GENDER SPECIFIC SERVICES

Office of Criminal
Justice Services

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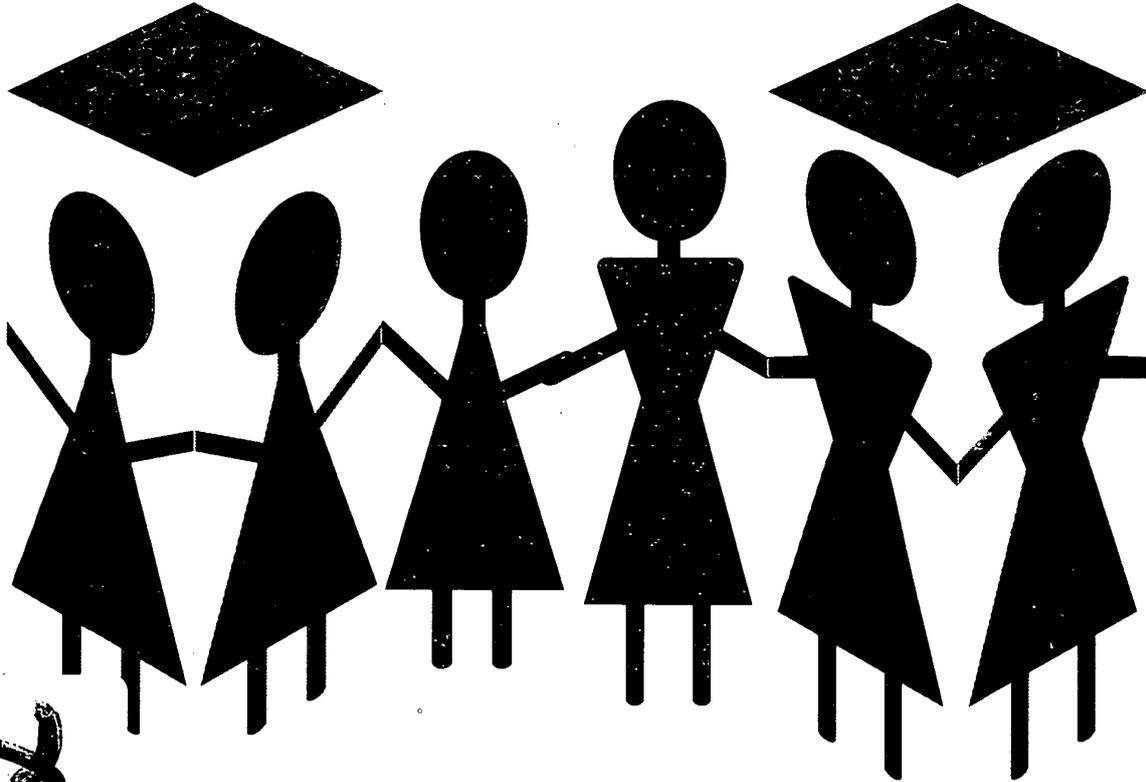
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A Report to the
Governor from
the Gender
Specific Services
Work Group
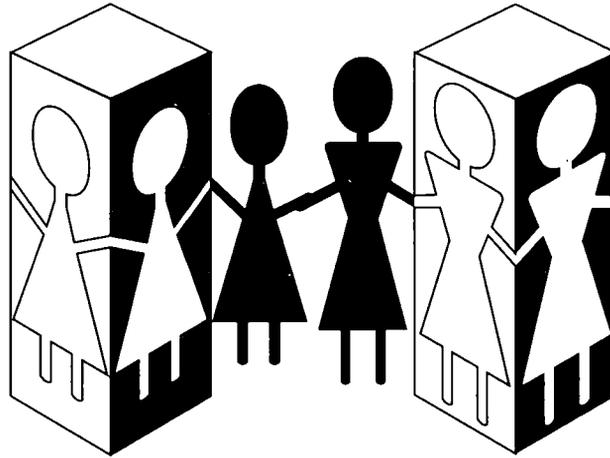
GENDER SPECIFIC SERVICES WORK GROUP

A Report to the Governor

January 1997

Moving Toward Juvenile Justice and Youth-Serving Systems that Address the Distinct Experience of the Adolescent Female

co-authored by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historically, criminal and juvenile justice systems, theories, research and program models were developed from a male perspective. The relatively small numbers of girls are frequently overlooked and under served as the system struggles to provide adequate and appropriate services for their male counterparts. It was becoming apparent that what we were doing for adolescent girls (in most cases, the same thing we provided for boys) was not working.

Beyond the basic inadequacy in our programs and services for adolescent females, traditional sex stereotypes have appeared to affect aspects of juvenile justice decision-making. Often, adolescent girls are still expected to conform to traditional gender roles. Girls who deviate from these persisting stereotypes by being more rowdy, boisterous, aggressive, or adventurous may be viewed as "at risk" or "in trouble." Boys who engage in the similar behaviors are viewed as normal. Mirroring these societal gender stereotypes, traditionally juvenile courts have viewed female adolescents as more vulnerable and in need of court intervention than their male counterparts and have used their discretionary powers in the service of traditional sex roles.

In the early 1990's, scholars, policymakers and juvenile justice and youth-serving professionals began to recognize that our juvenile justice and youth programs were not working effectively with adolescent girls. Simultaneously, statistics began to reveal further increases in the numbers of juvenile female offenders involved with the juvenile justice system. This new awareness of the differences between the male and female experience, combined with statistics that support the increasing rate at which juvenile females were entering the juvenile justice system, prompted Congress and the State of Ohio, Office of Criminal Justice Services to address the gender specific needs of girls.

Nationally, a recent report published by the U.S. Department of Justice entitled *Female Offenders in the Juvenile Justice System: Statistics Summary*, claims that females are entering the juvenile justice system in increasing numbers, at younger ages, and for increasing rates of violent crimes (Poe-Yamagata and Butts 1996). Overall, the report documents that girls' arrests increased from 21 to 24 percent of all juvenile arrests between 1983 and 1993, and their rate of arrests is growing faster than boys' rates. This report also shows that Ohio has the third highest (following California and New York) number of public facilities for juvenile detention in the nation, and the *second highest* number of juveniles as a whole, and females in particular, in detention admissions (again, following California). Ohio also ranks *second highest in the country* in commitments to the Ohio Department of Youth Services for both delinquents overall and girl delinquents in particular (again, following California). This rate increased similarly for girls (23%) and boys (25%) between 1988 and 1992 (Poe-Yamagata and Butts 1996).

During the 1992 Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, Congress listened to the concerns youth-serving professionals expressed and identified a necessity to address the gender-specific needs of girls. In 1995, the Office of Criminal Justice Services assembled a nineteen-member work group charged with identifying the specific needs of adolescent females in Ohio's juvenile justice system and making recommendations for the improvement of programs and services. This charge included identifying the types of programs and services which address the gender specific needs of adolescent females. The GSSWG gathered information and data on adolescent girls, studied adolescent female development, examined effective program models, visited existing programs and talked individually and collectively with girls in these programs.

Recent research on adolescent female development tells us that girls develop self-esteem differently, learn differently, value different things, process information differently, and respond differently to people and situations than boys. The key to these basic findings is that equality does not mean "sameness." Providing girls with the same services that are afforded boys within and outside an institutional structure does not ensure that their needs are being met. Because girls and women function in relationship with one another, girls' services must operate on three basic levels: individual change, relational change, and community change (Albrect, 1994).

In response to this research and current trends in female offending, and the challenges with providing treatment for adolescent girls, many have been re-examining the way we fashion and provide services to adolescent girls. Very simply, gender-specific programming and service delivery systems must:

♀ *meet the unique needs of females;*

♀ *acknowledge the female perspective;*

♀ *support the female experience through positive female role models;*

♀ *listen to the needs and experiences of adolescent females;*

♀ *recognize the contributions of girls and women;*

♀ *respect female development;*

♀ *empower girls and young women to reach their full potential; and*

♀ *work to change established attitudes that prevent or discourage young women from recognizing their potential.*

In September and October of 1996, the GSSWG coordinated and held six focus groups for delinquent girls and five focus groups for professionals working with delinquent girls to obtain additional information regarding the girls in Ohio's juvenile justice system. Fifty-eight girls and forty-two professionals participated in these eleven focus groups that took place across Ohio. Participation in the focus groups was voluntary. At the close of each focus group, the group debriefed and synthesized all of the observers' comments regarding that particular focus group. The individual observer notes and the focus group debriefing notes were organized and compiled into "Key Findings." These "Key Findings" are listed below. First the findings from the girls are presented, followed by findings from the professionals.

♀ *Key Findings from the Girls' Focus Groups*

Respect is a very important issue for these girls. In general, they do not feel respected.

The girls reported that gender differences exist in the treatment of male and female delinquents.

The life and family experiences of these girls have been extremely difficult and appear to play key roles in both their becoming involved in delinquency, as well as their potential for rehabilitation.

A variety of health issues, many of them significant, were identified by the girls (e.g., pregnancy, drug use, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV).

The girls in long-term institutional placements have many fears about leaving the institution and express anxiety about the lack of support they will experience once they leave.

Key Findings from the Professional's Focus Groups

The professionals had clear ideas about the problems in the Juvenile Justice System.

The professionals presented ideas about differences in the nature of boys and girls, the program availability for girls and ideas about what it is girls need. Perceptions of boys and girls ranged from sexist to insightful.

Professionals in each focus group identified parents as a significant part of the "problem." The attitudes about parents were generally negative and punitive, often blaming the parents for the girls' problems.

The professionals held clear ideas on which existing programs were useful/successful, as well as what type of programs were needed.

There is some discrepancy about how the girls view their problems in relation to how the professionals view the girls' problems.

