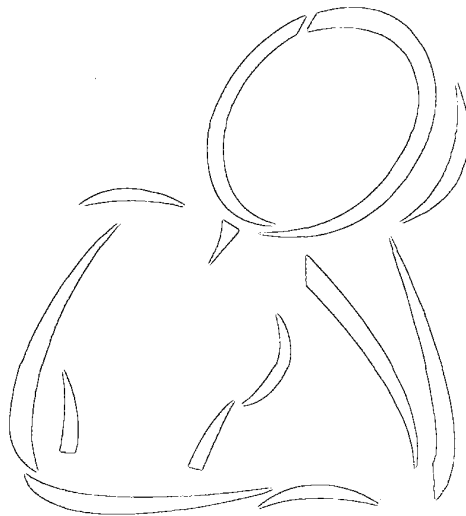


GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROMISING FEMALE PROGRAMMING

AN INVENTORY OF
BEST PRACTICES



The Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROMISING FEMALE PROGRAMMING

An Inventory of Best Practices

Second Edition

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
July 2000

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FOREWORD

Although the characteristics of female juvenile offenders vary considerably, more than 70 percent of girls entering the justice system report a history of drug use and physical, sexual, or emotional victimization. Victimization has been identified consistently as the first step for many girls along the pathway to delinquency, as they often respond to abuse by running away, using drugs, or committing other offenses.

Risk factors such as family fragmentation, academic failure, and mental health problems also contribute to female delinquency. A 1998 study of girls involved with the California juvenile justice system found that 95 percent of the girls lacked a stable home environment. In addition, 91 percent of the girls had faced serious problems at school.

Although girls develop differently than boys, juvenile justice programs have been constructed typically on a male model of development to address the needs of boys, with few programs designed to meet the specific needs of girls.

If delinquent and at-risk girls are to succeed, we must develop programs that address their unique needs. This report provides guidance on meeting girls' needs in the 21st century and offers examples and best practices on the processes for developing gender-specific policies and programs.

I trust that the dialogue it fosters will stimulate public interest in promising and innovative approaches to advance an integrated continuum of care for delinquent and at-risk girls and their families.

John J. Wilson
Acting Administrator

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to the directors and staff members of the promising programs we have highlighted here. They generously opened their facilities to our reviewers and shared their strategies so that other communities might benefit from their considerable knowledge, experience, and insight.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For decades, girls who have broken the law have entered a juvenile justice system that was designed to help someone else. Boys commit the overwhelming number of juvenile crimes, and their offenses tend to be more violent and dangerous than the status offenses most girls commit. It's no wonder, then, that female delinquents have been overlooked and neglected by a system engineered to help troubled boys become law-abiding men.

Two important trends are changing this picture.

First, more girls are getting into trouble. While girls still constitute only about one-fourth of all juvenile arrests, their numbers are increasing at an alarming pace. More girls are entering the juvenile justice system, and many at younger ages. While status offenses such as running away still make up most of the cases, some girls are committing more violent crimes such as assault. A small number are involved in gangs previously thought to be male turf. This tells us that we have a bigger problem with girls than we realized.

Second, researchers in fields such as psychology, sociology, and education are looking specifically at how girls develop into women. A new body of scholarly work describes the developmental pathways females travel during adolescence. Researchers now have a better understanding of the risk factors girls face because of their gender which can derail or delay their healthy development. For example, girls are three times as likely as boys to have experienced sexual abuse, which is often an underlying factor in high-risk behaviors that lead to delinquency. Researchers also have identified the protective factors most likely to shield girls from delinquency. This new understanding of female adolescent development points to solutions for helping the increasing number of girls who are engaging in delinquent or risky behaviors.

The most promising solution isn't to continue squeezing girls into a justice system designed for boys, or to separate juvenile delinquents according to gender. Rather, gender-specific programming for girls is a comprehensive approach to female delinquency rooted in the experience of girls. It aims to help girls already in trouble, while preventing future delinquency among girls who are at risk. It bridges theory-into-practice by combining female adolescent theory with juvenile justice practices.

This revised and updated version of the monograph, first published in 1998, outlines the promising practices in programming for girls who are already involved in the juvenile justice system or those who are at risk of delinquency. Its purposes are to:

- Provide a comprehensive review of the most relevant theoretical and research studies focusing on the gender-specific needs of at-risk adolescent girls

- Delineate the risk and protective factors affecting at-risk adolescent girls who may become juvenile delinquents
- Present effective gender-specific programming strategies for girls, both within the juvenile justice system and in community settings

Our goal is to provide practical information to practitioners and policymakers on how to design and implement gender-specific programs for girls. Promising and innovative strategies are being implemented nationwide in diverse communities serving a variety of adolescent girl populations. We offer an overview of these programs and hope these practical examples will encourage others to put gender-specific strategies into practice.

Chapter 1 outlines the urgent need for programming for girls. It offers a statistical look at female delinquency, provides a summary of female adolescent theory, and addresses the risk factors girls face because of gender. Chapter 2 describes the planning involved in creating gender-specific programs. It cites the policies that encourage gender-specific programming for girls and presents reports from states that have taken groundbreaking steps on behalf of girls. It defines gender-specific programming and provides an overview of the elements programs need to offer girls. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth look at the key elements and features of programs that are designed to serve the specific needs of girls. An appendix describes 17 promising programs currently offering gender-specific services to girls in both residential and community-based settings.

Throughout this document, we have also included comments from girls who have participated in gender-specific programs. They often describe the experience as life-changing. Many have found new hope as a result of these programs. We encourage others to find hope in these gender-specific strategies, which are intended to embrace the adolescent girl and help her find her way to a positive future.

Sheila R. Peters, Ph.D.
Senior Project Manager
Greene, Peters and Associates

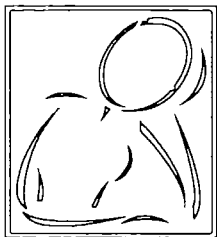
Chapter I

FEMALE JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

- **Who are they?**
- **What is the magnitude of the problem?**
- **Why are girls' needs different?**
- **Why address their needs now?**

AT A GLANCE

A number of interconnected risk factors contribute to adolescent girls being at risk of delinquency. Statistics show that more girls are becoming involved in the justice system, at a younger age, and some for more violent offenses. Minorities are disproportionately represented, and female delinquents have fewer placement options than their male peers in the juvenile justice system. Although research about female delinquents has been scarce, a growing body of research is beginning to identify developmental pathways most likely to lead girls to delinquency.



WHO ARE THEY?

Vanessa, 16, grew up with her mother and three younger siblings in an inner-city housing project. She never knew her father. Her mother was often angry and physically abusive. Vanessa can never remember feeling safe—not at home, not in school, not on the city streets where gunshots and violence have always been within earshot. She can't imagine a life without danger. She's been carrying a gun since she joined a gang a year ago.

* * *

Courtney, now 15, thinks she was about five when her father began calling her "Princess" and fondling her. He raped her the first time when she was 10, and continued sexually abusing her until she ran away from home a year ago. She was living on the streets, trading sex for food and drugs, until she met an older boyfriend who invited her to move in with him. He's 22 and shares his drugs with Courtney.

* * *

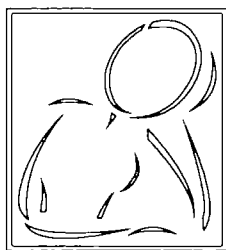
When she was in elementary school, Juanita loved to learn. Since she started middle school two years ago, though, her grades have been falling fast. Her parents always seem to be on her case. She's overheard other girls gossiping behind her back. They think she's stupid, but Juanita suspects they're just jealous. At 13, she already has a woman's body. She often cuts class to party with her friends. They get loaded and make out. Lately, her boyfriend has been pressuring her to have sex.

No single path leads girls to trouble. Rather, as these composite stories illustrate, a combination of factors may collide just as a girl is hitting adolescence, leaving her at risk of delinquency. Although girls constitute about one-fourth of the juvenile offender population, their problems are profound and reflect wrenching social issues such as poverty, racism, and family dysfunction.

The factors most likely to put girls at risk of delinquency are being identified by researchers, social service providers, and agencies that work with juvenile female offenders. Although every girl in trouble is unique, she is likely to share elements of this profile with other female juvenile delinquents:

- She's now 13 to 16 years old, although she may have started acting out a few years earlier
- She's poor and has grown up in a neighborhood with a high crime rate
- She's likely to belong to an ethnic minority group (50 percent of female juveniles in detention are African American, 13 percent are Hispanic, 34 percent Caucasian)
- She's had a history of poor academic performance, sees school as a battlefield, and may drop out as a means of escape
- She's been a victim of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse or exploitation
- She has used and abused drugs and/or alcohol
- She has gone without attention for medical and mental health needs
- Her family life likely has been fraught with stress and instability (possibly related to parents' divorce, single parent issues, estrangement from one or both parents, arrest and/or incarceration of family members, death of parent or other close family member)
- She may have entered the juvenile justice system as a runaway (or for such status offenses as truancy or curfew violations), seeking to escape abuse at home
- If she is a mother, she probably lost contact with her infant within the first three months of the child's life
- She feels that life is oppressive and lacks hope for the future

These risk factors do not always lead to delinquency, and not every girl in trouble has the same background. Some resilient girls survive these early life challenges without running afoul of the law (Basic Behavioral Science Task Force of the National Advisory Mental Health Council, 1996). But as statistics on female delinquency show, an increasing number do fit this profile. Although girl offenders have been called "the forgotten few" (Bergsmann, 1989), they are fast becoming too numerous—and their problems too serious-to ignore.



WHAT IS THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM?

When gunshots ring out on a schoolyard or young gangsters terrorize a neighborhood with drive-by shootings, the young perpetrators are probably male. Boys in trouble tend to lash out. They set fires. They get into fights. They carry guns. They look dangerous. They inspire fear. They get attention.

Girls get into trouble more quietly. In most cases, they were victims themselves before they became offenders (Girls Incorporated, 1996; Prescott, 1997; Schoen et al., 1997). When girls are angry, frightened, or unloved, they are more likely to strike inward. They may hurt themselves by abusing drugs, prostituting their bodies, starving, or even mutilating themselves (Belknap, 1996). Because girls in crisis are more likely to threaten their own well-being, they may not seem dangerous to society. As a result, their needs have been overlooked and undertreated (Chesney-Lind, 1988). Girls in trouble have been the afterthought of a juvenile justice system designed to deal with boys (Bergsmann, 1989; Miller, Trapani, Fejes-Mendoza, Eggleston, & Dwiggins, 1995).

"PACE has opened a new door in my life. I've accomplished many things at PACE, one of which is learning to be a productive member of society."

