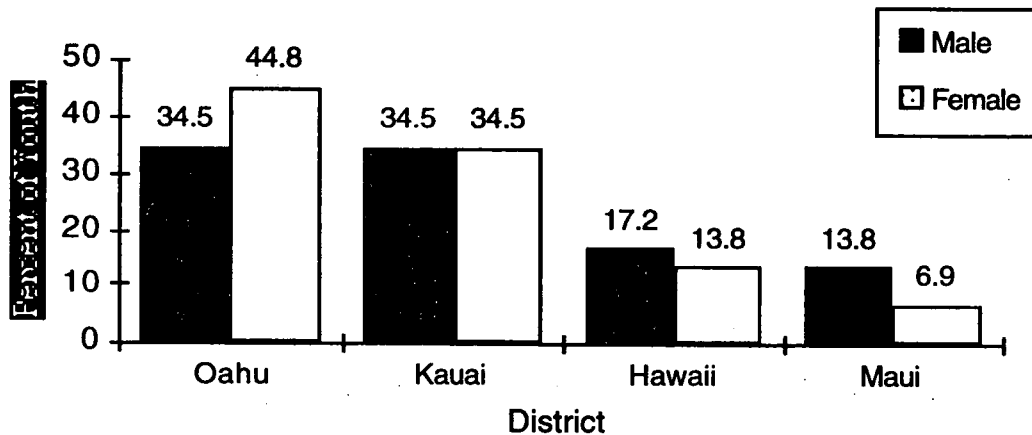
**Chart 2. Age of Male and Female Wards**

This population of youth consists of an overwhelmingly large group of Hawaiian/Part Hawaiian youth (70.7%). The second largest group are of mixed/other ancestry and comprises 17.2% of the population. The remaining populations are of Caucasian (5.2%), Filipino (3.5%), and Samoan (3.5%) ancestry.



**Chart 3. Ethnicity of Male and Female Wards**

The majority of these youth are from Oahu (39.7%) and Kauai (34.5%). About 15.5% are from the district of Hawaii and another 10.3% of the youth are from the district of Maui.



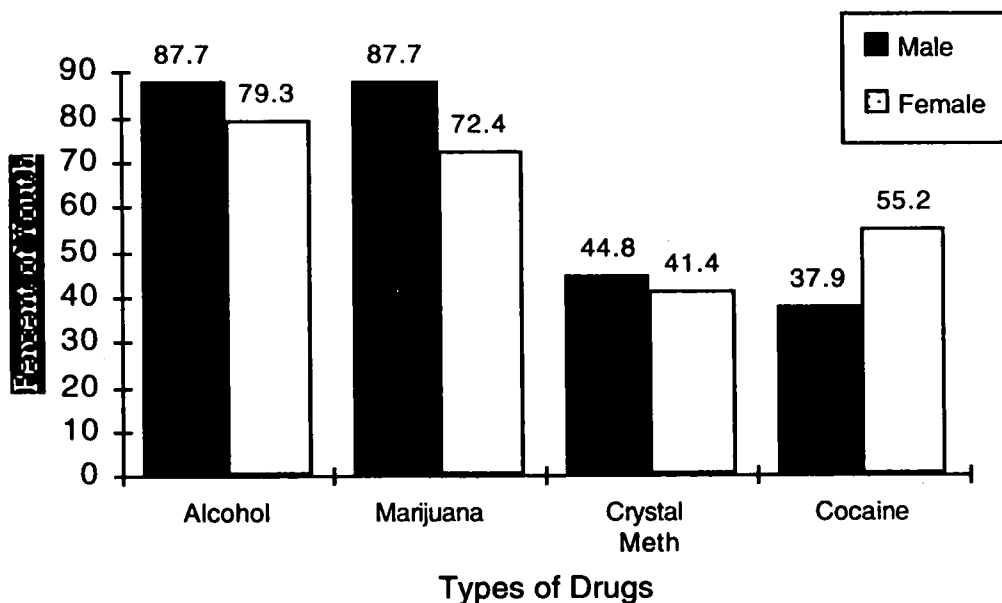
**Chart 4. Court Districts by Gender**

Although these youth share demographic similarities, gender differences are quite striking in the areas of suicidal behavior and sexual abuse history. This sample shows that suicidal attempts are significantly higher among females. About 45% of the girls admit to attempting suicide compared to only 6.9% of males ( $p=.001$ ). A significantly higher percentage of females (37.9%) also report being sexually abused compared to 13.8% of males ( $p<.04$ ). However, slightly more boys (24.1%) report a history of physical abuse compared to females (17.2%), but this difference is not statistically significant. These percentages are similar to a national report, which indicates that 40% to 73% of girls in the juvenile justice system have been abused (OJJDP, 1996).