Through the review of current literature regarding gender differences and adolescent female development, the study of available data, and the analysis of the information gleaned from the girls in Ohio's juvenile justice systems and the professionals who work with them, the GSSWG identified four areas that the Office of Criminal Justice Services should address to support the improvement of appropriate service development and delivery for girls in the juvenile justice system, which include:

○ *Obtaining more qualitative and quantitative data on Ohio girls in the juvenile justice system.*

○ *Developing and facilitating public education, training and information sharing around gender specific issues.*

○ *Identifying existing services programs for girls and assessing model gender specific programs and resources.*

○ *Supporting increased funding and development of adequate and appropriate gender specific programs and services.*

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VISION:

To enhance the equity, efficacy, and relevance of the services available to youth within the juvenile justice system based on gender differences.
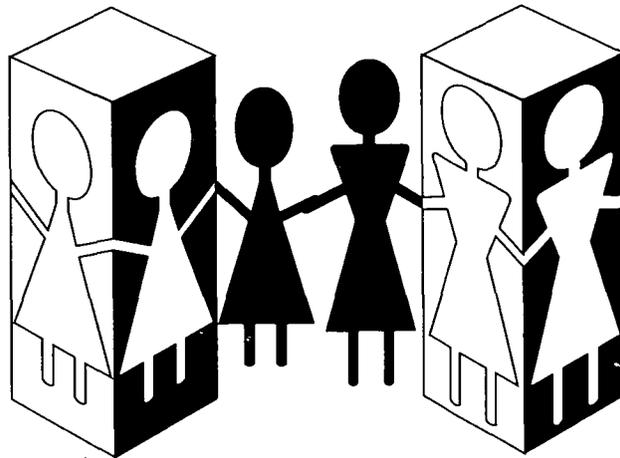
MISSION:

To facilitate effective and appropriate services for females involved with or at risk for becoming involved with the juvenile justice system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PREFACE

"I've heard it said that what separates men and women from the beasts is that men and women must tell their stories. Our stories unite us with nature...with our own beauty and our own beast. My story belongs to no one else, and yet our stories, yours and mine, are the same under the skin, beyond the facts, beyond the names and dates. Only the heart speaks to the heart...I needed to tell you my story as I need to hear yours, so that we may share our secrets and trust our hearts."

-Judy Collins

This is a story about girls. The girls in this story are not only faced with the typical challenges and pitfalls of adolescence, they wrestle with a whole host of other issues as well. Parts of this report may seem unfamiliar and uncharacteristic of a report of this nature. Don't shy away from its contents simply because it is different. In the words of John Gray, Ph.D., psychologist, relationship therapist and author of the book, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus,* women and men speak different languages. Often women assume poetic license to use various superlatives, metaphors and generalizations to express feelings and communicate. As Carol Gilligan's research found, and other researchers have echoed, this is a different way of finding their voice and communicating their experiences. The information presented and the stories shared in this document reflect these gender differences.

Physical, sexual and emotional abuse are commonplace among the girls in our story. Approximately 90 percent of the girls committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services have experienced some type of physical or sexual abuse. These girls struggle with alcohol and other drug abuse at very young ages, too frequently, learning the patterns of abuse or inheriting the addiction from a parent or other family members. These girls are often failing academically in environments that do not attempt to understand or support them. These are the girls who find themselves in the juvenile justice system for running away, cutting school, alcohol and other drug abuse, and more serious and violent offenses.

On top of the difficult and dangerous realities these young women face, they still struggle with the same mixed messages our society sends all girls and women. The media tell adolescent girls to "be sexy, but not sexual" through provocative commercials, advertisements, television shows and music videos. Recent studies by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) tell us that our educational system favors boys' learning styles over girls', support classroom settings where boys receive more support and individual attention than girls, and harbor hallways that are breeding grounds for sexual harassment. Too often, magazines and advertising that target adolescent girls prioritize beauty and "thin-ness" over intelligence, contribution and strength of character. Just as Mary Pipher writes in her New York Times Bestseller, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*:

"For those of us who work with girls on a daily basis, we know that adolescence is a particularly tumultuous time for girls, a time when the fearless outgoing girl-child is replaced by an unhappy and insecure girl-woman. Something dramatic happens to girls in early adolescence. Just as planes and ships disappear mysteriously into the Bermuda Triangle, so do the selves of adolescent girls go down in droves."

-Mary Pipher

This report is an attempt to communicate through the voices of adolescent girls and the individuals who work with and care about them. The members of this Work Group hope that this information and the stories these young women share enlighten you to the experiences of adolescent girls, speaks to your heart, and motivates you to act on behalf of the girls in your communities, schools and juvenile justice systems.

-The Members of the Gender Specific Services Work Group

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I. INTRODUCTION

Virginia Woolf said it best, "Every woman needs a room of her own."

Throughout the history and evolution of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, theories, research and program models were developed from a male perspective. This occurred partly because males were more likely to be involved with the justice system, and sociologists, psychologists and criminal justice professionals sought to understand and modify criminal behavior. As our justice systems evolved, the number of women and girls involved with these systems increased. However, institutions, programs and overall systems continued to evolve from a male perspective.

In the 1970's and 1980's, scholars such as Betty Friedan and Carol Gilligan began to discuss the differences between men and women. However, it wasn't until the early 1990's that individuals in the social services, psychology and justice fields began to recognize, study and value the differences between the male and female experience. Simultaneously, statistics began to reveal further increases in the numbers of juvenile female offenders involved with the juvenile justice system. Most recently, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention published a report that concluded that female delinquency has increased more than male delinquency in the recent past. The report also forecasted that if recent trends continue, female delinquents will occupy even more of the time and attention of policy makers, service providers, court officials, law enforcement agencies, and communities (Yamagata and Butts, 1996). This new awareness of the differences between the male and female experience, combined with statistics that support the increasing rate at which juvenile females were entering the juvenile justice system, lead people who work with girls to ask many questions, including:

Q *Why do the numbers of adolescent girls involved in delinquency and violence seem to be increasing at a faster rate than their male counterparts?*

Q *Why do juvenile justice professionals consistently report that adolescent girls are the most difficult population to work with?*

Q *Why is it that adolescent girls seem to be more traumatized by puberty than adolescent boys?*

Q *Why do girls in our programs seem to fail more often in treatment modalities that are effective with boys, such as level systems and positive peer cultures?*

This report addresses these questions. It sketches a profile of the adolescent girls who are involved in Ohio's juvenile justice system and examines how we can improve our juvenile justice and youth-serving systems by addressing the adolescent female experience, and in turn work more effectively with adolescent girls. Moreover, the report entailed extensive research, including literature reviews, data gathering from Ohio juvenile courts, and eleven focus groups consisting of youth-serving professionals and system-involved girls. Most importantly, this report tells the story of adolescent girls involved in Ohio's juvenile justice system, depicts their struggles with growing up, and provides recommendations for working more effectively with them.

II. BACKGROUND

"Contemporary feminists have done much to puncture stereotypes, to encourage the re-thinking of sex roles and relationships, to work for change in the education of girls, and to open up the question of women's work by insisting on equal pay and equal opportunity. At present, we insist that a woman be treated just the same as a man. Are we sure we want to be treated as most men in our society? Or do both sexes deserve something better?"
— Kay Keeshan Hamond

In the early 1990's, scholars, policy makers and juvenile justice and youth-serving professionals began to recognize that our juvenile justice and youth programs were not working effectively with adolescent girls. Professionals reported that girls often failed in their programs because they refused to follow the program structure and rules. These girls were referred to as recalcitrant, unyielding, combative and appeared to be becoming more violent than ever before. It was becoming apparent that what we were doing for adolescent girls (in most cases, the same thing we provided for boys) was not working.

Beyond the basic inadequacy in our programs and services for adolescent females, traditional sex stereotypes have appeared to affect aspects of juvenile justice decision-making. Protection against sexual promiscuity and "immoral conduct" have been factors in determining detention placement for adolescent girls for the past 100 years (Bergsmann, 1989). In general, adolescent males are expected to be rowdy, boisterous, and troublesome occasionally. It is more readily accepted when boys are aggressive, independent, and strive for great achievements. However, adolescent girls are still expected to conform to traditional gender roles. According to these persisting stereotypes, in many instances, girls are expected to be inconspicuous, passive in their dealings with others, take few if any risks, and obedient to their parents, teachers, and elders. From sons, defiance of authority is normative, but from daughters it may be seen as extremely serious behavior (Bergsmann, 1989). Mirroring societal gender stereotypes, traditionally juvenile courts have viewed female adolescents as more vulnerable and in need of court intervention than their male counterparts and have used their discretionary powers in the service of traditional sex roles (Bergsmann, 1989).

In addition to differential treatment in processing, adolescent females have also experienced inequity in the availability of appropriate programs and services in both institutional and community program settings. When compared to opportunities and activities developed for boys, programs and institutions for girls frequently provide less physical activity and vocational training. The relatively small numbers of girls are frequently overlooked and under served as the system struggles to provide adequate and appropriate services for their male counterparts. Class action suits based on the parity of programs have proven somewhat effective for adult women, thus increasing their educational and vocational opportunities while in prison (Bergsmann, 1989).

"If a boy goes to an institution, he gets a degree, job training... We don't."
— Scioto Juvenile Corrections Center Resident

However, such lawsuits have not been filed on behalf of young women involved with the juvenile justice system at this point (Bergsmann, 1989). Evolving attitudes and attempts to work more effectively with adolescent females may preclude the necessity of such lawsuits.