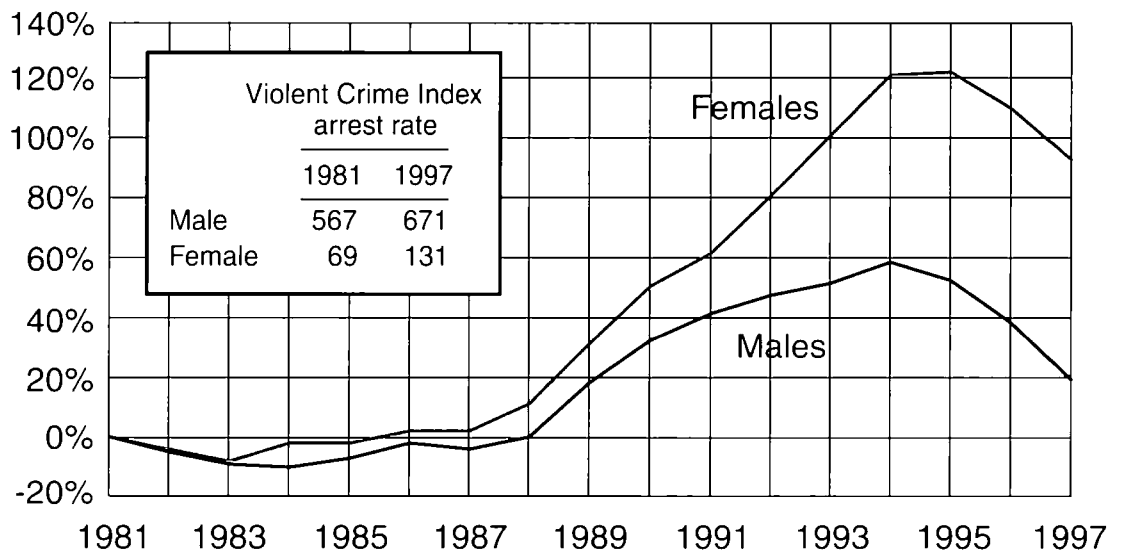
—Graduate, PACE program

A review of recent statistical trends provides data on the rising number of girls entering the juvenile justice system. In 1998, females accounted for 27 percent or 697,000 of the 2.6 million juvenile arrests (Snyder, November 1999). The Juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate for females more than doubled between 1987 and 1994, then fell in each of the three years. Nonetheless, the growth in juvenile violent crime arrest rates between 1994 and 1998 was far greater for females than for males in most offense categories. According to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, the most serious

Figure 1:

Between 1987 and 1994, the female juvenile violent crime arrest rate more than doubled, while the male rate increased by two-thirds

Percent change from 1981

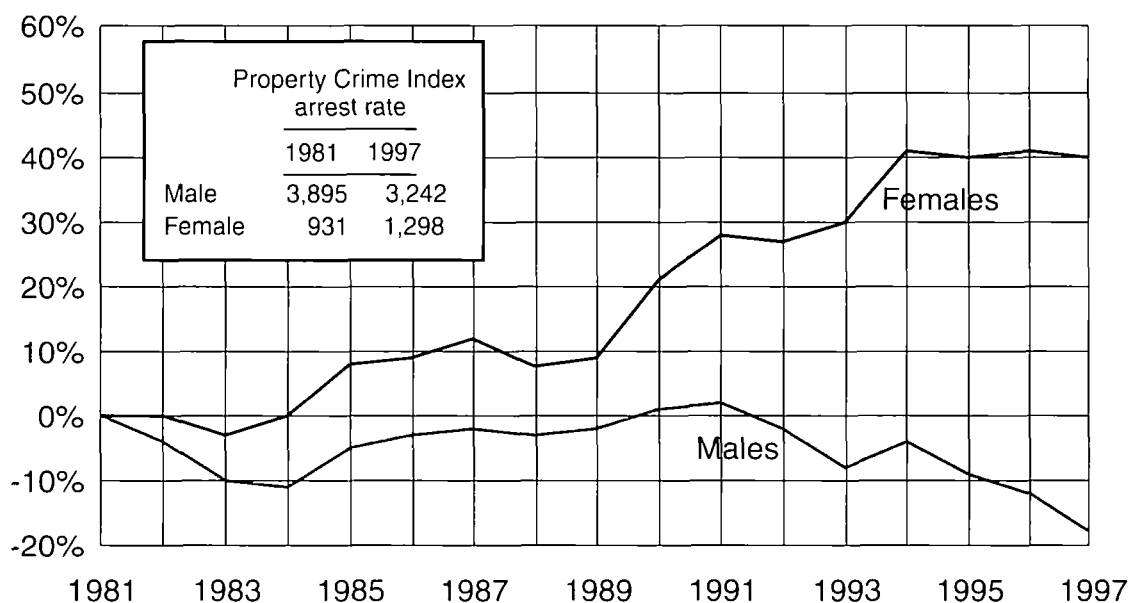


- Even though the juvenile violent crime arrest rates declined from 1994 to 1997 for both genders, the male rate in 1997 was still 24% above the 1987 rate and the female rate was 85% higher.
- Even with the large increase in female rates, the 1997 Violent Crime Index arrest rate for juvenile males was more than five times the female arrest rate.

increase in offenses for young females included aggravated assault (up 7 percent), simple assault (up 29 percent), and drug abuse violations (up 43 percent) (Synder 1999). Even with the recent decline, the female violent crime arrest rate for 1997 was 103 percent above the 1981 rate, while the male arrest rate was 27 percent above its 1981 level. In 1998, females accounted for 22 percent of juvenile arrests for aggravated assault and running away from home. According to an analysis of juvenile arrest patterns and trends, female arrests for weapons law violations nearly tripled between 1981 and 1997, while male rates nearly doubled (Snyder, 1999). Further, delinquency cases involving females rose 76 percent between 1987 and 1996, compared with 42 percent for males. The disparate growth in cases involving females outpaced the growth for males for all but drug offense cases.

Figure 2:

While juvenile male arrest rates for Property Crime Index offenses declined during the 1990s, the female rate increased



■ Between 1981 and 1997, male juvenile property crime rates declined 17%, while female rates increased 39%.

Figures 1 & 2 from Snyder & Sickmund, 1999.

These statistics seem to indicate broad increases in the proportion and seriousness of delinquent acts committed by girls. However, the reasons for the leap in the number of cases involving girls are hotly disputed by researchers, policymakers and direct service personnel (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1997). For example, there is concern about "bootstrapping," which refers to re-labeling a status offense (for example, running away, curfew violation, truancy) as a delinquent offense. The debate over bootstrapping centers on the belief that it fosters the incarceration of a disproportionate number of girls in detention facilities (Girls Inc., 1996; Chesney-Lind, 1999).

Even more disturbing, leading academics who have examined the various elements of life circumstances prevalent among adult and juvenile female offenders have unveiled a distinct route into the justice system. More than 70 percent of the girls who enter the justice system report a history of physical, sexual, and/or emotional victimization or drug abuse. This childhood victimization is now being correlated with lifelong health, learning,

"Before, I didn't care. I wasn't sociable. I was rude and tough and always getting into fights. I thought the world was supposed to revolve around me. Now I know it doesn't."

—Participant, PACE program

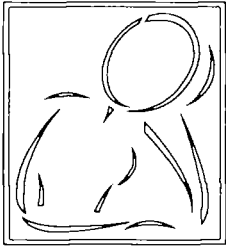
and behavioral disorders, including adolescent delinquency (Acoca 1998). Moreover, leading researchers and academicians postulate that the abusive histories typically shared by adult and juvenile female offenders are a significant factor in the victim-to-offender pathway of female juvenile delinquency (Belknap & Holsinger, 1998). There is no single factor that puts girls at risk of delinquency. However, indicators of the underlying

cases of female juvenile delinquency point to early victimization as a first step along a pathway into the juvenile justice system.

The growing number of girls involved in the juvenile justice system, along with the scarcity of information about gender and culturally specific programs and services, have prompted professionals who work with youth to reexamine the developmental and societal factors that place girls at risk for delinquent behavior.

Although female and male juvenile offenders may experience similar educational, familial, and economic problems, several gender-specific factors can exacerbate the problems girls face. These include higher rates of sexual abuse, physical abuse, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, mental health needs, adolescent motherhood, alternative lifestyle, and problems associated with the early onset of puberty (Chesney-Lind & Freitas, 1999; Greene, Peters, & Associates, 1998). Although any one of these factors may contribute to girls' increased risk of delinquency, they seldom occur in isolation.

Ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented in the female offender population (Bergsmann, 1989; Campbell, 1995; Community Research Associates, 1997). African American girls make up nearly half and Latinas 13 percent of all those in secure detention and (Bergsmann, 1994). Although Caucasians constitute 65 percent of the population at risk, they account for only 34 percent of girls in secure detention (Greene, Peters, & Associates, 1998). A census of private facilities in the early 1990s showed that well over half (53 percent) were Caucasians (Moone, 1997). Finally, seven of every 10 cases involving Caucasian girls are dismissed, compared with three of every 10 cases for African American girls (Greene, Peters & Associates, 1998).



WHY ARE GIRLS' NEEDS DIFFERENT?

Adolescence is a difficult passage for many girls, even those who have a strong safety net of support at home and in school. The physical changes of puberty coincide with enormous emotional and psychological challenges (Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1990). During the teen years, girls begin to separate from their families, assert their own identity, identify with their peers, redefine their relationships with nurturing adults, explore their sexuality, develop their own moral and ethical sense, and prepare for the responsibilities and challenges of adulthood. It's seldom a smooth or easy metamorphosis.

Persistent sexism makes adolescence more confusing for girls by projecting mixed messages about the worth and role of women in society. Girls may measure their own looks against media images of "perfect" female beauty, for example. Occupational stereotyping, sexual harassment, and a lack of female role models may make their dreams of future careers in male-dominated fields seem unrealistic. The culture of adolescence "demands that while young women may achieve, they should be careful not to look too smart or they will not get a boyfriend" (Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice, 1995). Girls may react by silencing their own feelings and turning to others for validation (Brown, 1991; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). A growing body of research documents the drop in self-esteem and lowered confidence of many teenage girls (Albrecht, 1994; Girls Incorporated, 1996; Miller et al., 1995).

Only recently have researchers focused specifically on female adolescent development. Dr. Carol Gilligan of the Harvard Graduate School of Education has enriched the understanding of this field by pointing out that classic psychological models, such as Erikson's view of identity formation, were based almost entirely on studies of boys. Gilligan's groundbreaking studies of female development illustrate the importance of relationships in girls' lives. For example, the formation of a girl's mature identity cannot be based solely on separation from her parents, but must also include her enduring relationships with adults (Acoca, 1995). A parent, teacher, counselor, probation officer, or other adult who demonstrates ongoing commitment and caring plays an essential role in a girl's development. Conversely, the lack of a close, caring adult during adolescence could interrupt or delay a girl's development. Without a close adult, and without confidence in her own judgment or abilities, she may be more likely to turn to her peers for support and validation.

When other risk factors are added to the already daunting developmental tasks of female adolescence, the results can be overwhelming, pushing some girls into delinquency. Although research about delinquency among girls is still scarce, some researchers are

focusing on a "developmental pathway to delinquency" (Belknap & Holsinger, 1998). Just as girls and boys develop in different ways physically and emotionally during adolescence, their pathways to delinquency are often gender specific, too.

"Gender-specific programs let me know that even in a 'man's world,' a lot can be accomplished by women, and someday it might not be a man's world."