Other researchers have also confirmed that girls experience significantly higher levels of abuse and suicidal behavior than boys. In addition, causal links between abuse and delinquency (in the form of running away, drug use, and suicidal

behavior) are more prevalent in girls (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1992; McCormack, Janus, & Burgess, 19986; OJJDP, 1996). Although this data does not reveal causal links, the higher proportion of girls who report abuse and suicidal behavior is cause for concern since runaway arrests are also higher for girls in Hawaii.

Chart 5 shows that drug use is a very common part of girl's lives. A study of state training schools "found that half of these facilities reported that more than 60 percent of the girls they serve need substance abuse treatment at intake and that over half of the girls they serve are multiplied addicted" (OJJDP, 1996, p. 12). Alcohol and drug use is quite high among incarcerated youth, with no statistically significant differences existing between males and females. An overwhelming majority of boys and girls consume alcohol and marijuana. Likewise, ice and cocaine use is reported by almost half of the population; interestingly, a higher percentage of girls use cocaine than boys.



**Chart 5. Reported Substance Use of Male and Female Wards**

The following table examines gender differences in regards to the most serious crimes for which these youth were first committed. Similar to national trends, boys in Hawaii are more likely to be committed for violent and property offenses, while girls are more likely to be committed for probation violations. Not surprisingly, nearly half of boys' most serious offense was a violent offense compared to less than a quarter (24.1%) of girls' offenses. Property crimes also account for more of boys' commitment (31.0%) than girls' (10.3%).

**Table 14. Most Serious Offense Sentenced for by Gender**

<u>Type of Offense</u>	Percent of Males (n=29)	Percent of Females (n=29)
Violent	48.3	24.1
Property	31.0	10.3
Other	0.0	10.3
Probation Violation	<u>20.7</u>	<u>55.2</u>
	100	100

Statistical Significance at .005

The data also reveals that over half (55.2%) of the females in this sample are committed for probation violations<sup>4</sup> compared to less than a quarter (20.7%) of

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<sup>4</sup> Although Hawaii requires status offenders to be placed in protective supervision rather than on probation (HRS 571-11), violations to probation include noncriminal offenses, such as running away from home or treatment facilities and truancy. Thus, a youth may be placed in the institution for noncriminal offenses rather than for committing a serious offense (HRS 571-31); this is clearly the case for a majority of the girls placed in this Hawaii training school. Furthermore, had a youth committed a more serious offense, he/she would be charged with such in addition to his/her probation violation. Hence, girls are more likely to be placed in the institution for nonserious offenses and "bootstrapping" is occurring in Hawaii through the use of "probation violations."

males; girls make up 72.7% of all probation violators in the institution during this period ( $p < .01$ ). They are also the only ones being committed for other offenses, such as contempt of court and prostitution (1) as their most serious offense. Running away is a common violation of probation rules and is the most frequent offense in girls' arrest according to Hawaii's arrest trend statistics.

Although boys are clearly committed for more violent offenses, there are few gender differences in sentence length for their first commitment. Table 15 shows that males are sentenced to only slightly higher terms than females (showing no statistical difference) for short-term sentences, which range from 7 to 365 days. On average, records show that males are sentenced to a mean of 62.2 days compared to girls' 57.5 days. Likewise, little gender difference exists for those committed for minority sentences or sentences that commit youth until the age of 18 ( or even to the age of 20). Twenty-one percent of boys and 17.2% of girls have been sentenced for these durations.

**Table 15. Length of Sentence by Gender**

<u>Length of Sentence</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Up to 30 days	34.5%	48.3%
31-90 days	34.5%	31.0%
Over 90 days	10.3%	3.5%
Until age 18-20	20.7%	17.2%

Females and males also show no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of returning to the facility, with 37.9% (11) of males and 44.8% (13) of females experiencing institutionalization more than once. For these repeat offenders, the number of sentences to age 18 to 20 increases to 50% of the ward's

most recent commitment (45.5% of boys and 53.9% of girls). The average short term sentence also increases dramatically with boys being sentenced to a mean of 169.2 days and girls to 164.2 days.