The Federal Response

During the 1992 Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, Congress listened to the concerns youth-serving professionals expressed and identified a necessity to address the gender-specific needs of girls. Congress accomplished this by including references to equity and gender-specific services throughout the Reauthorization legislation. The final Act provided that each state:

○ *conduct an analysis of gender-specific*
services for the prevention and treatment
of juvenile delinquency, including the
types of such services available and the
need for such services for females;

○ *develop a plan for providing needed*
gender specific services for the
prevention and treatment of juvenile
delinquency; and

○ *provide assurance that youth in the*
juvenile justice system are treated
equitably on the basis of gender, race,
family income, and mentally, emotionally,
or physically handicapping conditions.

These provisions recognized the Act's previous failure to deal with gender bias in a meaningful way and provided the impetus for states to begin to look more closely at the girls moving through our juvenile justice systems. In response, several states, including Ohio, have taken a proactive approach to addressing the gender specific needs of adolescent girls in the juvenile justice system.

The Ohio Response

In 1995, the Office of Criminal Justice Services assembled a nineteen-member work group charged with identifying the specific needs of adolescent females in Ohio's juvenile justice system and make recommendations for the improvement of programs and services. This charge included identifying the types of programs and services which address the gender specific needs of adolescent females. As part of this charge, the Gender Specific Services Work Group gathered information and data on adolescent girls, studied adolescent female development, examined effective program models, visited existing programs and talked individually and collectively with girls in these programs.

Specific programs demonstrated and shared effective strategies for working effectively with adolescent females. These programs included: Scioto Juvenile Correctional Center, an Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) facility that serves girls in Delaware, Ohio; the Euphrasia Center, a secure residential community corrections and treatment setting in the heart of downtown Cleveland; the Seal of Ohio Girl Scout Council, which coordinates statewide initiatives such as "Girl Scouts Beyond Bars," and the Tapestry/Sister to Sister Program based at the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville, Ohio. These programs emphasized key strategies for working with adolescent females, including: working with adolescent girls and young women in the context of their relationships; keeping young mothers with their babies and teaching them parenting skills; stressing academic and vocational successes to boost self-esteem; addressing issues of sexual abuse, pregnancy, and other women's health/mental health issues; and working with young women in environments that are free from the pressures of adolescent boys.

Throughout this process, initiatives such as the ODYS Female Focus 2000 (Female Offender Coalition to Upgrade Services) provided the Gender Specific Services Work Group (GSSWG) with information and support. Female Focus 2000 studied the services available to girls served by RECLAIM Ohio and those committed to the ODYS to determine whether their needs were being met. The group issued twelve recommendations related to data collection/retention, public education, physical plant/programmatic considerations, medical needs, basic personal hygiene, clothing and nutrition. ODYS is currently working toward implementing those recommendations, and as defined in their FY 1996 Departmental Goal 8, are ensuring that "all youth in ODYS institutions and regions will have their needs met as defined by the nine Basics (an ODYS guiding philosophy)." Female Focus 2000 provided essential groundwork as the Work Group began this initiative.

III. EXISTING RESEARCH AND DATA ON FEMALE DELINQUENTS

Overview of Historical Literature

🧍 *"We're not all bad kids, we're not all criminals."*
-A Focus Group Participant

An historical analysis of juvenile institutions in the South conducted by Vernetta D. Young (1994) highlights how the evolution of juvenile institutions occurred, largely in the 1890's. White male youth were the first youth to have juvenile institutions created in order to separate them from White adult male convicts in prisons. After slavery ended, Black male youth remained in Black adult male prisons until juvenile institutions designed specifically for Black male delinquents were built "to maintain social control, mainly by supplying needed laborers" (1994, p. 262). Next, White female youth institutions were developed to "save" these girls from sexual immorality and to properly instruct them in "women's work." Finally, institutions were developed to house Black female youth when it became too costly to house them in adult prisons or to remand them out of state. Thus, the history of institutionalizing male and female youth is fraught with both sexism and racism.

The belief that girls are less delinquent than boys has been borne out by statistics since data on girls' and boys' delinquency were first collected. While their crime rates are closer for less serious crimes such as shoplifting and smoking marijuana, they become more extreme for the more serious and violent crimes. There is also recognition that girls have been punished for status crimes (such as promiscuity, truancy and running away) far more seriously than boys (Belknap 1996a; Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1992). The gender bias against females for status offenses is not simply an historical phenomenon. A recent study found that girls are significantly more likely than boys to be sen-

tenced to a juvenile detention center for status offenses, and they are more likely to be referred to juvenile court for being sexually victimized (Dembo et al. 1993).

It was assumed that the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, designed to divert and deinstitutionalize juvenile offenders, would benefit girls more than boys. Specifically, girls have been traditionally processed more severely for status offenses (offenses that would not be offenses if the juvenile were an adult, e.g. truancy, running away, incorrigibility, etc.), than boys. Specifically, while there is some documentation of this decrease in institutionalization for females (see Storkamp 1994), there is also documentation that White boys were deinstitutionalized while girls were transferred from detention and correctional settings into mental health facilities for being "inappropriate," and African-American youth were "warehoused in the public system of juvenile institutions" (Federle and Chesney-Lind 1992, p. 165). Thus, this deinstitutionalization appears to have "created bed space in secure facilities that was immediately filled by minority youth" and is, therefore, "working better for white than nonwhite girls" (Federle and Chesney-Lind 1992, pp. 166 and 172). Moreover, the study by Federle and Chesney-Lind (1992) reports that girls are disproportionately arrested for the types of status offenses that involve high detention rates, particularly running away from home. In short, "girls are detained and committed for different and less serious offenses than boys" (Federle and Chesney-Lind 1992, p. 171). As Federle and Chesney-Lind (1992, p. 189) succinctly state: "Deinstitutionalization appears to have benefited only white males."

One study of juveniles referred to court in 1980 found few significant differences in the types of crimes for which African-American and White girls are referred, except that White girls are more likely to be referred for drug and alcohol offenses and Black girls are more likely to be referred for other public order offenses (Shelden and Chesney-Lind 1993). Approximately one-quarter of both Black and White girls were referred for status offenses. In contrast, this study found significant racial differences among male delinquents.

Notably, Shelden and Chesney-Lind state that their findings contradict "convergence hypothesis," the belief that Black girls are more "masculine," thus, their rates are approaching those of males.

Separate facilities for delinquent girls were started in the early 1900's (Sarri 1987). Like the separation of convicted women from convicted men, however, there were costs as well as benefits. Separating the sexes has basically institutionalized decreased access to programs and services for girls and women, and strengthened gender stereotyping in these institutions (Freedman 1982).

Pathways to Offending

"If I felt like people treated me better, I might do better..."
-a 16-year-old African-American girl in Cleveland

Theories of crime have long ignored the etiology of female delinquency and offending (see, for example, Belknap 1996a; Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1992; Leonard 1982; Naffine 1987; Smart 1976). The first efforts to include females were confounded by the "add-women-and-stir" approach (see Daly and Chesney-Lind 1988; Simpson 1991). Relatively recently, efforts have been made by scholars to understand how females and males may vary in their "pathways to lawbreaking" (see Daly 1992; Gilfus 1992). These and other studies indicate that girls' increased risk of incest is an important factor regarding gender differences in pathways to lawbreaking (Howell and Davis 1992; Sargent et al. 1993; Wells 1994). More specifically, incest often leads to running away from home, which often leads to prostitution and drug selling (which are often related to each other, as well).

A recent study of factors related to females' initiation into violent street crime conducted in New York City found that almost all of the girls experienced poverty and homes where substance abuse and domestic violence were common (Sommers and Baskin 1994). However, they noted a distinction between "early" and "normal/late" onset of delinquency, with the distinction being whether they started exhibiting violent behavior during later adolescence. The study found the two groups, based on age of onset of violent delinquency, differed most in terms of "ecological dimensions" (characteristics of their neighborhoods), and less on family background factors (such as whether they were raised in dual-parent households, whether their families relied on public assistance, familial criminality, substance abuse, and mental illness). The early onset girls were more likely to have grown up in neighborhoods "characterized by high concentrations of poverty," and they were more likely to have experienced physical and sexual abuse by a stranger than their later onset counterparts (Sommers and Baskin 1994, p. 477). Other differences between the groups included earlier and more severe substance abuse by the early onset group, as well as their increased likelihood of having friends who engage in violent crimes, relative to the later onset group.

"I had no structure, my older brother brought me up, my parents divorced when I was two and my mom was gone a lot, if mom could have sat down and talked with me and told me what I should or shouldn't be doing... things would be different."
-A Scioto Juvenile Correctional Center Resident

Recent studies have pointed out the high rate of delinquent girls whose family members, including parents, turn them on to drugs (Sommers and Baskin 1994; Howell and Davis 1992). This poses a continual problem in that even if the girls are able to become "clean and sober" while institutionalized, many of them face returning to homes where drugs are easily available and routinely consumed. This family/parent drug use was evident from the focus groups recently conducted in Ohio, as well. In summary, a review of the literature in this area suggests "girls and boys entering the juvenile justice system often have different constellations of problems and, therefore, present needs for somewhat distinct services" (Dembo et al. 1993, p. 75).

Wells (1994) believes that not only are the current services limited for girls in trouble (not only for delinquent girls, but even girls who are running away from sexually and physically abusive homes), but she suggests that this limited access is related to some girls' offending. "While touring corrections programs in Oregon in the late 1980's, the state's governor was actually confronted by a female juvenile who complained of having to continually escalate the seriousness of her offenses in order to secure services already provided to her male counterpart who engaged in the same initial misbehavior" (Wells 1994, p. 5).