—Participant, Harriet Tubman Residential Center

The problems faced by girls and young women can be viewed as part of a developmental continuum linking early problems (such as family dysfunction, abuse, loss of a primary caregiver, and other traumas) to later behavioral problems (Oregon Commission on Children and Youth Services, 1990). During the teen years, when girls are transitioning to adulthood, unresolved issues from earlier stages of their development may come to a head. Incomplete bonding in infancy, sexual abuse in childhood,

failed relationships with adults, and other problems can result in an inability to form positive relationships, lack of self-respect, ignorance of physical health and sexuality issues, and low self-image (Oregon Commission on Children and Youth Services). Substance abuse at a young age can also interrupt a girl's psychosocial development. As one researcher observed, "It is not unusual to have a 16-year-old check into a residential drug treatment program with both her 'works' (needle and syringe) and a well-worn stuffed animal hidden in her backpack" (Acoca, 1995).

In understanding the developmental pathways that can lead girls to delinquency, it may help to consider what girls need for healthy development while also recognizing the challenges that may put them at greater risk of delinquency. For example:

- Need for physical safety and healthy physical development
 - Challenged by poverty, homelessness, violence, inadequate health care, inadequate nutrition, substance abuse
- Need for trust, love, respect, validation from caring adults to foster healthy emotional development and form positive relationships
 - Challenged by abandonment, family dysfunction, poor communication
- Need for positive female role models to develop healthy identity as a woman
 - Challenged by sexist, racist, homophobic messages, lack of community support
- Need for safety to explore sexuality at own pace for healthy sexual development
 - Challenged by sexual abuse, exploitation, negative messages about female sexuality

- Need to belong, to feel competent and worthy

—Challenged by weakened family ties, negative peer influences, academic failure, low self-esteem

Researchers have identified factors that support resiliency and may mitigate some of these risks. Resiliency research has implications for all adolescents, but may carry particular importance for programs designed to serve young women. Indeed, according to *Juvenile Female Offenders: A Status of the States Report*, "it becomes the responsibility of the juvenile justice system to build these issues into its established treatment programs for young women" (CRA, 1998).

Resiliency research, notably the contributions of Michael Resnick of the University of Minnesota Adolescent Health Program, underscores the need for programming that will:

- Provide girls with a connection to at least one adult in a nonexploitive relationship
- Help girls achieve school success by providing academic programming best suited to their learning needs
- Offer girls a personal form of spiritual connectedness through formal or informal programming (which could range from opportunities to participate in formal worship services of their choice to more informal outlets such as keeping a journal)
- Reduce sources of family stress, or teach girls coping skills to help them deal with stress caused by family dysfunction (Flansburg, 1991)

In addition to issues around these basic needs for healthy development, some girls face specific factors that put them at greater risk of delinquency. Seldom, however, do these factors occur in isolation. More typically, risk factors are interconnected like a web, with each risk potentially both cause and consequence of the others. Risks of special concern to girls include:

- ◆ **Sexual and/or physical abuse:** Girls are three times as likely to have been sexually abused as boys (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Among female delinquents, an estimated 70 percent have a history of sex abuse (Calhoun, Jurgens, & Chen, 1993). In some detention facilities, the incidence of girls who have been abused is closer to 90 percent. Most often, abuse is perpetrated by family members or close family friends who are perceived as trusted adults (Schoen et al., 1997). Sexual abuse can have a profound impact on a girl during adolescence, resulting in lessened self-esteem, inability to trust, academic failure, eating disorders, teen pregnancy, and other serious concerns. If sexual abuse is not addressed, girls may run

away or turn to alcohol or other drugs to numb their emotional pain (Acoca & National Council on Crime and Delinquency [NCCD], 1998). A few lash out at their perpetrators violently.

- ◆ **Substance abuse:** Substance abuse exacerbates the other problems that might put a girl at risk of delinquency. Many girls, for instance, report being intoxicated or under the influence of illegal substances while committing criminal acts (Sommers & Baskin, 1994). If a girl runs away from an abusive or dysfunctional family and winds up on the street, she is more likely to become involved in drug use and/or drug trafficking. Alcohol and other drugs may lessen her inhibitions, leading her to take risks that may result in unplanned pregnancy and/or exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Research shows that among female populations, substance abuse coexists with other problems such as mental illness and academic failure at a significantly higher rate than among males (Rotheram-Borus, 1993).
- ◆ **Teen pregnancy:** Female juvenile offenders engage in sexual activity at an earlier age than non-offenders, putting them at higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. For many young women, teen pregnancy is a virtual guarantee of poverty and long-term reliance on welfare. Most teen mothers drop out of high school and remain single most of their young adult years. They earn an average of \$5,600 annually, less than half the poverty-level income. More than 60 percent of African-American and half of all Hispanic teen mothers are concentrated in poor, racially segregated neighborhoods that have poor housing, high crime rates, and inadequate schools. Many teen mothers have been victims of sexual abuse. Adolescent mothers are more likely to raise a child who goes to prison than mothers who delay having children until their early 20s (Robin Hood Foundation, 1996).
- ◆ **Poor academic performance:** The most significant risk factor relating to early onset of delinquency is poor academic performance (Dryfoos, 1990; Greenwood, Model, Rydell, & Chiesa, 1996; Yoshikawa, 1994). A disproportionate number (26 percent) of female juvenile offenders have learning disabilities (U.S. Department of Justice, 1994). By the time they enter the system, they may be at least a grade level behind their peers. They may have developed a negative attitude about learning and lack self-confidence about their own ability to master academic skills (Bergsmann, 1994; Girls Incorporated, 1996).

Girls who are juvenile offenders may have reacted to academic challenges in the past by skipping school or dropping out altogether (Bergsmann, 1994; Hugo & Rutherford, 1992). Or, if they stayed enrolled in schools that did not meet their needs, they may have “shut down” in the classroom, internalizing their frustration

and assuming they "could not learn." Boys experiencing learning difficulties are more likely to be disruptive, externalizing their frustration (American Association of University Women, 1991). Once they enter the juvenile justice system, these girls find themselves back in the classroom. They may perform well behind grade level. Some girls who have a history of academic failure may respond with defiance or anger if forced back into the classroom. Because academic failure is so closely linked to underemployment and unemployment, it is a risk factor that must be addressed for female delinquents if they are to avoid a life of impoverished opportunities.

"If I didn't come, she [the counselor] would be on the phone, calling me: 'Why aren't you here?' I'd come up with some lame excuse, and she'd say, 'You get in here. You need this education.' Yeah, it worked."

Graduate, PACE program

- ◆ **Mental health needs:** Girls who are coping with such serious issues as sexual abuse, substance abuse, family dysfunction and/or academic failure may experience depression, eating disorders, and other mental health concerns. More than half of young women in training schools have reported attempting suicide; of those, 64 percent have tried more than once to kill themselves (Bergsmann, 1994).
- ◆ **Societal factors:** Girls and boys don't get into trouble for the same reasons, in the same ways, or at the same rate. Nor are they treated the same by a juvenile justice system designed to deal with boys. Because community-based resources for girls are scarce and the juvenile justice system perceives the need to "protect" girls, a disproportionate number of girls are committed to state training schools, often for status offenses.

Ethnic minority female offenders are treated more harshly than white girls. For boys and girls alike, black offenders are more likely than white offenders to receive a more severe disposition at their arrest, intake hearings, and in court (Belknap, 1996; Bergsmann, 1994; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Lindgren, 1996). African American, Asian, and Latina girls who are poor and addicted are more likely to be incarcerated than referred to treatment (Girls Incorporated, 1996; Sarri, 1983). African American girls make up almost 50 percent of all girls in secure detention, and Latinas make up 13 percent (Bergsmann, 1994). White girls are more likely to be referred to mental health facilities than juvenile justice facilities (Federle & Chesney-Lind, 1992).

In addition to the risk factors affecting many young female offenders, some girls have additional special needs, including:

- ◆ **Pregnancy/parenting teens:** Teen pregnancy, often the outcome of early sexual experimentation, creates special needs for both the adolescent mother and her child (Maynard & Garry, 1997). For the young mother, parenthood at an early age may interfere with the normal challenges of adolescence, such as identity development (Apfel & Seitz, 1996; Corley & Chase-Lansdale, 1998). Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of high school, limiting their future chances for employment and increasing the likelihood they will live in poverty (Robin Hood Foundation, 1996). Additionally, at least half of first-time teen mothers become pregnant again within a year of their first birth. The child of a teen parent is vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Children of teen mothers are twice as likely to become victims of child abuse and neglect as children of adult mothers (Robin Hood Foundation). Because at least 70 percent of girls in the justice system have a history of abuse themselves, this becomes an issue that spans generations. Finally, the sons of teen mothers are 2.7 times more likely to be incarcerated than the sons of adult mothers (Maynard & Garry).
- ◆ **Relationship building:** Girls are socialized to value relationships. Through their play with early childhood toys, girls learn to take care of others, but are often confused about taking care of themselves. Relationships can be a source of both joy and pain in female development.

Relational aggression is a psychological strategy used to gain power over another through such behaviors as spreading rumors, slandering, backbiting, stereotyping, forming cliques, and using negative nonverbal cues to control a situation (Rys & Bear, 1997). Girls rather than boys tend to use these subtle forms of indirect aggression more than overt violence. Through processes that are not easily observed by others, these actions effectively sabotage the victim's peer relationships and can contribute to such devastating consequences as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and social avoidance (Pearson, 1999).

Nicki Crick at the Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota, found in her research that relational aggression occurs in girls as young as four years old. A girl who is upset may hold grudges, complain to a teacher, or refuse to include another girl in activities. If such a pattern of behaviors continues and a girl does not learn how to deal with issues in a healthy manner, Crick indicates that the pattern of behavior may result in serious, long-term social and psychological adjustment problems (Crick, Cass, & Mosher, 1997).

Girls escalate their use of relational aggression during early adolescence (Bjorkqvist, 1994). Some researchers connect this change to girls' increased awareness of restrictions on their behavior. Girls may become increasingly aware of the

cultural expectations of "feminine behavior" and feel they cannot openly show disagreement, anger, or competition. They resort to methods that are oblique and not easily detected as ways of resisting cultural expectations they experience as confining (Brown, 1998). Manipulating social situations may also be a way of masking hidden desire for power, recognition, and success. Girls may use relational aggression to seize power in situations where they feel they have no power.

"At first I really didn't want to go to the program, but the way I was going, I knew I needed it."

Participant, Project Safe Place

A relationship also exists between indirect forms of aggression and more physical aggression. As girls become older, they may shift from using gossip and verbal threats to more directly aggressive behavior (Leschied, Cummings, Van Brunschot, Cunningham, & Saunders, 2000). Furthermore, researchers find that girls most at risk for performing violent acts are often depressed or have been physically or sexually victimized (Leschied et al.).