The average length of time before being discharged from the facility (on the first commitment) by males (n=24) is 94.8 days and 69.6 days for girls (n=26). Yet when comparing differences in sentence length to the date of discharge, girls serve an average of 27 days more in their sentence compared to boys' 15 days. In addition, female (n=5) records on time served for the most recent offense for which they were committed show that girls spend an average of 259.2 days in the institution compared to 113.3 days for males (n=6). Although these numbers come from a very small sample, it should be noted that four out of five females' most recent commitments were for violating parole or probation; two of them were sentenced to minority status, one for 60 days, and the other for 90 days. Conversely, half of the boys' most recent commitments (2) were for violent offenses that were given sentences of 60 and 365 days; however, of the two, only one served a full sentence. The other two males served 35 and 50 days, considerably less time than the females who committed parole and probation violations. Thus, it is clear that girls are not only sentenced to the institution for nonserious offenses but they are more harshly penalized as well.

Research shows that law officials play a large part in the gender disparity found in the juvenile justice system. Police officers seem to adopt a more paternal role with young females as well as a harsher attitude toward what might be viewed as inappropriate gender role behavior (Visher, 1983). In addition, judges and probation officers have been known to subscribe more readily to gender-role expectations, thus contributing to further differential treatment (Chesney-Lind, 1978; Cohen & Kluegel, 1979; Datesman & Scarpitti, 1977; OJJDP, 1996). They, along with the laws, claim that institutions are a safe alternative for girls who are in abusive



situations or are a threat to themselves. Thus, lack of alternative placements for girls, impacted by the fact that many of these girls' problems stem from home, leads to the justification of institutionalizing these nonserious offenders (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1992; Cohen & Kluegel, 1979; Shorter, Schaffner, & Frappier, 1996). Girls, consequently, are unfairly punished as a result of the system's failure to provide adequate placement options.

To add further insult to injury, girls also receive unequal treatment while in the institution. Data reveals that boys and girls are equally cited for misconducts (prohibited acts also known as rule violations) that are categorized at equal levels of seriousness; however, the nature of these misconducts indicates gender disparity. Table 16 illustrates that boys commit a larger proportion of level one misconducts and girls commit a larger number of level two and three misconducts. Overall, boys are cited for more misconducts (58.6%) than girls (37.9%), but no statistical significance is shown. Interestingly, the girls who are actually cited for misconducts average more (11) than boys (7).

**Table 16. Levels of Misconducts for Male and Female Wards**

Levels of Seriousness	Percent of Male Misconducts (n=120)	Percent of Female Misconducts (n=109)
Level 1	44.2	31.2
Level 2	42.5	50.5
Level 3	13.3	18.3
	100	100

Although the data, on the whole, indicates that there are no significant gender differences in the amount and severity of misconducts, Table 17 shows that

the nature of female misconducts are less serious than male misconducts. This particular sample shows that boys are more likely to be cited for fighting with other wards than girls (31% verses 20.7%). They are also the only ones to be frequently cited for assaulting staff members (34.5%). Girls, on the other hand, tend to be cited

**Table 17. Five Most Frequent Misconducts**

Misconduct	Males	
	Percent of Misconducts (n=120)	Percent of Inmates Cited (n=29)
Refusing to Obey Orders	20.0	37.9
Assault	15.8	34.5
Fighting	9.2	31.0
Being in a Restricted Area	7.5	24.1
Escape	5.0	17.2

Misconduct	Females	
	Percent of Misconducts (n=109)	Percent of Inmates Cited (n=29)
Possessing Contraband	22.0	20.7
Refusing to Obey Orders	13.8	27.6
Using Vulgar Language	10.1	17.2
Threatening	6.4	13.8
Fighting	6.4	20.7
Being in a Restricted Area	5.5	17.2

for more nonviolent misconducts such as possessing contraband and using vulgar language, which are not listed in the top five most frequent misconducts for boys. Similarly, McClellan (1994) found that in adult institutions, females are more likely to be cited for petty insubordinations while males are more likely to be cited for more violent acts.

In sum, gender disparity is clearly evident in youth institutions, as this institution's records show. This is partly due to gender-role expectations, the ideology of protection by control, and the lack of alternative placements available for girls. Likewise, our laws continue to rationalize the harsh treatment of female status offenders. Clearly, massive systemic changes need to be undertaken to ensure fair and equitable treatment for girls; this necessarily entails creating alternative placements that are designed to actually help these young women.

### **Interviews with Girls at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility**

Since quantitative data fails to elucidate the actual perspective of girls in the system, the Hawaii Girls Project elected to hold two focus groups of 4 and 5 girls at the Youth Correctional Facility. These hour and a half long sessions involved extensive discussions of their general problems and concerns, experiences in the facility, and suggestions to prevent recidivism. A survey was also conducted to assess demographic backgrounds, previous delinquency statuses, and victimization histories.