Jails

Some research has indicated that arrested girls are often placed in solitary confinement in jails, given that there are so few arrested girls and the need to keep them separate from adults and boys (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1992). This solitary confinement is problematic in a number of ways. First, the likelihood of suicide is higher with solitary confinement. Second, given the high rates of sexual victimization of delinquent girls, they are already at increased risk of suicide. Finally, some research has pointed out the significant risk that incarcerated girls face of being sexually assaulted by male staff and other inmates (Chesney-Lind and Rodriguez 1983).

Long-term Confinement

"Jail or foster home is better than living at home. My father abused me. I like jail I wanted to go back to jail...I got three meals a day which is rare/unusual. I can't afford to feed myself...a bed to sleep in, it was like a vacation."
-A 15-year-old Focus Group Participant from Newark

Similar to women's prisons, institutions for delinquent girls have been found to reinforce gender stereotypes and roles in their daily regiment (Gelsthorpe 1989; Kersten 1989; Smart 1976). Girls are subject to greater rule rigidity and control, and offered fewer vo-

cational and other programs than boys (Kersten 1989; Mann 1984). The institutions for delinquent girls often stress the importance of the domestic role (Smart 1976). Additionally, one study found that although boys and girls faced the same policies, there were significant differences in how the youth were treated and the activities they had access (Gelsethorpe 1989). This study found that girls were rewarded for such feminine behavior as being affectionate, maternal, sensitive, and crying. Boys were allowed activities such as soccer, volleyball, swimming and ping pong, while girls were expected to watch the boys from the sidelines. The staff's view of the girls being "destined for marriage and family life" was apparent in the prescribed daily activities: sewing, cooking, and dieting (Gelsethorpe 1989).

Pregnancy

"Pregnant girls get treated just like the rest of us...they're going through so many changes, and need special treatment."
-a Scioto Juvenile Correctional Center Resident

Many girls entering the criminal justice system are pregnant or will become pregnant after entering the system. Unfortunately, access to OB/GYN and prenatal services is very limited and often inadequate (Howell and Davis 1992; Wooldredge and Masters 1993). Research has shown that pregnant females often face significantly more hostility and discrimination from the staff, likely due to the staff's resentment of their special medical and physical needs (Holt 1982; McHugh 1980). Additionally, there is considerable documentation of incarcerated pregnant females being encouraged or even forced to give their babies up for adoption (Baunach 1992; Haft 1980; Haley 1980; Mann 1984; Ross and Fabiano 1986). This is true even if the girl became pregnant while incarcerated (Mann 1984).

Programming

"I believe, as Miller, Mead and DeBeauvoir believed, that pathology comes from failure to realize all one's possibilities. Ophelia died because she could not grow. She became the object of their lives and lost her true subjective self...as my client said, they are perfectly good carrots being cut into roses."

-Mary Pipher

Ninety-one percent of juvenile offenders served by state and federal juvenile systems in 1993 were male (Wells 1994). That females constitute less than ten percent of the clientele is often used as an excuse or justification for the incredibly low status female offenders rate in the youth services system. In fact, Wells claims that across the U.S., the gender-neutral term "downsizing" in juvenile corrections has had a gender-specific effect: "Lacking a powerful constituency of agitated victims, girls' services throughout corrections and the rest of the continuum of care are often the last funded and the first cut, creating the phenomenon of throwaway services for throwaway girls" (Wells 1994, p. 4).

Research on female offenders has documented a growing drug problem and "crack down" on female drug users (see, for example, Chesney-Lind 1991). Unfortunately, although a recent national survey found that 28 percent of female offenders were incarcerated for drug or alcohol offenses, and 73 percent report a need for substance abuse treatment (Howell and Davis 1992), such treatment is often limited (see Belknap 1996b). Studies on child sexual abuse histories of juvenile and adult offenders suggest far higher rates for girls than boys (Dembo et al. 1993; Howell and Davis 1992; Wells 1994). Research on delinquent girls also reports a high frequency of self-esteem problems (Maryland Department of Juvenile Services 1993). This is hardly surprising given the experiences many of them have lived through.

"I feel like I'm old and I'm only 15, I feel like I've lived a whole life... I feel old as dirt."
-A 15-year-old Focus Group Participant from Cleveland

These self-image problems are evident in research showing institutionalized girls are significantly more likely than their male counterparts to try to hurt themselves (Dembo et al. 1993). Troubled boys are more likely to act out, for example slash tires, while troubled girls are more likely to hurt themselves, for example slash their wrists. "No one will demand and obtain intervention for her because in our country it is more often slashed tires, not slashed wrists, that are noticed" (Wells 1994, p. 4). A study comparing institutionalized male and female delinquents found that female delinquents are far more likely to think about suicide and attempt suicide than their male counterparts. Although for both male and female delinquents "hopelessness" was the most commonly given answer for wanting to commit suicide, female delinquents were more likely than male delinquents to bring up "hate myself" and "angry" as reasons for attempting suicide (Miller 1994). Another study found that girls are twice as likely as boys to report feeling hopeless (Wells 1994).

Research on institutionalized delinquent girls reports educational problems as severe (see Howell and Davis 1992; Maryland Department of Juvenile Services 1993). Two studies conducted on incarcerated female delinquents reported a significant number of these girls have educational disabilities (Fejes-Mendoza and Rutherford 1987; Hugo and Rutherford 1992).

Programming for "special" or unique subgroups in the female delinquent population require additional consideration. For example, Tracy and Shelden (1992) point out that simply because they make up such a small part of the criminal justice system, little is allocated to violent female juvenile offenders. They "fall through the crack that policy makers have created by inattention and the lack of programmatic offerings to grapple with this small, but significant, group of adolescents" (p. 34).

In 1982, a Florida woman, Vicki Burke, who worked in a juvenile delinquency program, recognized that many girls were in detention centers or training schools simply due to the lack of available programming. After coordinating with judges and others in the state, she developed a program called P.A.C.E. (Practical and Cultural Education), a Center for Girls which opened in 1984. This refreshing and effective program was developed to address the gender specific needs of girls, including formal education, counseling, career development, and counseling for drug and alcohol problems and sexual abuse. This program moved to a community college and was so successful that it has been replicated in four more cities across Florida (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 1993).

Data on Female Delinquents

"Pathology often arises in girls because of the failure to realize their true possibilities of existence. The best treatment for this pathology is growth, encouragement and resistance training."

-Mary Pipher

To date, most of the available statistics discussed on female offenders focus on adult women. It is important to briefly note these as they are clearly related to female juvenile offenders. First, recently many scholars have pointed out that women's imprisonment rates have grown at a faster rate than men's since 1981 and, in fact, tripled in the 1980's (Chesney-

Lind 1992; Pollock-Byrne 1990; Sarri 1987). This growth occurred despite a decrease in women's violent crimes. The increase in women's imprisonment is a result of an increase of women's non-violent property crimes and changes in responses (increased severity) to women's drug offenses (Chesney-Lind 1992). These changes have also been attributed to two economic recessions in the 1980's and the building of new facilities for women (Sarri 1987). Moreover, incarcerated women are increasingly women with children and women of color (Sarri 1987).

The number of girls referred to intake in the State of Maryland between 1991 and 1993 increased by 26 percent (Maryland Department of Juvenile Services 1993). During this time period, African-American girls were twice as likely as White girls to be adjudicated. Moreover, young women were more likely than young men to be removed from their homes after adjudication with African-American girls being more likely to be removed to detention and commitment than the White girls (Maryland Department of Juvenile Services 1993). A study of female delinquents in Minnesota between 1972 and 1992 reveals generally consistent rates of their percent of apprehension for property crimes. Girls' share of apprehensions for violent crimes (relative to boys) peaked and ebbed, but was always lower than boys and appeared to decrease since 1990 (Storkamp 1994). However, girls' apprehensions for violent crimes appears to have increased in Minnesota since 1990 (but less so than boys') (Storkamp 1994). This pattern is somewhat similar for apprehension of girls for property crimes, and apprehension for girls'

Table 1

OHIO JUVENILE ADJUDICATIONS AND COMMITMENTS

	1993				1994				1995			
	Adjudications		Commitments		Adjudications		Commitments		Adjudications		Commitments	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
Male	88.30%	12,586	92.80%	2,643	88.40%	12,806	93.50%	2,827	88%	13,493	92%	2,647
Female	11.70%	1,667	7.20%	204	11.60%	1,681	6.50%	197	12%	1,834	8%	226

SOURCE: The Ohio Department of Youth Services

Part II crimes has increased significantly since 1986, but appear to be leveling off (Storkamp 1994). Regarding 1992 apprehensions, this study found that girls constituted 75 percent of the prostitute apprehensions, and 41, 32, 31, and 29 percent, respectively, of the apprehensions for forgery, liquor law violations, fraud, and larceny (Storkamp 1994). The girls made up 10 percent of robbery apprehensions of juveniles, and 12, 13, and 15 percent, respectively, of apprehensions for narcotics, aggravated assault, and arson.

In order to attempt to understand local statistics, the GSSWG collected annual juvenile court reports from a number of Juvenile Courts across Ohio. Before discussing the results of our perusal of these data, we would like to note that many of these county reports fail to make gender distinctions. Moreover, those that do, usually fail to control for race and gender at the same time. Thus, distinctions cannot be made between, for example, White boys and Black boys, or Black boys and Black girls. Therefore, we recommend that future of juvenile court annual reports include data distinguishing race, age and gender (simultaneously), and to conduct this for both the processing of juveniles, as well as for the types of offenses for which they are referred or committed. This would improve the abilities of professionals in the criminal justice system and others to more clearly examine changes in the offending rates and the processing of these offenders. Furthermore, these improved data would facilitate providing more appropriate treatment.