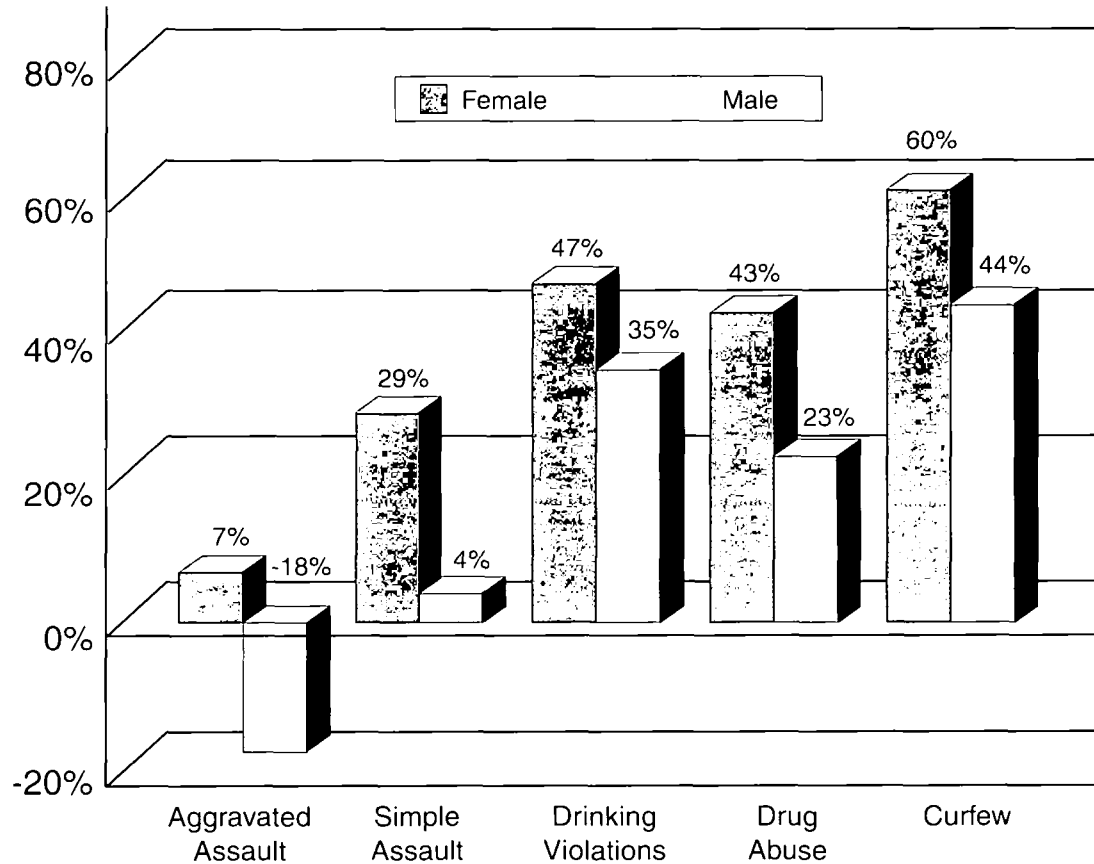
Some psychologists are currently conducting research and exploring the complex social influences and results of relational aggression. Suggestions for further study include first listening to what the girls themselves have to say within the intricate social contexts of their lives in order to create supportive programs (Brown, Way, & Duff, 1999). For professionals working with at-risk girls, this implies showing sensitivity to and an understanding of the negative factors that affect the girls' lives.

Other suggestions for intervention and prevention program development include identifying relationally aggressive behavior so that more physical forms of violence can be prevented (Leschied et al., 2000). Also, parental aggression, antisocial peers and behavior, academic problems, depression, and victimization are all factors that need to be addressed in effectively addressing and minimizing subtle and overt aggression (Leschied et al.). Gender-specific programs need to help girls identify negative behaviors and substitute them with positive problem-solving skills.

- ◆ **Gang membership:** Because boys and young men have long dominated the gang culture, researchers have been slow to consider why girls become involved in gangs and what risks they face because of gang membership. Researchers have seen females as playing a primarily sexualized role or one of only peripheral importance in relation to male gang members (Chesney-Lind & Brown, in press). Although the number of girls involved in gangs remains relatively small (3.6 percent of youth identified by law enforcement agencies as gang members are female) (Chesney-Lind & Brown), gangs do pose specific risks for young females (Family and Youth Services Bureau, 1993;

Figure 3:

**Percent Change in Arrests of Juvenile Girls and Boys
1994-1998**



Based on a table from Snyder, 1999.

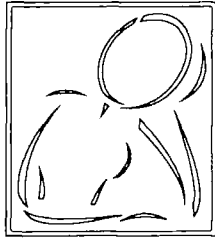
Spergel, 1992). Girls seem to be attracted to gangs out of a desire for safety or power, and a sense of belonging (Campbell, 1990; Molitor, 1996). Studies of female gang members show that many have come from homes with a high incidence of sexual abuse, domestic violence, and family dysfunction (Molitor). Growing up in poverty, isolated from the economic mainstream, marginalized because of race, class, and academic failure, girls most likely to affiliate with gangs tend to feel hopeless about their future (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993).

Far from offering girls a safe haven, however, gang membership puts adolescent girls at an increased risk of victimization and violence. Girls are often treated as the sexual property of male gang members. During initiations, girls may be beaten, sexually assaulted, or gang raped. As gang members, girls face increased risks of unsafe sex, sexual abuse, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and suicide (Family and Youth Services Bureau, 1993; Morris et al., 1995). In addition, gang involvement complicates or interferes with a girl's ability to complete the developmental tasks of adolescence (Chesney-Lind & Brown, in press). Staying in the gang may require that a girl tolerate ongoing physical or sexual abuse, suppressing her anger, resentment, humiliation, and shame. Some girls eventually become perpetrators of violence themselves.

"Now that I am graduating from group, I am realizing how much good it has done for me. I hope this group continues helping girls who need help. Hopefully, the girls who need to be helped will be sitting down and writing on the same topic as I am with a positive attitude."

—Participant, *Young Women Achieving Success*

- ◆ **Early onset of puberty:** Girls who hit puberty earlier than the norm may feel awkward, alienated, or "different" from the peers with whom they want to belong. Some may act out by engaging in early sexual experimentation, substance abuse, or delinquent behavior (Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, & Silva, 1993).
- ◆ **Alternative lifestyle:** The issues facing lesbian girls within the juvenile justice system have not been adequately researched (Savin-Williams, 1995). However, the limited research that is available suggests that lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are vulnerable to mental health problems (D'Augelli & Dark, 1994; Rotheram-Borus & Fernandez, 1995). Additionally, lesbian girls may feel ostracized because of their sexual orientation, at a time in their adolescent development when they have a need to belong and to be accepted. They are at increased risk of substance abuse and suicide. Risk of suicide for lesbian adolescents is three times greater than for their heterosexual peers (Gibson, 1989; Women's Action Coalition, 1993). Some girls who are open about their sexual orientation report increased conflict at home and at school (Rofes, 1994). Some girls run away or are forced to leave by family members who disapprove of their lifestyle. Lesbian girls who become delinquent also report feeling alienated within the justice system. In addition, they are vulnerable to hate crimes or other violence because of their orientation (D'Augelli & Dark, 1994; Herek, 1989; Savin-Williams, 1995).



WHY ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS NOW?

For too long, delinquent girls have been punished for being victims, for not being boys (and, as a result, not melding into existing programs), and for being misunderstood because girls' development does not mirror that of boys.

Over the last decade, an increasing number of juvenile justice agencies and systems have begun to look at the needs of girls separate from those of boys. A research base now exists that describes how girls develop, what they need, who they are, and what risks they face because of gender. Taking this information, gleaned primarily from the educational and mental health arenas, juvenile justice practitioners have developed principles of gender-specific programming and "best practices" for working with girls. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has supported planning grants and technical assistance to implement gender-specific programming in a variety of agencies and jurisdictions.

Like female juvenile delinquents, women who commit crimes have been an invisible minority whose needs, histories, and issues have gone largely undocumented (Belknap, 1996). Women offenders account for only about 6 to 8 percent of the U.S. prison population, a number many researchers have considered too small or insignificant to warrant in-depth study. However, a recent increase in the female crime rate is drawing more attention to this population, just as increases in arrests of juvenile females are drawing attention to young female offenders.

The emerging profile of women offenders bears strong resemblance to the profile of female delinquents, with many of the same risk factors affecting women's and girls' lives. More than four in 10 female adult inmates report a history of physical or sexual abuse. Nearly six in 10 grew up in a household with at least one parent absent. Minorities are disproportionately represented among the adult female offender population. Women prisoners are likely to be poor, undereducated, and single parents. About 20 percent of adult female offenders also served a sentence as a juvenile (Belknap, 1996; Snell, 1994).

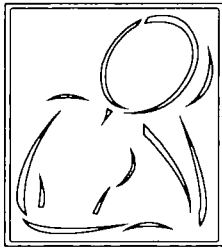
Although research on the causes of criminal behavior in women remains scarce, many women currently serving sentences report that they can see a link between their adult offense and their history of sexual victimization, drug abuse, and prostitution (Belknap, 1996). For many of the women currently housed in prisons, these issues have gone unaddressed and untreated since childhood.

The needs of females in the juvenile justice system have not kept pace with societal changes in the roles and goals of women. While women have made great strides, for instance, in the educational, political, and occupational spheres, breaking into professional and technical fields once dominated by men, many programs for young females reflect an earlier era, training girls for lower-paying, low-skill jobs. In reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in 1992, lawmakers have attempted to address these discrepancies. The Act encourages states to empower young women to defend themselves, assert their rights, overcome abuse, aspire to rewarding and lucrative careers, and lead healthy, independent lives.

The reasons to focus on girls' issues are compelling, especially as the number of females involved in the justice system continues to grow. Researchers have achieved an increased understanding of the developmental pathways that may be leading girls to delinquency. Practitioners have a better knowledge of the best practices for working with girls in the juvenile justice system. The combination of these factors makes the timing appropriate to focus specifically on the needs of the girls of today, who will become the women of tomorrow.

"My treatment social worker had an office on my unit and she had a lot of one-to-one contacts with me. She helped me think about my mistakes and how to not let them happen again. She helped me to stay strong, which helped me earn my release."

– Participant, Southern Oaks Girls School



SUMMARY

Because female delinquents are outnumbered by boys in the juvenile justice system, and because girl offenders may seem less dangerous to society, the needs of girls have gone largely unaddressed.

However, more girls are entering the system. Some are committing more violent offenses, such as assault. By focusing specifically on girls, researchers are gaining a better understanding of female adolescent development and the factors that put girls at risk of delinquency. Gender-specific programming offers a way to tailor juvenile justice services specifically to the needs of girls.

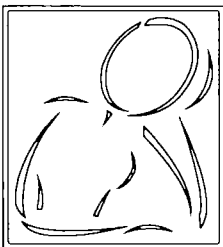
Chapter 2

POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR SERVING FEMALE JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

- *What is the process for developing gender-specific policies?*
- *What is the process for program development?*
- *What does gender-specific programming look like in practice?*

AT A GLANCE

Programs rooted in the experience of girls offer the most promising approach to treating and preventing female delinquency. National policy encourages the development of gender-specific programming, designed to get and keep adolescent girls on a positive developmental track. Development of such programs at the state and local level involves high-level administrative commitment and a plan to address girls' specific needs. Comprehensive programs provide a continuum of gender-specific services, while also encouraging protective factors that make girls more resilient.



WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING GENDER-SPECIFIC POLICIES?