The surveys and discussions reveal that these girls come from high-risk environments and possess serious records of delinquency. These girls are of 14 to 18 years of age and are mostly from Oahu; a few, however, are from Kauai. Five are of part Hawaiian ancestry and were living at home before coming to the facility, and two came from other programs or residential homes. As Table 18 shows, these girls

have engaged in numerous delinquent acts in the past, however, they point out that they were not caught for a majority of these acts. Coinciding with Hawaii's overall arrest trends, many of these girls were placed in these institutions for minor offenses.

This population of girls shows a marked tendency to associate with gang members. All of the girls have friends who are in gangs; two-thirds (6) also have family members in gangs. They believe that kids join gangs for a number of reasons: chief among them are lack of support and attention from family members, peer pressure, protection, respect, and "being cool." Conversely, they believe that many youth avoid joining gangs because they are dangerous and involve extensive fighting and possible death. The girls acknowledge that youth can stay out of gangs by engaging in productive activities and having ample support from family and friends.

These girls have experienced extensive abuse in the past. Over three-quarters of them claim to have been sexually or physically abused. Almost half (4) were abused by boyfriends, a third (3) by strangers, one by a family member, and one by a family friend. Almost all (90%) of these girls have been the victim of an assault and have seen someone being assaulted. Likewise, 70% said that they have witnessed the abuse of someone else.

The girls in the facility feel they are monitored too closely. Not surprisingly, they detest being locked up and not having any freedom. They find it especially difficult to have to live with other girls that they neither get along with nor trust. One girl said, "hard to get along with the other girls, they talk shit and try to get you in trouble when you're almost getting out. They're jealous so they try to make you get in trouble so you stay in longer." Another girl believed that "this place made me worse than before I came in. I used to be nice to people and now I'm not, being in

**Table 18. HYCF Girls' Self-Reported Delinquency**

<u>Delinquent Offenses</u>	<u>Girls (N=9)</u>	
<b>Stolen or Tried to Steal</b>		
goods worth more than \$50	67%	(6)
goods worth less than \$50	33%	(3)
bought, sold, held stolen goods	67%	(6)
motor vehicle	67%	(6)
<b>damaged property</b>	45%	(4)
<b>Weapon</b>		
used to hurt, threaten, or self defense	45%	(4)
carried to school (knife)	45%	(4)
carried a gun to school	33%	(3)
<b>Drugs</b>		
used alcohol	89%	(8)
used marijuana	89%	(8)
used ice	56%	(5)
sold marijuana	67%	(6)
<b>Run away</b>	67%	(6)
<b>Lied about age to purchase cigarettes or alcohol, or get into a bar</b>	33%	(3)
<b>School</b>		
suspended	33%	(3)
cheated on test	56%	(5)
truant	67%	(6)
<b>Violence</b>		
hit or threatened to hit a person	78%	(7)
attacked person w/ idea of hurting or killing	56%	(5)
gang fight	33%	(3)

here makes you have to be mean or the girls take advantage of you, even the staff makes you do stuff the other girls won't do if you're too nice."

Some of the girls expressed being homesick and missing their families. They also wished that they were able to see and talk to their families on a more frequent basis. Others, however, did not miss their families since they felt that their families did not provide them with enough emotional support. One girl stated that her family members were always too busy to pay attention to her. Despite these problems, the girls look forward to leaving the facility and going home. Although they unanimously contend that they do not plan to return to the facility, they seemed unsure about their ability to distance themselves from the lifestyles that lead them into the facility in the first place. Since most of these girls lack adequate support systems, having the strength to stay "delinquency-free" becomes a real challenge. Nonetheless, a couple of the older girls realize that despite these odds, they need to persevere in order to help their younger siblings from becoming delinquent. These same girls also expressed a desire to go to college.

They were very open about the types of problems girls of their backgrounds have: problems with family, school, substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse, friends and peers, and living in at-risk communities. They emphasized the necessity of "keeping busy" and engaging in interesting activities to stay out of trouble. They also recognized the necessity of outside help to prevent recidivism.

Several of the girls were at other treatment programs before they entered the facility. Although treatment at other programs did not always help, the girls, nevertheless, contend that their experiences there were wholly superior to being in the facility. For the most part, they felt that the staff at other programs actually "listened" to them, taught them to respect themselves, and more importantly, did not treat them like "criminals." These programs also provided ample activities to keep them occupied; which additionally, helped to alleviate the desire for drugs.