Tables 1 through 7 represent data gleaned from these annual reports. Table 1 represents juvenile adjudications and commitments in Ohio from 1993 to 1995 (Ohio Department of Youth Services). Over time, boys constitute about 88 percent of adjudications, and girls about 12 percent. These data also suggest that boys are disproportionately likely to be committed: about 93 percent of boys are committed compared to about 7 percent of the girls. The most obvious explanation for this is that boys tend to commit more serious crimes.

Table 2 represents data from juveniles in Cuyahoga County in 1994. Notably, while girls constitute 27 percent of all delinquent and unruly cases referred to court, they make up only 20 percent of those referred for delinquent offenses and 47 percent referred for unruly offenses. Regarding these same data when dispositional orders are made, it appears that, consistent with existing research, that girls are disproportionately likely to be dispositioned for status and disorderly offenses. More specifically, although girls make up only 17 percent of juveniles dispositioned, they make up 56 percent of those dispositioned for unruly offenses (when they made up only 47% of the referred unruly cases). Table 3 is a presentation of gender dif-

Table 2 CUYAHOGA COUNTY JUVENILES IN 1994				
	Cases Referred		Disposition Orders Made	
Delinquent	12,970		6,793	
Male	10,402	80.2%	5,867	86.4%
Female	2,568	19.8%	926	13.6%
Unruly	4,583		540	
Male	2,419	52.8%	238	44.1%
Female	2,164	47.2%	302	55.9%
Total	17,553		7,333	
Male	12,821	73.0%	6,105	83.3%
Female	4,732	27.0%	1,228	16.7%

SOURCE: 1994 Annual Report of the Juvenile Court of Cuyahoga County

Table 3		
HURON COUNTY JUVENILE DISPOSITIONS IN 1994		
	Dispositions	
Delinquent	611	
Male	503	82.3%
Female	108	17.7%
Unruly	161	
Male	83	51.6%
Female	78	48.4%
Total	772	
Male	586	75.9%
Female	186	24.1%

SOURCE: 1994 Annuual Report of the Juvenile Court of Huron County

ferences in dispositions made in Huron County Juvenile Court in 1994. While girls constitute 24 percent of the total dispositions, they make up 48 percent of dispositions for unruly offenses. Thus, once again, girls are disproportionately represented in unruly offenses (relative to their overall offending).

Turning to Hamilton County in Table 4, this was the only report we found that made racial distinctions *across* gender. First, based simply on gender, girls constitute 27 percent of those juveniles charged with delinquency, 67 percent of those charged with unruliness, and 39 percent of those charged with both delinquency and unruliness in Hamilton County. Again, we see girls disproportionately represented in the unruliness category of offenses. Interestingly, African-American girls are most predominant (60%) for the straight delinquent category, followed by straight unruliness (53%), and finally in combined delinquency and unruliness (45%). White girls, on the other hand, are predominantly in the combined delinquency and unruliness (55%), followed by straight unruliness (47%), and finally by straight delinquency (40%). This may be that there are racial differences among girls

Table 4								
YOUTH CHARGED IN HAMILTON COUNTY IN 1994								
	With Delinquency		**With Unruliness**		**With Both**		**Total**	
Girls	1815	26.7%	497	67.1%	284	39.4%	2596	31.4%
White*	709	10.4%	224	30.2%	152	21.1%	1085	13.1%
Black*	1084	15.9%	255	34.4%	126	17.5%	1465	17.7%
Boys	4986	73.3%	244	32.9%	436	60.6%	5666	68.6%
White*	453	6.7%	128	17.3%	198	27.5%	779	9.4%
Black*	2951	43.4%	110	14.8%	232	32.2%	3293	39.9%
Unknown Gender and Race	1604	23.6%	24	3.2%	12	1.7%	1640	19.8%
Total	6801		741		720		8262	

*Races were unknown for some delinquents so the totals for the races are less than the overall totals.
SOURCE: the 1994 Annual Report of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court

Table 5
TYPES OF OFFENSES FOR JUVENILE CASES IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY IN 1993 AND 1994*

	1993				1994			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
Delinquency								
Homicide	97.0%	32	3.0%	1	91.4%	32	8.6%	3
Robbery	92.1%	430	3.0%	37	92.3%	408	7.7%	34
Assault	77.7%	1,373	7.9%	395	77.1%	1,573	22.9%	467
Arson	90.0%	54	22.3%	6	77.1%	52	10.3%	6
Sex Offenses	93.3%	166	10.0%	12	89.7%	176	4.9%	9
Weapons	86.6%	406	6.7%	63	95.1%	411	13.5%	64
Burglary	90.9%	527	13.4%	53	86.5%	547	9.1%	55
Theft	62.9%	1,699	37.1%	1,004	90.9%	1,812	37.0%	1,065
Drug Violation	95.7%	1,162	4.3%	52	63.0%	1,300	6.1%	85
Alcohol Violation	78.7%	269	21.3%	73	93.9%	325	18.8%	75
Unruly	49.4%	2,195	50.6%	2,245	52.8%	2,419	42.7%	2,164

*Only selected offense types were used for this table.

SOURCE: 1994 Annual Report of the Juvenile Court of Cuyahoga County

Table 6
TYPES OF OFFENSES FOR JUVENILE CASES IN HURON COUNTY IN 1993 AND 1994*

	1993				1994			
	Male		Female`		Male		Female	
Sex Offenses	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	100.0%	13	0.0%	-
Assault	81.4%	48	18.6%	11	66.0%	33	34.0%	17
Arson	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	100.0%	7	0.0%	-
Drug Laws	80.0%	12	20.0%	3	82.0%	28	17.6%	6
Liquor Laws	82.8%	53	17.2%	11	74.2%	49	25.8%	17
Theft	73.7%	70	26.3%	25	82.7%	91	17.3%	19
Breaking and Entering	90.9%	50	9.1%	5	97.6%	41	2.4%	1
Motor Vehicle Theft	66.7%	8	33.3%	4	85.7%	6	14.3%	1
Fraud/Forgery	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	66.7%	2	33.3%	1
Ungovernable	43.6%	34	56.4%	44	41.7%	35	58.3%	49
Curfew	84.6%	22	15.4%	4	73.1%	19	26.9%	7
Runaway	53.8%	7	46.2%	6	0.0%	-	100.0%	3
Disorderly Conduct	85.0%	17	15.0%	3	69.0%	20	31.0%	9
Probation Violation/VCO	56.2%	41	43.8%	32	66.9%	83	33.1%	41

*Only selected cases were used for this table.   SOURCE: 1994 Annual Report of the Juvenile Court of Huron County

for the types of crimes they commit, or it may be that girls are treated differently by their parents and the juvenile justice system *based on* their race. For example, White parents may be more likely to turn their daughters over to "the system" for unruly behavior.

Tables 5 and 6 aim to examine the types of offenses that juveniles are likely to commit. Table 5 represents cases in Cuyahoga County in 1993 and 1994. Consistent with existing research, it appears that boys are far more delinquent than girls, particularly for the more serious offenses. The second most apparent finding from this table is that females' rates, relative to males, changed very little between 1993 and 1994. However, a glance at the raw numbers for both boys and girls suggests that both are committing more crimes. For example, girls' assaults increased from 395 to 467 from 1993 to 1994, and their drug violations increased from 52 to 85. Although girls constitute slightly more than 1 in 5 of juvenile assaults and about 1 in 10 for juvenile homicides and juvenile arson, these data do not depict this "new" violent female juvenile that some of the media would have us believe. While the increase in girls' violent crimes is certainly a concern, it is not as extreme as some suggest, and juvenile violent crimes are still predominantly committed by boys. Regarding unruly offenses, girls appear to commit about half of these according to these statistics, and that has decreased slightly between 1993 and 1994.

Table 6 represents gender differences for specific offenses in Huron County in 1993 and 1994. (There were no juvenile homicides according to the annual reports.) According to these data, while Huron County juveniles appear to be more law-abiding, it is interesting to note that the girls constitute a higher percentage of the offenders in this county than in Cuyahoga County. This is particularly true for assaults and drug violations. Girls, however, commit a lesser percentage of juvenile thefts in Huron County (than in Cuyahoga) County. Examining the types of crimes related to unruliness, once again, girls are disproportionately represented here, relative to their overall offending rates. This is particularly true for being "un-

Table 7		
CUYAHOGA COUNTY 1994 JUVENILE POPULATION IN DETENTION SERVICES		
Detention Center	2,697	
Male	2,377	88.13%
Female	320	11.87%
Home Detention	1,143	
Male	962	84.16%
Female	181	15.84%
Shelter Care	509	
Male	349	68.57%
Female	160	31.43%
Total	4,349	
Male	3,688	84.80%
Female	661	15.20%
SOURCE: 1994 Annual Report of the Juvenile Court of Cuyahoga County		

governable," which is consistent with existing research that girls are more likely to be labeled for this than boys by their parents and the system.

Table 7 depicts detention services in Cuyahoga County in 1994. Girls constitute about 15 percent of those in detention services, and relative to this, are least represented in detention centers (12%) and most highly represented in shelter care (31%). This suggests a problem with the data in this and other annual reports. Sometimes it is not clear whether these juveniles are victims as well as offenders, or "simply" victims (and not offenders). For example, many children, both male and female, run away from home to escape violence and abuse in the home (see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1991). Given that girls are more likely to be sexually abused at home and to runaway, it

is not surprising that they are over-represented (relative to the other rates in this table) in shelter care. The questions these data beg are: how many youth are in the juvenile justice system because they are victims, how many of these have committed no offense except to get out of abusive (and sometimes even lethal) homes, and how often is the abuse a "pathway" to offending?