Girls travel a different path to delinquency than most of their male counterparts. After years of struggling to squeeze girls into programs designed for boys (Albrecht, 1994), some agencies that work with girls are seeking solutions that are gender-specific. This does not mean giving girls the same programs as boys, or isolating offenders according to gender. Instead, the most effective programs are rooted in the experience of girls and incorporate an understanding of female development.

Gender-specific programming refers to program models and services that comprehensively address the special needs of a targeted gender group, such as adolescent girls. Such programs foster positive gender identity development. Gender-specific programs recognize the risk factors most likely to affect the targeted gender group and the protective factors that can build resiliency and prevent delinquency.

At the national, state, and local levels, there is a movement to use gender-specific programming to create programs intended to help at-risk delinquent girls. These programs incorporate promising practices meant to help girls get back on a positive developmental track and avoid future delinquent behavior (CRA, 1998). For a girl already in trouble or at high risk of delinquency, programs that incorporate gender-specific practices offer reason to hope for a positive future.

Policies That Encourage Gender-Specific Programming

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has had considerable involvement in issues related to girls in the juvenile justice system. The office recognizes the importance of increasing understanding of the factors that contribute to female juvenile offending and those that protect at-risk girls from becoming offenders.

Congress addressed this issue in the 1992 the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974. As amended (42 U.S.C. 5601 et. seq.), the act included language in Section 223 (8)(B)(i-ii) that specifically requires all states applying for Part B Formula Grants program funds to include in their plans: "(i) 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; and (ii) a plan for providing needed gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency."

Congress also enacted the State Challenge Activities program under Title II, Part E, in the 1992 amendments. The challenge activities program provides incentives for states participating in the Title II, Part B, formula grants program to improve their juvenile justice systems by developing, adopting, or improving policies and programs in one or more of 10 specified challenge areas. Congress has provided \$10 million annually to states since fiscal year 1995 to address one or more statutorily identified challenge areas.

Several states have sought to meet the treatment needs of young females through the following state challenge activities: (A) developing and adopting policies and programs to provide basic health, mental health, and appropriate education services, including special education, for youth in the juvenile justice system; (B) developing and adopting policies and programs to provide access to counsel for all juveniles; (C) increasing community-based alternatives to incarceration by establishing programs (such as expanded use of probation, mediation, restitution, community service, treatment, home detention, intensive

supervision, and electronic monitoring) and developing and adopting a set of objective criteria for the appropriate placement of juveniles in detention and secure confinement; (E) developing and adopting policies to prohibit gender bias in placement and treatment and establishing programs to ensure female youth access to the full range of health and mental health services, including treatment for physical or sexual assault or abuse, self-defense instruction, parenting education, general education, and training and vocational services; (G) developing and adopting policies and programs designed to remove status offenders from the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, when appropriate; (H) developing and adopting policies and programs designed to serve as alternatives to suspension and expulsion; and (I) increasing aftercare services for juveniles in the justice system by establishing programs and developing and adopting policies to provide comprehensive health, mental health, education, family, and vocational services to youth upon release from the juvenile justice system.

Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia have used challenge grant funds to develop specific approaches that address the needs of female offenders in their juvenile justice systems: create public awareness and professional competence through staff training, conferences, publications, and technical assistance; develop curricula on gender-specific topics; and produce program regulations, policies, and/or procedures.

OJJDP has initiated a unique collaborative effort between Connecticut and Illinois. OJJDP is using the lessons learned from the GIRLS LINK Juvenile Female Offender Project in Cook County, Illinois, to develop specialized delinquency prevention and detention programs for Connecticut girls. Needs and risk assessment instruments developed as part of the GIRLS LINK project have been incorporated into the Connecticut project. A focus of the project involves systemic reforms at the state level to improve the way female juvenile offenders are treated. Two strategies being employed are creating a hierarchy of sanctions, with specific provisions for pregnant girls and teen mothers; and making effective use of Medicaid/Medicare reimbursements.

"My psychologist at Southern Oaks really made me think about things and to realize some important facts about myself. I could go to him with any problem and be calm."

—Participant, Southern Oaks Girls School

Also, OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders (Wilson & Howell, 1993) assists communities in developing a working blueprint for measurably reducing juvenile offending. The comprehensive strategy pilot sites (Jacksonville and Ft. Myers, Florida, and San Diego, California) and local jurisdictions in

eight comprehensive strategy sites (Maryland, Florida, Rhode Island, Iowa, Texas, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Oregon) have completed an extensive strategic planning process that included identifying the needs of girls at risk or involved with the juvenile justice system.

In addition to state-level support, OJJDP has provided guidance directly to the field to support promising or effective gender-specific strategies. For example, in October 1999, OJJDP's *Juvenile Justice* journal published "Investing in Girls: A 21st Century Strategy," which examined the troubling effects of the factors and life circumstances that are often

"I changed my attitude and anger and my addiction problem. I took my treatment groups seriously and took the advice of staff. And I'm proud of myself that I made these changes."

-- Participant, Southern Oaks Girls School

precursors for girls in or on the edge of the juvenile justice system (Acoca, 1999). Also included in that issue of *Juvenile Justice* were two articles about exemplary efforts: "The Female Intervention Team," which discussed a gender-specific program for girls adjudicated delinquent by the Maryland state court system (Daniel, 1999), and the "National Girls' Caucus," which spotlighted an advocacy group that focuses national attention on the specific needs of girls involved with the juvenile justice system (Ravoira, 1999).

Similarly, OJJDP in collaboration with Greene, Peters & Associates (GPA) and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, has published three gender-focused curricula designed to build professional understanding and capacity in addressing girls' needs. A two-part set of curriculum materials, *Beyond Gender Barriers: Programming Specifically for Girls*, will be used by a cadre of trainers to raise awareness of the need for gender-specific programming for girls and to improve services for young females. Curriculum I of the two-part curriculum targets administrators and policymakers. Curriculum II targets service providers who work directly with girls. In addition, a training-of-trainers manual helps ensure that facilitators are provided with adequate materials and background to guide others effectively.

OJJDP also supports the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) that focuses on providing mentors for youth at risk of delinquency, gang involvement, educational failure, or dropping out of school. JUMP sites in California, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina provide gender-specific programming for girls. Despite these efforts by OJJDP and the states, statistics demonstrate that more needs to be done to meet the critical needs of girls.

MINNESOTA

In 1978, Minnesota formed its first statewide task force to look at the needs of women offenders. In the two decades since then, the state has continued to expand programming not only for women offenders, but also for juvenile females.

Mary Scully Whitaker, director of planning for the female offenders unit of the Minnesota Department of Corrections, oversees efforts to improve gender-specific services for all female offenders, regardless of age. It's no accident that planning for girls is handled by the same office that plans for adult women. "Developmentally, girls are a lot more like women than they are like boys," Scully Whitaker explains.

In Minnesota, the following steps have been key to improving services for girls:

Planning for equity: The 1978 task force on women offenders resulted three years later in a statute on parity for women offenders and the creation of a permanent Advisory Task Force on the Woman Offender in Corrections. In 1991, the statute on parity was amended to include juvenile girls, and the task force evolved to become the Advisory Task Force on Adult and Juvenile Female Offenders in Corrections.

In 1994 a state law was passed, mandating that the commissioner of corrections collaborate with the commissioners of human services, health, economic security, planning, education, and public safety, and with representatives of the private sector, to develop a comprehensive continuum of care to address the gender-specific needs of juvenile female offenders. The Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee to the Advisory Task Force on Female Offenders addresses these issues.

Also as a result of the 1994 law, Minnesota hired its first planner to focus specifically on serving juvenile females. Paula Schaefer provides technical assistance, consultation, and training on gender-specific services for agencies, community-based programs, and residential-based service providers throughout the state. A second planner, C'ana Petrich, was hired in 2000 to further expand these outreach and training efforts. The department continues to push for policy development that speaks to the needs of girls.

Addressing special needs of girls: A state corrections report published in 1989 ("State Plan for the '90s") cited glaring gaps in services for girl offenders. As a first step to improve services, a statewide conference was planned to train corrections staff on how to work with young female offenders. "We were going to do one conference," Scully Whitaker recalls. "We wanted all those people who work with girls, from across a variety of disciplines, to tell us what works, and why."

"My most important change was my willingness to change."

Participant, Southern Oaks Girls School

The first conference, in 1991, drew about 200 attendees. It was so successful that it has become an annual event (the Minnesota Conference on Adolescent Females), and is now a cornerstone of gender-specific training and programming efforts. The conference has grown to include more than 400 attendees from across the state, as well as representatives from other states and national agencies. The conference has done a great deal to mobilize support on the statewide level for gender-specific and culturally specific services for girls.

Encouraging model programs: Since 1993, Minnesota has awarded model program grants totaling \$122,000 to community-based programs to provide gender-specific services. The grants help fund programs that serve underserved populations, especially girls living in culturally specific communities and in rural areas. "Rather than being too prescriptive, we want to encourage programs that deliver what girls in local communities need," Scully Whitaker says. For example, some model programs have focused on fostering stronger bonds between mothers and daughters, while others have helped girls leave prostitution. Some of the programs that began with state grants have since become self-sustaining.

Overcoming obstacles: Educating policymakers about the need for gender-specific programming is an ongoing challenge in Minnesota. Some policymakers who have long fought for gender equality, for example, may be resistant to hearing that girls' needs are different than the needs of boys. Others may not perceive young female offenders as being as "dangerous" as boys, and therefore not as needy of services. A new emphasis on program outcomes is expected to help focus attention on the elements of successful programs for girls. "In the meantime," Scully Whitaker acknowledges, "we continue to face challenges because girls and women in our juvenile and criminal justice systems are the minority." Delivering gender-specific services, she adds, often means "people have to think differently."

Training the trainers: In June 2000, Minnesota provided a five-day, train-the-trainers seminar for volunteers recruited from across the state. Consultants with a national reputation for their expertise presented the curriculum they have developed to address gender-specific programming for girls. The volunteers—recruited from fields including corrections, social services, and community-based organizations that work with girls—were trained in best practices for providing gender-specific programming. The volunteers now serve as resource brokers in their local communities. The goal of this training session is to build capacity at the local level, especially in the areas of prevention and early intervention.

The volunteers will receive ongoing support from the state corrections staff who are focusing on serving the needs of girls.

Gathering information: The female offenders unit of the state corrections office continues to act as a clearinghouse on girls' issues, gathering new research, models, and information on best practices for gender-specific programming.

New tool: By the end of 2001, the female offenders unit expects to have developed a new assessment tool to measure the needs and risks of individual girls who come into the corrections system. The research-based tool will look holistically at girls' needs and risk factors. The assessment will look at needs such as family issues, victimization and other trauma issues, housing, parenting and child care issues, academics, health care needs, and risks such as chemical abuse/dependency, self-harm, and others that affect girls during adolescence.

"My mom and I are much better friends and we are able to communicate better."

Participant, Nuevo Dia

MARYLAND

Asking questions: "What were we doing to serve girls?"

That fundamental question about gender-specific services was posed by the Secretary of the State Department of Juvenile Justice in Maryland in 1992. She developed a task force to focus on the needs and issues of girls.