Many commented that the other programs granted them more freedom as well. Some of the girls suggested that they had sometimes exaggerated or lied about drug problems in order to enter treatment centers where more freedom was granted and where they felt more welcome. Overall, they felt that these programs cared about them more. Some of the girls, nevertheless, ran away from these programs. However, these girls ran away because of problems with other girls or their therapists and not with the programs, themselves. In general, the girls maintain that they had more interest and hope in these other programs and treatment centers.

Conversely, the girls regard their experiences at the facility to be dismal by comparison. For the most part, the girls feel that their counselors are not there for them. They also feel that the staff members, except for one or two of them, do not care about them either. One ward stated that, "when I first came here, they said come by anytime I needed to talk, but I go, he's busy." Another ward complained that "here, the people talk to you like a prisoner, not a person."

The girls note discrepancies between the way they are treated from the boys at the facility. In general, they claim that there are more placement options for boys. They also believe that people seem to take more of an interest in the boys at the facility than in them; this is evidenced by more visits from youth program employees and more activities offered to them. In addition, they feel that there is differential treatment in punishment. They claim that "boys don't get punished for the same things. Some staff scared of boys so don't punish them." They also feel that their punishments are for trivial reasons like minor skirmishes over gossip, personal items, etc. Lastly, they criticize the staff for continually failing to work out conflicts among them.

The two focus groups were held during the past summer. During that time, their recreation leader was on vacation, so they were bereft of activities and were

quite bored. However, regular activities include an "excel" program that encourages good behavior by rewarding girls with outside activities and late nights. The girls seem to especially enjoy occasional outings to the beach, movies, and concerts. They also appreciate joint activities with the boys in the facility since they are given the opportunity to socialize with people other than in their own group.

In general, the girls feel that their experience in the facility is somewhat depressing and hopeless. They say that they need goals to encourage them to stay out of trouble. Many of the girls seemed ambivalent about their ability to fight outside pressures that could lead them back into the facility. When asked what could be done to prevent recidivism, suggestions included: having someone to talk to, having a sponsor, regular "check-ups," encouragement, having "something to do, like a job or something," and generally keeping busy. One girl believed that "talking in groups helps some people, more like it makes you think about what you did. Some girls go back to the same things...if you're smart and strong enough and keep busy you can stay out of trouble." The girls continue to emphasize the necessity for support and encouragement as well as keeping themselves occupied. Given the concerns they have about reentering society, programs designed around "after-care" services need to be implemented to service this population.



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## APPENDIX: LEVELS OF MISCONDUCT

### Level 1: Greatest or High Misconducts

- Assaulting any person, with or without a dangerous instrument.
- The use of force on or threats to a correctional worker or the worker's family.
- Escape.
- Destroying, altering, or damaging government property or the property of another person resulting in damage of \$1,000 or more, including irreplaceable documents.
- Adulteration of any food or drink.
- Possession or introduction of any firearm, weapon, sharpened instrument, knife, or other dangerous instrument.
- Rioting.
- Encouraging others to riot.
- The use of force or violence resulting in the obstruction, hindrance, or impairment of the performance of a correctional function by a public servant.
- Fighting with another person.
- Threatening another person, other than a correctional worker, with bodily harm, or with any offense against the other person or the other person's property.
- Attempting or planning escape.
- Possession or introduction or use of any narcotic paraphernalia, drugs, or intoxicants not prescribed for the individual by the medical staff.
- The use of physical interference or obstruction, hindrance, or impairment of the performance of a correctional function by a public servant.

### Level 2: Moderate Misconducts

- Engaging in sexual acts.
- Making sexual proposals or threats to another.
- Destroying, altering, or damaging government property or the property of another person resulting in damages between \$50-\$499.99.
- Theft.
- Misuse of authorized medication.
- Possession of anything not authorized for retention or receipt by the inmate or ward and not issued to the inmate or ward through regular institutional channels.
- Refusing to obey an order of any staff member.
- Failing to perform work as instructed by a staff member.
- Lying or providing false statements, information, or documents to a staff member, government official, or member of the public.
- Being in an unauthorized area.
- Failure to follow safety or sanitary rules.

### Level 3: Low Moderate Misconducts

- Destroying, altering, or damaging government property, or the property of another person resulting in damage less than \$50.
- Possession of property belonging to another person.
- Using abusive or obscene language to a staff member.
- Smoking where prohibited.
- Tattooing or self mutilation.
- Harassment of employees.

\* Compiled from State of Hawaii, Department of Social Services & Housing. (October 1983). Title 17, Administrative Rules of the Corrections Division: Inmates Handbook.