On a national level, a recent report published by the U.S. Department of Justice entitled *Female Offenders in the Juvenile Justice System: Statistics Summary*, claims that females are entering the juvenile justice system in increasing numbers, at younger ages, and for increasing rates of violent crimes (Poe-Yamagata and Butts 1996). While girls' arrests increased from 21 to 24 percent of all juvenile arrests between 1983 and 1993, their rate of arrests is growing faster than boys' rates. For this same time period, girls' arrests increased by 23 percent while boys' arrests increased by 11 percent (Poe-Yamagata and Butts 1996). For this time period, the number of juvenile court cases charging delinquency increased 31 percent for girls relative to a 21 percent increase for boys. Finally, the percent of girls detained for person offenses increased from 16 to 29 percent from 1989 to 1993, and the rate of girls committed for person crimes increased from 23 to 31 percent.

Still, when one examines some of these data closely, girls' arrest rates for murder between 1983 and 1992 have not changed, while boys have more than doubled. There are not enough girls arrested for forcible rape to even conduct analyses on percentages and changes over time. While girls' rates of robbery have increased faster than boys' rates, their growth in aggravated assaults, arson, motor vehicle theft and weapons law violations is almost identical to that of boys. Girls' arrest rates appear to be growing faster than boys' for property crimes such as burglary and larceny-theft. Their rates of arrests for drug abuse violations, however, were markedly lower than boys' rates (Poe-Yamagata and Butts 1996). Similar to some of the Ohio data discussed previously, this national study found that girls are less likely than boys to be removed from their

homes and taken into custody, either short-term or long-term (Poe-Yamagata and Butts 1996). However the rate of delinquency cases involving secure detention increased more for girls (23% increase) than boys (18% increase) from 1989 to 1993, and this was most pronounced for property crimes (a 26% increase for girls and a 12% increase for boys). Notably, there was a 13 percent decrease in incarceration rates for females with drug charges and only a 2 percent decrease for boys charged with drug offenses.

Interestingly, this report shows that Ohio has the third highest (following California and New York) number of public facilities for juvenile detention in the nation, and the *second highest* number of juveniles as a whole, and females in particular, in detention admissions (again, following California). While these detention admissions for girls in Ohio decreased 7 percent between 1988 and 1992, they increased 11 percent for boys. Regarding commitments to the Ohio Department of Youth Services, Ohio is again *second highest in the country* for both delinquents overall and girl delinquents in particular (again, following California). This rate increased similarly for girls (23%) and boys (25%) between 1988 and 1992 (Poe-Yamagata and Butts 1996).

Conclusion

The review of research and statistics on female delinquents suggests that important changes are occurring that affect the experiences and behaviors of these girls. Although girls continue to be far less likely to offend than boys, it appears that the offending rates of girls are changing, and that they are likely related to the girls' access to programs and services. The research to date has addressed the limited amount of concern and programming available for girl victims as well as girl offenders. In order to help this changing and challenged population, it is important to try to understand the unique needs these girls have. Finally, regardless of how the rates may or may not be changing, special programs need to be put in place to respond to the violent female offenders.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S PSYCHOLOGY AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

What a woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded to unfold such powers as are given to her.

-Margaret Fuller

Recent research on adolescent female development tells us that girls develop self-esteem differently, learn differently, value different things, process information differently, and respond differently to people and situations. The key to these basic assumptions is that equality does not mean "same-ness" (Valentine Foundation, 1990). Providing girls with the same services that are afforded boys within and outside of the institutional structure does not begin to ensure that their needs are being met. Girls and women function in relationship with one another, therefore, girls' services must operate on three basic levels: individual change, relational change, and community change (Albrect, 1994).

In response to this research and current trends in female offending, and the challenges with providing treatment for adolescent girls, many sociologists, psychologists, criminologists, and juvenile justice practitioners have been re-examining the way we fashion and provide services to adolescent girls. Traditional criminological research and treatment models have centered upon predominately male samples. Traditional models recognize that boys form their identity primarily in relation to the greater world. This means that they are interested in the rules of that world, their place in the structure of that world and how to move ahead or gain power within that structure. Girls, on the other hand primarily form their identity primarily in relation to other people. This means that they are interested in what relationship means and how it works. They de-

fine themselves through those to whom they relate and by how well they get along with those people (Iowa Department of Human Rights, 1996).

When examining gender-specific programming, it is important to recognize equality does not mean "sameness". Equality is not about providing the same programs, treatment and opportunities for girls and boys. Although, in some instances, access to physical fitness and sporting equipment manifest as like opportunities. Equality is about providing opportunities that mean the same to each gender. This new definition legitimizes the differences between boys and girls. Programs for boys are more successful when they focus on rules and offer ways to advance within a structured environment, while programs for girls are more successful when they focus on relationships with other people and offer ways to master their lives while keeping these relationships in tact (Iowa Department of Human Rights, 1996).

This research clearly supports the need to provide services specifically for girls. Such services must do more than merely target adolescent girls at risk. Gender-specific services are services which are specific to the female experience and free from gender bias (Iowa Department of Human Rights, 1996). Very simply, gender-specific programming and service delivery systems must:

♀ *meet the unique needs of females;*
♀ *acknowledge the female perspective;*
♀ *support the female experience through positive female role models;*
♀ *listen to the needs and experiences of adolescent females;*
♀ *recognize the contributions of girls and women;*
♀ *respect female development;*
♀ *empower girls and young women to reach their full potential; and*
♀ *work to change established attitudes that prevent or discourage young women from recognizing their potential.*

Services tailored for girls must not be viewed in isolation from: women's roles in society, societal barriers to women's growth and development, and violence against women throughout society. They must recognize and incorporate how girls develop self-esteem differently, value different things than boys, process information differently and respond differently to various treatment approaches. Adapting programs that were initially designed for boys are not as successful for girls. Their underlying assumptions do not lead to strong, healthy female development (Iowa Department of Human Rights, 1996). In cases where programs have been designed for male adolescents, it is necessary to make changes that:

○ *Allow more opportunity for the building of trusting relationships.*

○ *Offer learning experiences and skill building after these relationships have been established.*

○ *Allow girls the safety and comfort of same-gender environments.*

○ *Help girls understand that they can be professionally and emotionally successful in life and still have strong relationships.*

○ *Allow for exploring and honoring cultural differences also for African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Appalachian etc. youth.*

In addition to the basic philosophies which underlie providing services and programs for adolescent girls in the juvenile justice and other youth-serving systems, there are other areas that must be addressed. In addition to the turbulence of adolescence, these girls have complex issues that include: mental health issues, lack of self-esteem, trauma from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, women's health problems, alcohol and other drug abuse, academic failure, and emotional isolation. As gender specific programs and services develop, it is important to address the relevant issues in the each individual girl's life, these areas include but may not be limited to:

○ *role of relationship in the lives of girls,*
○ *development of sense of self and self-esteem,*
○ *women's health issues,*
○ *sexuality,*
○ *mental health,*
○ *physical fitness and athletics,*
○ *pregnancy and parenting issues,*
○ *trauma from physical, emotional and sexual abuse,*
○ *racial, cultural, and ethnic differences, and*
○ *spirituality.*

V. WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE SYSTEM-INVOLVED GIRLS IN OHIO: A FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

"Girls' symptoms reflect the grief at the loss of their true selves. Their symptoms reflect the confusion about how to be humans and be a woman. The basic issues appear and reappear in many guises. Girls must find, define and maintain their true selves. They must find a balance between being true to themselves and being kind and polite to others."
-Mary Pipher

Focus Group Background, Design and Methodology

After considerable deliberation by the Gender Specific Services Work Group (GSSWG) at monthly meetings rotating throughout the state (in the Ohio Reformatory for Women, the Hamilton County Juvenile Detention Center, Scioto Village, and Euphrasia), it was decided that the preferable format for obtaining information on institutionalized delinquent girls in Ohio was to formalize focus groups of both girls and professionals working with them across the state. The group was fortunate to find assistance from a focus group expert,

Pat Fettig, whose occupation is conducting focus groups for many private companies.

In September and October of 1996, Pat Fettig conducted six focus groups for delinquent girls and five focus groups for professionals working with delinquent girls. Fifty-eight girls and forty-two professionals participated in these twelve focus groups that took place across Ohio. The girls' groups ranged in size from seven to eleven girls, and their ages ranged from thirteen to twenty. The ages at which the girls first became involved in the system ranged from four to seventeen. Their placements included group homes, probation, detention, house arrest and diversion. Sixteen of the girls were African-American or bi-racial, sixteen were White, and for twenty-five their race was unreported. Forty-two professionals participated in the five focus groups for professionals, with groups ranging in size from four to eleven individuals. Some of the occupations represented included probation officers, executive directors, court administrators, supervisors for girls, intervention unit workers, juvenile court magistrates, therapists and social workers, and teachers. The entire group was comprised of approximately eight African-American women, one Hispanic woman, twenty-five White women, seven Black men and eight White men.

All of the focus group participants were contacted by various workers in the juvenile justice system. Participation in the focus groups was voluntary. Prior to the first focus group, Pat Fettig met with the GSSWG to develop questions for the girls and professionals. These questions were determined from the notes we had taken at the informal meetings we had with girls across Ohio prior to September. Pat Fettig conducted all of the focus groups, while various members of the GSSWG took turns observing the focus groups and taking detailed notes on the respondents' answers. At the close of each focus group, the group debriefed and synthesized all of the observers' comments regarding that particular focus group. The individual observer notes and the focus group debriefing notes were organized and synthesized by Kristi Holsinger and Joanne Belknap. This resulted in a considerable amount of

qualitative data which Kristi Holsinger organized into "Key Findings." The GSSWG members met to discuss the complete set of field notes and the "Key Findings" to prioritize them and to determine any areas that needed more attention and develop the recommendations offered at the conclusion of this report. The results from these focus groups and qualitative data are presented below. "Key Findings" are followed by notes from the qualitative data, often direct quotes from the focus group participants. First the findings from the girls are presented, followed by findings from the professionals.