Marian Daniel, area director for Baltimore City Department of Juvenile Justice, had previous field experience working with young female delinquents. She knew firsthand that girls had specific needs to address, especially around the general subject of sexuality. As a female probation officer, Daniel had organized informal groups for the girls she supervised. Daniel also knew from experience that many probation officers considered girls' cases difficult to handle because they often involved emotional and relationship issues. Many girls in trouble react by running away, a tendency that makes their cases harder to manage.

Reorganizing caseloads: Daniel proposed reorganizing the juvenile caseload in Baltimore so that all girls on probation would be supervised by a single unit. Their probation officers would be trained to work exclusively with juvenile females. By sending out a "want ad" about the program to her staff of 200, Daniel recruited 10 probation officers interested in forming the new unit, which was named the Female Intervention Team (FIT).

The next step was to reassign cases to the new team. Daniel made an enticing offer to her entire staff. She told them, "I will give you 10 boys for every girl you transfer to the new unit." Many probation officers were so eager to be rid of girls' cases, they willingly expanded their caseloads with boys' cases. No additional funding was required to launch the program, because it involved reassigning existing staff.

Connecting girls with existing services: With staff and clientele in place, Daniel recalled, the next step was to figure out, "What are we going to do with these girls?" She and the FIT staff contacted Baltimore area service programs that were already working with girls. The Urban League, for example, had established programs designed to promote self-esteem. The local health department was running groups for adolescents. A local physician had a one-year grant to prevent teen pregnancy. These program providers and others were invited to work with the girls and staff involved in FIT.

Training staff to work with girls: Since FIT began, both staff training and program development have been ongoing. The program continues to evolve as the factors that put girls at risk of delinquency become better understood and documented by research. The statewide task force, for instance, conducted assessments of girls in institutions and documented a high incidence of sexual abuse, sexually transmitted disease, and teen pregnancy. That information has helped the FIT staff understand patterns in delinquent girls' behavior, and has guided program development.

Remaining flexible: Rather than channeling girls through a highly structured program, FIT remains flexible to better meet individual girls' needs and respond to changes in the population of girls on probation. For example, girls can become involved in groups that specifically address:

- Teen parenting issues
- Sexual abuse
- Pregnancy prevention and family planning (incorporating a prop called Baby Think It Over, a lifelike doll that girls practice nurturing and feeding to gain a sense of the responsibility involved in parenting)
- Infant and toddler care, including developmental assessment
- Substance abuse education

Building positive gender identity: FIT offers a "rites of passage" program designed to help girls make a positive transition to womanhood. The program builds cultural and spiritual awareness, celebrating girls' passage to womanhood with symbols and rituals.

Because the clientele is predominantly African American, program elements incorporate culturally specific themes and include African American role models. "Rites of passage" typically involves girls in a community service project, such as volunteering at a nursing home where they can have positive interactions with elders. The program culminates in a graduation ceremony, which Daniel stresses is an important way for a girl to say, "I was successful."

FIT also works with the Girl Scouts to provide girls with positive recreational activities and promote social learning.

Developing career and job skills: As FIT continues to evolve, new program components are being added to help girls prepare for careers and develop job skills. For example, a college intern developed a program to foster academic and career enrichment. Female role models, working in traditional and nontraditional career fields, meet with the girls and talk about career choices. The girls receive training on how to prepare for work, including how to interview for a job and how to dress appropriately on the job. Another program uses computers to teach girls technical skills. Computers are also used to prepare girls for GED or SAT tests.

Some program components are more informal. For example, FIT took a group of girls on a one-day field trip to Harlem, where they toured museums and theaters. For many of the girls, Daniel said, it was their first trip out of the city (except, perhaps, for detention in a state facility).

Involving families: In addition to the programs for girls, FIT also conducts groups for the parents of participants. Many of the parents were themselves teen mothers and may also share other risk factors that have affected their daughters' lives, such as a history of sexual abuse. Parent groups offer a forum for discussing issues that often span generations.

Creating a female-friendly environment: The physical space that houses FIT is designed to be friendly to females, including girls who are teen parents. The office includes child-sized tables and chairs where toddlers can play or hear a story. Even the posters on the walls are chosen to deliver a positive message to girls. (One, for example, lists "100 ways to say no to sex.")

Daniel highlights several steps taken in Baltimore that she believes would be helpful in other communities interested in providing gender-specific programs:

...the first generation you get to
experience. They are surrounded by role
models who are boys, information
about the world, and good resources.
They are not just being told to
be good, they are being shown how to
be good. They are being shown how to

become part of the world.

- Train staff to understand the special needs of girls
- Understand the role of relationships in girls' lives
- Build success components into the program, so that girls achieve a sense of accomplishment
- Be flexible to meet the needs of the girls being served

Currently, FIT has a staff of 13 probation officers and a supervisor. Approximately 375 girls within the city of Baltimore are being served by the program.

OREGON

Oregon has been a pioneer in adopting policies and developing programs for girls at risk. It is one of only two states to have adopted legislation regarding gender-specific programming and equitable access to services by juvenile females. The Oregon Equal Access law, passed in 1993, calls for gender equity not only in the area of juvenile corrections, but for all state agencies providing or funding services to children and adolescents. Minnesota's law relating to gender-specific services, in comparison, applies only to juvenile justice.

History: In 1987, a group of social service providers began meeting to discuss the lack of coordinated services for Oregon's girls and young women involved, or at risk of becoming involved, in juvenile justice or welfare systems. Concerned that changes in state detention laws and the use of close custody secure placements had had a significant impact on delinquent girls, the group also recognized the cyclical nature of problems facing at-risk girls.

By 1992, the group had formally organized as the Equal Access for Girls Committee of Children First for Oregon and set a goal of getting an Equal Access law passed during the 1993 legislative session. Also in 1992, the Oregon Commission on Children and Families began working to raise public awareness of the issues facing girls at risk. The commission issued a grant to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to develop and disseminate a series of media products to educate the public on these issues (CRA, 1998).

The Equal Access law (Oregon Revised Statute 417.270), signed into law in July 1993, affirms that providing equal access to services for females and males under the age of 18 is in the best interest of the state; requires state agencies providing services to children to identify disparities in allocations of money and services for females and

males under age 18; and requires these agencies to prepare plans to implement equal access to appropriate services for juveniles of both genders.

The Equal Access for Girls Committee reorganized to become the Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls, Inc., a private, nonprofit organization working to ensure that girls receive equal access to all the appropriate, gender-specific support and services they need to help them to develop to their full potential. The coalition includes advocates drawn from nonprofit organizations, public and private agencies, elected and appointed officials, community leaders, and businesses.

Policy: As a result of the law, all state agencies that provide service to juveniles are currently examining the access and delivery of gender-specific services. The three agencies directly affected are the Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Youth Authority, and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families. In addition, Governor John Kitzhaber's Juvenile Crime Prevention Plan calls for counties requesting state funding to ensure that

local services are both gender specific and culturally appropriate. The state has demonstrated its commitment by budgeting \$50,000 of OJJDP Formula Grant funds annually to provide consulting, training, and technical assistance on gender-specific services.

Training: In 1998, Oregon hosted its first Girls Summit to educate key decisionmakers about the need for gender-specific programming and the specific needs of at-risk girls. Funding from OJJDP helped provide space for 440 attendees (although more than 600 applied). Focus of the first Girls Summit was on the "why" of gender-specific programming so that program administrators and managers would understand the need to plan and create programs for girls at risk.

A second Girls Summit, scheduled for November 2000 in Portland, Oregon, will focus on the "how-to" aspects of creating and delivering gender-specific programs for girls. The anticipated 500 attendees will include those working with girls in a variety of juvenile justice settings, from prevention and early intervention to the secure end of services, according to Pam Patton, President of the Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls and a consultant to the state on gender-specific practices. "The first summit looked at why you need to do this. This one will really focus in on how you do it," Patton explained. In particular, the summit is expected to focus on meeting the needs of girls from cultural or ethnic groups that are currently underserved. Experts will focus on providing better access to services, overcoming barriers, and presenting models and best practices for meeting girls' specific gender and cultural needs.

"Look at me now—I'm graduating from the group with a positive attitude toward myself, life, past, present, and future."

*Graduate, Young Women
Achieving Success*

To expand awareness of gender-specific concepts and programming throughout the state, Oregon also has dedicated part of its federal funding to a training-of-trainers session on serving the needs of girls. A team of nationally known experts in gender-specific programming delivered an intensive, five-day training session for 20 volunteers from county juvenile departments, Oregon Youth Authority, and other agencies. The volunteers received the training at no charge. In return, they agreed to present four training sessions in their home regions to expand awareness exponentially.

Lessons: Providing girls with gender-specific programs takes a cultural shift on the part of those used to working with this population. Patton acknowledges, adding, "This kind of change is a long-term process." Central to Oregon's progress has been a committed group of advocates, willing to keep pushing for needed and appropriate services for girls. The Coalition of Advocates for Equal Access for Girls, Inc., Patton attests, has been "willing to stay organized, to be a voice for girls, to push for legislation, and to be a watchdog once the law was passed."

COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

In 1994, a group of individuals within the Cook County juvenile justice system convened to conduct research on girls in the juvenile justice system, to assess the system and its effect on girls, and to advocate gender-specific programming for girls. From this group of individuals, a steering committee was formed. Included in this voluntary collaborative are representatives from more than 20 public and private agencies that work with girls involved in the Cook County juvenile justice system.

With support from a planning grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the steering committee has accomplished the following gender-specific initiatives:

Developing gender-specific assessment tools: With the assistance of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), two gender-specific assessment tools were developed for use with girls in the juvenile justice system. The Risk Assessment Instrument objectively classifies a girl's risk of re-offending and can help decisionmakers and service providers in targeting limited resources. The Strengths/Needs Assessment Instrument (see Appendix B) helps service providers to plan and deliver gender-specific interventions. The Cook County Juvenile Probation Department, in cooperation with GIRLS LINK (see "Establishing a mission," below), has contracted with NCCD to develop policies, procedures, and classification systems for standardizing the use of the Risk Assessment

Instrument and the Strengths/Needs Assessment Instrument. In addition, the Juvenile Probation Department now has a Female Offender Unit that will use these gender-specific assessment tools.

Publishing a resource directory: A resource directory of gender-specific programs for girls in the juvenile justice system was developed and distributed to agencies throughout Cook County. The directory includes programs addressing teen pregnancy and parenthood, physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, and gang involvement.

Coordinating training programs: Training programs have been coordinated for more than 500 individuals working within the Cook County juvenile justice system, including front-line service providers, program managers, and community-service providers. The focus is to provide training on issues affecting girls and the value of gender-specific programming for girls. These training programs cover the latest gender-specific research and provide both resource materials and technical assistance necessary to expand the continuum of services for girls involved in or at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Piloting a gender-specific case-management model: A pilot gender-specific case-management model that addresses continuum-of-care issues was implemented in January 1998 in two Chicago police districts. The model links a case manager with a girl, beginning from initial police contact and continuing through release from the Department of Corrections. The case manager travels into the girl's community and builds a trusting relationship that helps foster effective intervention. Case managers actively engage girls and develop linkages for them with community-based service providers.

Establishing a mission, goals, and new initiatives: In October 1997, the steering committee formally adopted the name GIRLS LINK and the following mission statement:

"GIRLS LINK, together with decisionmakers, service providers, and the community, will develop a systemic culture that recognizes the importance of increasing resources designed to meet the special needs of girls who are involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the Cook County juvenile justice system."

GIRLS LINK continues to operate as a steering committee, chaired by Co-Conveners Mary Kehoe Griffin, Bureau Chief-Bureau of Public Safety and Judicial Coordination, and the Hon. Sophia H. Hall, Administrative Presiding Judge, Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Department. GIRLS LINK also employs one paid staff person.

Four standing committees provide the leadership to accomplish the four major goals of GIRLS LINK: advocacy, education, policy development, and programming. The advocacy committee advocates on behalf of GIRLS LINK for political, moral, financial, and practical

"I have learned a lot from this experience. It has changed me in ways I never thought possible. I just take it one day at a time. With positive thinking, I will stay on the right path."

—Participant, *Life Givers*

support of the organization. The policy committee develops policy, standards, and guidelines for gender-specific programming for girls in the juvenile justice system. The program committee is responsible for the development, oversight, and refinement of the GIRLS LINK case-management model. The education committee identifies training needs, as well as developing, coordinating, and implementing gender-specific training with an emphasis on implementing the case-management model.

The newest initiatives of GIRLS LINK focus on the following areas:

- **Web site:** A GIRLS LINK Web site is under development by a newly established Computer Technology Committee to aid in education and advocacy missions. The Web site will include linkages to similar sites and organizations.
- **Systems change:** Best standards and practices in delivering gender-specific programming to girls in the juvenile justice system, or those at risk of involvement, will be used to facilitate the development of interagency agreements. GIRLS LINK intends such agreements to foster a climate that will institutionalize systems change through policy, procedures, staff development, and training requirements.
- **Mapping:** The course of each girl who enters the Cook County juvenile justice system will be mapped, and the outcomes will be studied to gauge efficiency and effectiveness. The map will also be made available to girls and their families as an informational tool to be used when navigating the system.
- **Co-sponsored training:** Collaborating with the state of Connecticut, GIRLS LINK will co-sponsor annual training in addition to its regular training schedule. The combined efforts of co-sponsored training are expected to result in shared knowledge and will be cultivated to benefit program participants, administrators, committee members, and the community. GIRLS LINK and Connecticut are also working on long-range plans to co-sponsor a national conference on gender-responsive issues.
- **Evaluations:** GIRLS LINK is currently seeking funding to proceed with process, outcome, and impact evaluations of the case management pilot as well as the work the GIRLS LINK initiative has done to bring about systems change in Cook County.
- **Sharing information:** Focus groups, community forums, and executive briefings are being organized and facilitated by GIRLS LINK to bring a variety of groups together for conversation and sharing of information about gender-responsive programming.

- **Profile of pregnant and parenting girls:** A study of pregnant and parenting girls in Cook County will parallel a similar study conducted in Connecticut. The information gained from comparing girls in an urban environment with those in less populated areas will be assessed and shared with other collaborators. The information will also help shape future programming efforts for girls deemed at risk or already involved in the juvenile justice system.

OHIO

In 1995, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) assembled a 19-member work group, Gender Specific Services Work Group (GSSWG), charged with identifying the needs of adolescent females in Ohio's juvenile justice system and making recommendations for improvement of services for this population.

The work group has gathered information and data on adolescent girls, studied adolescent female development, examined effective program models, visited existing programs, and talked both individually and collectively with girls in these programs.

In September and October of 1996, GSSWG conducted six focus groups for delinquent girls and five focus groups for professionals working with delinquent girls to obtain additional information. The findings from these focus groups were merged with research on Ohio's juvenile justice system and services, and led to the publication of *Gender-Specific Services: A Report to the Governor from the Gender-Specific Services Work Group* (June 1997). The report included conclusions and policy recommendations to OCJS for improvement of services for girls in Ohio's juvenile justice system. Specifically, the recommendations included: obtaining more data on Ohio girls in the juvenile justice system; developing and facilitating education and training regarding gender-specific issues; identifying existing services and programs for girls; assessing model gender-specific programs and resources; and, supporting increased funding and development of appropriate programs and services.

OCJS has received funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in addition to making a commitment to this issue and to the work group. This support has led to the following projects:

- Five regional training seminars throughout Ohio in the fall of 1997 and the summer of 1999 for juvenile justice professionals who deal with adolescent females in the juvenile criminal justice system or at risk of entering the system

- An assessment on the availability and quality of services and programs available to adolescent females in the juvenile criminal justice system or at risk of entering the system conducted by the University of Cincinnati
- A documentary video about female adolescents who are in the juvenile criminal justice system or at risk of entering the system
- Plans to fund a third round of regional training seminars
- Plans to contract with a vendor to develop an assessment tool for programs for girls
- Plans to publish a nearly comprehensive directory of programs and service for adolescent females

Juvenile Female Offenders: A Status of the States Report, prepared for OJJDP by Community Research Associates in October 1998, provides an historical look and an inventory of the approaches individual states are taking to serve girls at risk of delinquency and girls already in the juvenile justice system. The report identifies 24 states and the District of Columbia as having developed unique approaches to addressing the needs of female juvenile offenders. Lessons learned by the states include (CRA, 1998):

- Establish a representative planning group—involving key community and state leaders, juvenile justice practitioners, and historically significant girl-serving organizations—dedicated to bringing the needs of girls into discussion
- Assess system processing and existing services to identify how the system processes females compared with their male counterparts and indicate where service gaps exist
- Create specific programmatic responses to service delivery gaps by coordinating existing services to meet needs; clearly defining gender-specific services; focusing on prevention and intervention efforts; and looking to existing models to adapt to local needs
- Encourage systemwide training in female development for juvenile justice practitioners and system administrators

Common Steps in Policy Development

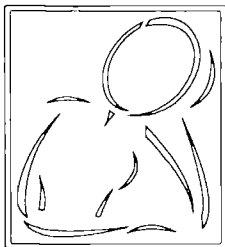
The impetus to develop a policy for serving girl delinquents can originate from a number of different sources, such as governors' offices, state legislatures, state agencies, community organizations, juvenile courts, and others. Rather than being all-inclusive, the steps highlighted below are given as examples of those steps that have proven useful in states that have already developed policies for serving girls.

- ✓ **Get organized.** Many states have developed policies to better serve girls by forming a task force or working group to focus attention and gather information on the specific needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. Accurate information on the scope and nature of the problems girls face within a particular state or region will guide the development of gender-specific policies. In some states, a formal task force or legislative study group has grown out of a more informal network of service providers who work firsthand with delinquent girls. In other instances, committees addressing the issues of women offenders or community services have expanded their scope to include delinquent girls.
- ✓ **Define mission, vision, goals, and objectives.** Answer such questions as, What is the purpose of the task force or other planning group? How will the mission be accomplished? Who will be involved in the process?
- ✓ **Gather information.** Present information that portrays the scope and nature of problems girls face within a particular state. Some states, such as Oregon, have undertaken a county-by-county assessment to obtain an accurate picture of girls and availability of programs in urban, rural, and suburban communities. Town meetings, focus groups, and grassroots meetings are all useful forums for gathering information about girls and defining their problems in local communities.
- ✓ **Disseminate findings.** Once information has been gathered, an information campaign can advance understanding of the unique problems girls face, highlight the lack of services available to them, and obtain public support for gender-specific programs. Such campaigns can make the "invisible" population of girl offenders more visible. In Oregon, for example, a quarterly newsletter ("Oregon Girls Advocate") was published in 1991-92 to promote awareness of the problems and needs of girls and young women related to physical and sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, homelessness, and teen pregnancy.
- ✓ **Lobby for legislation.** Conduct ongoing advocacy to address needs of girls in juvenile justice and secure funding for gender-specific programming. Engage support from likely allies, such as other agencies or community groups that serve girls.

- ✓ **Plan for implementation.** What actions need to be taken? What individuals and agencies should be involved in the process? What resources are available? What are the estimated costs and timetables for implementation? For example, in Minnesota, the task force decided to implement an annual statewide conference to train corrections staff on gender-specific approaches to working with girl offenders.
- ✓ **Overcome barriers.** In some states, task forces have also had to overcome impediments to policy development. Common impediments include:
 - Inadequate funding to create and enhance programs specifically for girls
 - Insufficient knowledge of effective programming for females (i.e., misunderstanding that all-girl programs that merely isolate offenders by gender are not the same as comprehensive, gender-specific programs)
 - Lack of awareness of the magnitude of the problem
 - Lack of commitment by legislature and/or staff
 - Concern that gender-specific programming for girls would constitute reverse discrimination (i.e., by shortchanging programs for boys, or moving away from equity)

A more detailed look at the steps involved in developing and implementing policy is provided in the *Community Planning Manual: The Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (CRA, in press). An overview of the steps outlined for developing a community action plan includes:

- ◆ Getting organized (enlisting the support of key community leaders, establishing a planning or vision group, developing leaders, developing a budget, and identifying resource needs)
- ◆ Establishing vision, mission, goals and objectives
- ◆ Conducting community assessments to assess factors that place youth and families at risk and identify the services and programs that currently exist to serve them
- ◆ Developing a community action plan that addresses key questions: What are we going to do? Why are we doing to do it? How are we going to do it? Who is going to do it? When are we going to do it, and how long will it take? How does the plan relate to our vision and goals? Do we need to rethink our goals and objectives?
- ◆ Program development
- ◆ Budgeting and fundraising
- ◆ Overcoming barriers to implementation
- ◆ Advocacy
- ◆ Community education/awareness



WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT?

Whether a program for girls is conceived on the local or state level, it is essential that it begin with a realistic assessment of an organiza-

tion's or system's capacity and desire to provide an effective gender-specific program.

Comprehensive

programs, while generally the most effective, tend to be costly. Key questions to address at the beginning of program development include:

- What are the agency's or organization's capabilities and limitations?
- What resources and expertise are available for planning and staff training, and how can existing resources be redirected at little or no cost?
- How much can an organization afford to invest in a program for girls?

An effective program clearly defines its target population. No one program model will be effective for all girls, and not every community faces the same issues or has the same population. Program planning should include:

- ✓ **Vision and mission statements that guide program direction.** What behaviors can the program systematically address? What risk factors can the program address in a gender-specific framework? What are the program's targeted issues and concerns? Who is the program designed to serve? What does the program hope to achieve?
- ✓ **Program goals:** Program goals clearly state the intended results of the program. For example, a program that incorporates gender-specific programming for girls should foster positive gender identity development during adolescence, enhance those protective factors likely to build resiliency, curb negative behaviors, nurture girls' personal and social competence, and enhance their self-esteem.
- ✓ **Program objectives:** Objectives are specific, concrete statements of what needs to be accomplished to implement a goal. Programs that focus on measurable, clear, and focused objectives (i.e., reducing teen pregnancy rates in targeted population) will have more impact than a program with an overly broad goal, however admirable (i.e., "helping girls feel good").
- ✓ **Organization and management:** Planning should address how the organization is to be structured, what type of personnel should comprise management, and issues related to staff training and expertise. The importance that girls place on relationships

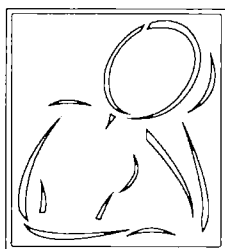
"I talk things out now. If I get angry, I take real deep breaths or I go in my room and cool off."