Key Findings from the Girls' Groups

> *"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along. You must do the thing you think you cannot do."*
> *-Eleanor Roosevelt*

Respect

> *"What I really want is someone who will love and respect me for what I am, not what they want you to be, to ask you what you think."*
> *- A Focus Group Participant*

Respect is a very important issue for these girls. In general, they do not feel respected. The lack of respect they feel was expressed predominately in their relationships with staff. They shared a number of examples in which they felt "put down" by staff. The girls' concept of respect was best articulated when they described what an ideal person and/or mentor would be like. They want to be listened to and loved unconditionally by caring adults who are able to set healthy limits. They want more one-on-one relationships in order to talk about their feelings. Some of the girls' responses included:

> *If you go to talk to them [staff], they look down at you. They look at you like, I'm paid to come here, I can take away your home visit.*
>
> *They don't listen. Like you tell them you have an attitude [like you want help with it] and they'll yell at you that you shouldn't have an attitude.*
>
> *If I felt like people treated me better, I might do better...*
>
> *Staff can cuss at us, but we can't respond.*
>
> *Don't want to have male staff around when taking showers.*
>
> *[I would like] someone to treat me with respect, not hit me, not yell at me, not treat me like a two year old. Talk problems out.*
>
> *Staff stereotype us. Some of us try hard and we aren't recognized.*
>
> *Male staff be dogging you, calling me a "bitch."*
>
> *The staff tell us we're "nothing," we're not "special."*

Differential Treatment Based on Gender

The girls reported that there are gender differences in the treatment of male and female delinquents. Much of the variation in treatment and programming appears to be a result of administrators' and professionals' adherence to stereotyped gender roles. In general, the girls perceive the boys as getting more privileges, more space, more equipment and better treatment. For example, girls believe the boys have more educational, recreational and occupational opportunities.

> *When we play fight we get in trouble; they yell "Calm down! Calm down!" When the boys air box, they can do whatever they want.*
>
> *Females aren't supposed to act like that, but boys can. Girls get fines.*
>
> *Police treat boys and girls differently.*
>
> *Boys can cuss all they want. Girls say one cuss word and they miss their home visit for the weekend.*
>
> *[What programs would you add?] Basketball and football for girls.*
>
> *In the facility after PT they say, "good job guys" or "way to go guys," but they don't say, "good job girls."*
>
> *They [staff] are very sexist.*
>
> *Boys get more, they act like girls can't do any sports, boys get sports, boys get track and get to compete outside the institution.*
>
> *Boys get to go off grounds [more than we do].*
>
> *The first time I came here there were no boys, we had off ground privileges, now we don't, they gave our privileges to the boys [Girl from Scioto Juvenile Correctional Center, on the facility becoming co-ed].*
>
> *If a boy goes to an institution, he gets a degree, job training.*
>
> *Judges and prosecutors are less strict on boys, "boys do boy-things."*

Difficult and Traumatic Life and Family Experiences

"I wanted someone to love me...to talk to me ...to tell me right from wrong...someone to help me with my homework and just be there for me. They (her parents) did not have time. They did not talk to me in an appropriate manner. They were always yelling and hitting."
-A Focus Group Participant

The life and family experiences of these girls have been extremely difficult. The experiences were varied ranging from neglect to severe physical and sexual abuse. This factor appears to play key roles in the girls becoming involved in delinquency, as well as their potential for rehabilitation, particularly when the parents are directly involved in criminal activities. In some focus groups girls talked fairly openly about being survivors of rape, usually incest. Other times it was alluded to with the perception of the focus group observers that there was a great deal of pain and shame involved in speaking about this. Here are some of the girls' responses:

> *When I was eleven I saw my father get killed. I had a lot of anger.*
>
> *Trouble runs in my family, everyone in my family has been in trouble except my mom...My brother was suicidal...I saw so much violence.*
>
> *It's hard to get off pot when you smell it and your parents are doing it in front of you.*
>
> *I had no structure, my older brother brought me up, my parents divorced when I was two and my mom was gone a lot, if mom could have sat down and talked with me and told me what I should or shouldn't be doing...*
>
> *Problems with physical-sexual abuse built up and I let them build up, never talked to anyone.*

Health Issues

"HIV—I have two girlfriends and tons of guy friends with HIV, one's twelve."
-15-year-old, White, Central Ohio Focus Group Participant

A variety of health issues, many of them significant, were identified by the girls. The girls identified pregnancy, drug use, eating disorders and sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV) as areas of concern. They also expressed a desire for better medical care and healthier foods while incarcerated. Even though it was not brought up regularly, the focus group observers believed that many of the girls exhibited strain and mental health problems resulting from being incest survivors. In fact, while the research in this area discusses the high risk of self-mutilation, these girls were unlikely to initiate discussion on this topic. Perhaps if you don't like yourself, hurting yourself (including killing yourself), is not such a bad thing. This may be particularly apparent for girls who blame themselves for being raped. The following are some responses to being questioned about how they perceived their problems:

> *STD's...when I was in jail, a girl brought crabs to the whole facility, we had to be shaved.*
>
> *I have an eating disorder, now I'm huge, but I let my weight get down too low, I was eighty-seven pounds, 5'5", snorting a lot of crack, crank, when you are on crank you don't want to eat.*
>
> *I was on crystal meth and crank and had a miscarriage.*

Leaving Institutional Settings

👧 *"I would want someone as my mentor who is educated and could help me..."*
-A Scioto Juvenile Corrections Center Resident

The girls we spoke to in the institutional setting, particularly those who have been institutionalized for an extended time period, have many fears about leaving the institution and express anxiety about the lack of support they will experience once they leave. Overall, the girls expressed happiness and excitement about leaving the system, and find being in the system very stressful. However, they are fearful about repeating the mistakes they have made and being returned to the system. There was a recurring theme among many of the girls recognizing and fearing that nobody was going to be responsible for them when they leave this very controlling and regimented system. They worried about what it would be like to drive, to attend a regular school, to take a bus, cook, buy groceries, and to get along with people. The long-term girls offered many ideas about what programs they would like to see in place to provide aftercare.

> *If I screw up again, I'm afraid of getting out and doing everything I did before.*
>
> *I won't make it. I'll get killed. I've been shot at. [It's safer to be in there?] Yes. Nobody can come in and get me.*
>
> *I'm shaky. I've been here so long, I don't want to just be thrown out. I'm anxious.*
>
> *I'm afraid I'll still be acting like a kid [from a young woman who had been in Scioto since she was thirteen and was now almost twenty].*
>
> *I want a job, need to know how to get a job.*

> *I need to be introduced to the community.*
>
> *[I] want to go to college and just observe.*
>
> *Bring a variety of people in to talk about issues before we leave.*
>
> *Panic, what do I do if I got sick, what do I say?*
>
> *When you leave here, you'll be right back in the same place, with the same people.*
>
> *I was scared to help an old lady when I was out on leave once, I felt that I had "institution" written all over me.*

Key Findings from the Professionals' Groups

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of the focus groups with the professionals was what a difficult time most of them had restricting their answers to discussing girls. It appeared that most of the professionals, unless they worked exclusively with girls, had a difficult time not talking solely about the male delinquents. The professionals varied a great deal in their attitudes and experiences with female delinquents. Some exhibited great dedication to girls and the special problems they faced and others appeared to stereotype the girls and blame them and their parents for all of their problems. These are the professionals' responses regarding systemic problems:

Systemic Problems with the Juvenile Justice System

The professionals had clear ideas about the problems in the juvenile justice system. Some of the identified problems include a lack of facilities for girls, insufficient funding for girls' programs and a lack of communication within the system. Concerns were

raised that professionals may not know the best way to treat girls, given that many treatments were developed with boys in mind.

> *There's a need for better communication within the system, a way of knowing what's out here. There needs to be better networking and communication to know what's available. Possible ideas were a big reference book, workshops, a phone number, a home page on the computer.*
>
> *Now we're dealing with the fact that every psychiatric hospital in the state is closed to children. So now we're mental health workers, too. Our staff is not qualified to help psychiatrically disabled children. We can't be half correctional and half treatment.*
>
> *No research on what would be useful to treat female sex offenders. We can't just assume the male model will work.*
>
> *We're getting more female sex offenders and there's nowhere to send them.*
>
> *Children are sent home without support services. Services often are not available because we don't know who will pay.*

A lot of our programs are targeted for the funding and the funding is geared toward boys because the numbers are bigger. Funders look at raw numbers and there are more boys in the system.

Gender Differences Between Boys and Girls

The professionals presented ideas about differences in the nature of boys and girls, the program availability for girls and what girls need. Perceptions of boys and girls ranged from sexist to insightful. The professionals seemed to agree with the girls that girls in the system receive less programming and fewer facilities than boys. The following represent professionals' statements about differences between male and female delinquents.

> *Boys are easier to handle than girls.*
>
> *The focus has been on White males, then on African-American boys, and girls of both races lose.*
>
> *Less facilities for girls than boys. Across the system, girls get less than boys.*
>
> *Ours has been hard to keep full for the girls. Then there's the practicality of dollars and cents [implying the girls' programs/ institutions aren't cost effective since there's so few of them, relatively].*
>
> *We don't have adult female role models for the girls. There are mentors for boys, like coaches.*
>
> *Girls are more difficult, I hate them.*
>
> *Females face lack of empowerment and hopelessness, they are angry women and they clam-up or become emotional (crying), don't act out as much as boys, they cut adults out, will glare at them, and exhibit self-destructive behaviors.*

Girls have a great deal more medical issues; STD's, pelvic inflammatory disease, self-mutilation-physical pain to avoid mental pain or outward exhibition of inner pain, where boys are more physically aggressive towards others, and let anger out.

Girls shut you out during assessment, so they don't have to relive abuse, and are better actors. This makes them more difficult to work with.

No recognition of need for female programs, funders are usually male.

Females are much more untrusting of the system and authorities than males. It takes less time to have the boys open up.

People find it more socially acceptable for boys to have problems than girls.

Judge/magistrates believe that promiscuity/sex leads them [girls] to lie, the thinking that girls make up more things than boys.

Girls want to be able to spend time with their kids.

The Role Parents Play in the Lives of these Girls

"My mother and my father abused me physically and verbally. My father raped my sister. I didn't have anyone."
-A Focus Group Participant (that recorders suspected had also experienced incest).

"My father was a big time dope dealer, and my mom treated me like I was grown, so I thought I was..."
-A Focus Group Participant from Cleveland

Some professionals in each focus group identified parents as a significant part of the "problem." The attitudes about parents were generally negative and punitive, often blaming the parents for the girls' problems. The GSSWG identified that some professionals may be particularly vulnerable to viewing the parents in this manner if they themselves viewed the girls as "good" and "likable." That is, they want to blame someone, and often the parents make the easiest target. Nonetheless, for some of these girls, the parents were at fault, particularly in cases where the parents abused them, allowed others to abuse them, or introduced their children to drugs and alcohol. It is important to remember that most of the girls go back to these parents, and that in itself is an issue. The following are the professionals' responses regarding the problems and needs of delinquent girls:

Parents with poor time management skills. They don't spend time with their kids.

Stability. They don't get it at home. I am the only stable thing this kid has and she only sees me twice a week.

Her mom's a crack head.

As a system, I think we need to be intervening much more than the system allows, much earlier. Removing kids from home, if necessary. Plug them into services. It may be a variety of things.

The problem is, is that the parents won't cooperate.

The parents often don't think there's anything wrong.

I blame the parents, they're using drugs and alcohol, my girls are abused sexually and the parents are involved, or not doing anything about it.

No nurturing by parents, no control, no discipline.

Parents are a lot more ready to hear that their son is acting out than that their daughter is. They tend to make more excuses for boys—"boys will be boys."

Parents say "do as I say, not as I do."

Parents freak out when girls are developing, getting boy crazy, etc. They need to learn to pick their battles.

I wouldn't want to be a single parent for twelve-sixteen year olds.

I wouldn't want to be a teenager today either.

Mom and Dad don't play a role, and need to be interested and involved. Parents are not participating in school functions.

Parents can't make meeting because of work, struggle between parents possibly losing job to attend court hearings for youth, business/work force does not value family, where are the priorities?

Successful Program Models/Approaches

"Young children need help sorting out everything they see and hear and need help making decisions to know what are the right decisions."
-A Focus Group Participant

The professionals held clear ideas on which existing programs were useful/successful, as well as what type of programs were needed. Overall, professionals seem to share the belief that girls are getting involved in more serious crimes at younger ages. It was frequently suggested that girls are more angry, aggressive and violent than in the past. The following are some of the professionals' responses to improving the system for girls:

Front load the system. Change the services for the younger kids. Now it's all for older kids, fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen. I hate to say this, but it may be too late for them. At least it's not working very well. We need programs for kindergarten and elementary school kids. We need to intervene early, instead of later.

We need to teach staff to go into homes and treat people with respect. Parents aren't being respected.

Let's bring back some of the programs we threw out. More programs for sexually abused girls, more beds, more day programs.

Mentoring is real successful, but the funding is not.

They need to be empowered to accept responsibility and to be given the opportunity to help someone else and give back, share their story and know they're helping. Have older teens teach younger children about sexual abuse, suicide attempts, etc.

Exposure, need to pull child out of their "box" and show them something that they haven't seen before, see larger world, to the theater, Case Western Reserve University, bowling, art museum, have to show them the world is theirs, a form of empowerment.

Other things that work are family-based, sustained family preservation and case management for longer than one year. This is not usually done because it must be sustained

> *and the unpleasantness of some tasks, such as home visits.*
>
> *Direct link between classroom teaching and jobs that will carry them over to the next century. Employment survival skills.*
>
> *These kids need parenting and anger management classes instead of algebra II.*
>
> *Teen pregnancy programs which focus on personal awareness to prevent pregnancy. And programs on building self-worth. Intervention assistance aid. If kids are acting out, don't punish them. Don't take away recess, but set them up with mentor kids and agencies. It wouldn't be that extensive, but give them a chance to catch their breath.*
>
> *Parenting classes mandated in high school.*
>
> *Education about HIV.*

Variation Between the Girls' and Professionals' Perspectives

There is some discrepancy between how the girls view their problems in relation to how the professionals view the girls' problems. Several discrepancies were noted by the focus group observers. For example, the professionals were not able to accurately comment on who the girls look up to. The girls tended to look up to their mothers and grandmothers rather than their boyfriends as suggested by the professionals. The professionals suggested that the girls were not intelligent and this did not seem to be true for many of the girls in the focus groups. The girls also expressed an interest for more athletic activities while the professionals did not seem aware of this desire. The professionals were more likely than the girls to bring up sexual abuse issues, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases as problems the girls faced.

VI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

"Long-term plans for helping adolescent girls involve deep seated and complicated cultural changes—rebuilding a sense of community in our neighborhoods, fighting addictions, changing our schools, promoting gender equity and curtailing violence. The best fence at the top of the hill is a future in which there is structure and security of the fifties and the tolerance for diversity and autonomy of the 1990's. Then our daughters could grow and develop slowly and peacefully into whole authentic people."

-Mary Pipher

Through the study of the empirical data, review of gender differences and the literature on adolescent female development, and the sound of the voices of the girls in Ohio's juvenile justice systems, the GSSWG identified four areas that the Office of Criminal Justice Services should address to support the improvement of appropriate service development and delivery for girls in the juvenile justice system. These recommendations include:

Obtaining more qualitative and quantitative data on Ohio girls in the juvenile justice system

The GSSWG's research found the existing empirical data on the girls in Ohio's juvenile justice system woefully inadequate. Future juvenile court annual reports need to include data distinguishing race, gender and age (simultaneously) for both the processing of juveniles, as well as for the types of offenses for which they are referred or committed. Support for ongoing objective and subjective data collection on girls in the juvenile justice system is imperative. Specifically, the following action steps would greatly improve

cally, the following action steps would greatly improve our understanding of the girls who are being served by our juvenile justice and youth-serving systems.

- ○ *Conduct a female focused offender tracking study*
- ○ *Conduct a comprehensive survey-based research study that builds on the initial data collected through the focus group process*
- ○ *Provide ongoing support for the development and implementation of a statewide data collection and retention system (e.g. Juvenile Data Network)*

This would improve the abilities of professionals in the criminal justice system and others to more clearly examine changes in the offending rates and the processing of these offenses. Furthermore, these improved data would facilitate more appropriate treatment.

Developing and facilitating public education, training and information sharing around gender specific issues

The GSSWG discovered through the focus groups and program visits that awareness of gender differences and appropriate services for girls varied. In many instances, the juvenile justice and youth serving professionals did not appear to know the most basic information regarding gender differences and the needs of adolescent girls. The following action steps would greatly improve the professionals' understanding of girls who are being served by our juvenile justice and youth-serving systems.

- ○ *Assess and implement an effective training curriculum and educational agenda for juvenile justice professionals that allows them to consider and respond to the specific needs of girls*

- ○ *Produce a video documentary that can be*

disseminated statewide to raise consciousness regarding gender specific issues and the needs of adolescent girls

- ○ *Coordinate regional gender specific sensitivity training and information sharing sessions for juvenile justice and youth-serving professionals*

Identifying existing services programs for girls and assessing model gender specific programs and resources

Currently, few individuals have developed the ability to identify appropriate and effective programs for delinquent girls. The following action steps would greatly enhance the ability to identify appropriate and effective programs for delinquent girls, and improve the overall quality of programs and services for Ohio girls.

- ○ *Develop an assessment tool to measure the effectiveness and appropriateness of girls' programs*

- ○ *Produce an inventory of such programs for Ohio*

- ○ *Conduct periodic program evaluations which include findings to make recommendations for more effective services*

These tools will enable individuals who work with delinquent or at risk girls to network with other professionals who are attempting to improve services and programs for adolescent girls at the state and local level. Also, completing these actions steps will enable us to foster continual improvements in programs and services for girls throughout the state.

Support increased funding and development of adequate and appropriate gender specific programs and services

Funding for program development and implementation for appropriate gender specific services is important as this initiative develops. The following action steps would greatly enhance the ability to deliver appropriate and effective girl's programs and services.

○ Support the development of mentoring initiatives and programs for adolescent girls

○ Assign greater priority to gender specific programming in federal formula grant program guidelines and state subsidy funding

○ *Support the Ohio Department of Youth Services as they implement the recommendations made by Female Focus 2000 and facilitate transitional services for girls who leave the institutional setting after long-term confinement.*

"If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."
-Margaret Mead

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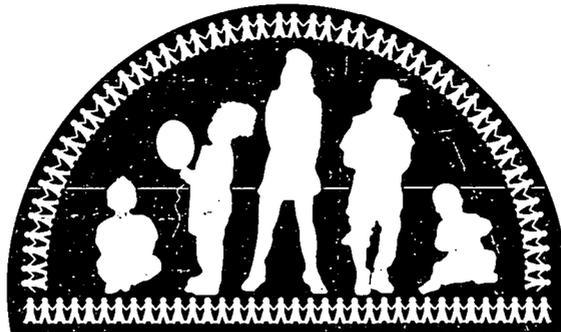
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