—Participant, *Project Safe Place*

needs to be kept in mind during program design and planning. Gender-specific programs create opportunities for girls to build healthy, positive relationships with staff. All staff, including those involved in noncounseling roles such as transportation or food service, should have opportunities to form positive relationships with girls. In addition,

organizational plans that encourage teamwork and cooperation by staff will give girls a chance to observe mutual cooperation between adults. (Girls who have grown up in dysfunctional family settings may never have seen models for this behavior.)

- ✓ **Program elements:** Program planning should remain flexible to address each individual girl's needs. Even if planning has targeted one age group, for example, individuals within that group may differ greatly in their emotional, physical, social, and academic development.
- ✓ **Staff development and training:** In the past, delinquent girls have been fit into a justice system designed primarily to serve boys' needs. As a result, even experienced staff may not have received gender-specific training. Program planning should include preservice and ongoing inservice training for staff.
- ✓ **Evaluation strategy:** Given the lack of research in this area, new programs for girls need to be evaluated not only to enhance program implementation but also to increase knowledge in the field. Evaluation is not an afterthought. It needs to be addressed during the program planning stage and be ongoing. Evaluation can help work out the "nuts and bolts" of a new program and indicate needed adjustments.



WHAT DOES GENDER-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

COMPREHENSIVE, NOT PIECEMEAL. Just as the problems and risks facing girls tend to be interrelated and complex, effective solutions cannot be fragmented or offered on a piecemeal basis.

A comprehensive approach deals with behavior in context, enabling each girl to focus on her individual needs, to understand how risk factors have shaped her development, and to address issues that arise in her relationships with others (Lindgren, 1996; Valentine Foundation, 1990), including family, peers, community, and society.

Comprehensive program models have a dual purpose of reducing numbers of female delinquents and serving those girls already involved in the juvenile justice system. By preventing problems before they occur, intervening early to change risky behaviors, and providing follow-up care after treatment to reinforce new skills and prevent recidivism, comprehensive programs provide girls with a continuum of services. Within this continuum:

- Primary prevention aims to eliminate or minimize behaviors or environmental factors that increase girls' risk of delinquency (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1993). Primary prevention focuses on helping girls to develop the knowledge, skills, and experiences that will promote health and resiliency. All girls can benefit from primary prevention.
- Early intervention (also known as secondary prevention) provides early detection and treatment to reduce problems caused by risky behaviors and to prevent further development of problems (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1993; Mulvey & Brodsky, 1990). Examples of interventions for girls in the juvenile justice system include educational and vocational training, family-based interventions, and diversion to community-based programs (Mulvey & Brodsky).
- Treatment and aftercare (also known as tertiary prevention) arrest the progression of problems caused by risky behaviors. Residential and secure incarceration may be utilized to help girls develop perspective, interrupt high-risk behavior patterns, and learn skills to address the normal developmental tasks which their life experiences have not allowed them to master. Aftercare is included in the treatment model to prevent recidivism. (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994).

"All in all, I gained a lot of positive aspects from the group. I learned how to respect myself and others around me. I learned how to protect myself. Most important of all, I gained the respect for myself and that's all that matters."

*Graduate, Young Women
Achieving Success*

GENDER-SPECIFIC. Gender-specific programming goes beyond simply focusing on girls. It represents a concentrated effort to assist all girls (not only those involved in the justice system) in positive female development. It takes into account the developmental needs of girls at adolescence, a critical stage for gender identity formation. It nurtures and reinforces "femaleness" as a positive identity with inherent strengths.

Gender-specific programming provides girls with decisionmaking and life skills that will assist their development into womanhood. Given the importance that girls place on relationships, gender-specific programming teaches positive relationship-building skills. Empowerment teaches girls to use their voice, to speak for themselves, and to recognize that they have choices.

Gender-specific programming also recognizes the dangers and risks that girls face because of gender. This means acknowledging that the lives of girl offenders may have been affected by:

- Sexism, which means less power and fewer options for females in society
- Victimization, including sexual abuse, child pornography, prostitution, and other forms of exploitation
- Poverty, which affects teen mothers in disproportionate numbers and also increases girls' vulnerability to dropping out of school, joblessness, health problems, and delinquency
- Racism, which may affect placement of female juvenile offenders (Federle and Chesney-Lind, 1992)

The Valentine Foundation (1990) has articulated the essential elements of effective gender-specific programming for adolescent girls. These benchmarks include:

- Space that is physically and emotionally safe, and removed from the demands for attention of adolescent males
- Time for girls to talk, for girls to conduct emotionally "safe," comforting, challenging, nurturing conversations within ongoing relationships
- Opportunities for girls to develop relationships of trust and interdependence with other women already present in their lives (such as friends, relatives, neighbors, church members)

- Programs that tap girls' cultural strengths rather than focusing primarily on the individual girl (i.e., building on Afrocentric perspectives of history and community relationships)
- Mentors who share experiences that resonate with the realities of girls' lives and who exemplify survival and growth
- Education about women's health, including female development, pregnancy, contraception, diseases and prevention, along with opportunities for girls to define healthy sexuality on their own terms (rather than as victims)
- Opportunities to create positive changes to benefit girls on an individual level, within their relationships, and within the community
- Giving girls a voice in program design, implementation, and evaluation
- Adequate financing to ensure that comprehensive programming will be sustained long enough for girls to integrate the benefits
- Involvement with schools so that curriculum reflects and values the experience and contributions of women

In addition to these key features of gender-specific programs, additional elements have been identified by other researchers. A report by Girls Incorporated (1996) stresses the importance of valuing, celebrating, and honoring "the female perspective" in program planning and design. The Ms. Foundation (1993) makes a case for programs to target girls before they reach adolescence, and also encourages gender-specific programs to "address racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and other identified isms." Community Research Associates (1998) promotes the least restrictive programming environment for girls, and also encourages placement of delinquent girls in programs located as close to home as possible. Leslie Acoca, director of the Women and Girls Institute at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, lists these hallmarks of a female-friendly facility: a humane living environment; small scale, which allows for innovation; respectful interactions between staff and residents; and a positive atmosphere to encourage positive change (Acoca & NCCD, 1998).

In order to effectively implement systemic change through the infusion of gender-specific programming for girls, there is a need for courageous advocacy for gender-specific programming. Albrecht (1994) has adapted a leadership model by Kouzes and Posner

"I have a different way of thinking. I think I don't need to be big and loud. All I need to do is be smart."

Participant, Southern Oaks Girls' Home

(1987) in outlining steps to gender-specific programming advocacy. This model promotes the following critical steps:

1. **Challenging the process.** The juvenile justice system needs to be challenged regarding its gender bias. Girls have been overlooked for too long.
2. **Inspiring a shared vision.** The juvenile justice system can help promote the empowerment of girls by advancing a vision of appropriate and gender-specific services for females. In order for a system to reach consensus on such a shared vision, individuals must engage in a process of reexamining their values about girls and women if they are to advance gender-specific programming for girls.
3. **Enabling others to act.** Through collaboration and coalition building, diverse groups can develop a common working ground in which cultural, gender, and ethnic differences can be valued in the promotion of gender-specific programming.
4. **Modeling the way.** Effective leadership in the advocacy process needs to model change rather than doing "business as usual." Systemic change occurs when countless small changes coalesce. Those small changes can be effectively modeled by leaders who exhibit courage by changing their old behaviors and doing things differently. Making girls a priority before their numbers increase to the level of male juvenile delinquents represents a proactive rather than reactive way of addressing the problem.
5. **Encouraging the heart.** By recognizing the need for taking small steps, making changes in values, and connecting with others within the system at the individual value level, employees are encouraged to feel and act compassionately about the needs of girls in the juvenile justice system.

Because a majority of girl offenders have experienced sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse during childhood, gender-specific programming within the juvenile justice system makes treating the issues related to abuse a priority in all aspects of care. In designing programs, this means:

- Girls need to develop an understanding of their victimization and how they may continue to view themselves as victims
- Girls need to begin to understand that they can accept the power to not participate in abusive situations in the future
- Girls need opportunities to address their feelings of anger and frustration that might have contributed to their involvement in criminal activity
- Girls need opportunities to systematically explore their reluctance to trust others

- Girls need opportunities to learn how to develop and maintain appropriate, healthy boundaries in relationships

ADDRESSING RISK AND RESILIENCY FACTORS. A comprehensive program addresses the risks and dangers girls face, and also encourages those protective factors that can help girls in the juvenile justice system.

Specific risks addressed in comprehensive program models include those explained in more detail in Chapter 1, namely:

- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Ethnic membership
- ◆ Poor academic performance
- ◆ Teen pregnancy
- ◆ Substance abuse
- ◆ Victimization
- ◆ Health and mental health concerns
- ◆ Gang membership

Resilient girls, who avoid delinquency despite exposure to risks, tend to have a close relationship with at least one caring, trusted adult. Their teachers and parents tend to express high expectations for them, helping them look positively toward the future. They are given opportunities to meet positive role models and mentors through their neighborhood and community life.

The following protective factors, which can be targeted in comprehensive programs, help girls change their negative behavior:

—Gender identification: Persistent messages about sex roles hit many girls hard at adolescence, resulting in a well-documented drop in self-confidence and hope during the early teens. Research by Carol Gilligan and others has shown that many girls feel as if they lose their “voice” at adolescence, and revert to silence and passivity in place of assertiveness and strength (Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). Gender-identity development counters this trend and helps girls see their maturity to womanhood as a hopeful future.

—Interpersonal relations: Relationships are of particular importance to girls, who are socialized from a young age to listen to others and to value emotional exchanges (Archer, 1985; Loeber & Hay, 1997; Streitmatter, 1988). Positive relationships, including girls’

informal communities of friends and their relationships with adults, can be a strong protective factor. Relationship skill building will help girls recognize potentially damaging relationships and develop healthy ways of interacting with others. Interactions between girl offenders and juvenile justice staff provide a context for girls to participate in healthy relationships. These interactions need to be fostered in a positive, ongoing, therapeutic manner. In residential settings, girls need to develop healthy ways of interacting with all staff responsible for their care. Some relationships will be close, interpersonal, and lasting, while others will be respectful but limited to the roles of student and staff.

—Self-esteem: Girls' self-esteem is particularly vulnerable at adolescence. Low self-esteem can be a precipitating factor in delinquency, depression, suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and school failure (Albrecht, 1994). Enhanced self-esteem can mitigate against these behavioral risks (American Association of University Women, 1991).

—Individualism: During adolescence, girls struggle to balance feelings of self-importance with connection to others. They face the developmental task of defining themselves on their own terms, and not relying on adults for approval or determination of self-worth (Mitten, 1995; Ms. Foundation, 1993). Having a strong sense of themselves as individuals helps them set appropriate boundaries, make good decisions, and form healthy relationships. Developing this sense of self becomes more difficult if they have experienced abuse, family dysfunction, or other situations in which trust was violated (Knudson-Martin, 1994).

—Future orientation: An orientation toward the future serves as a protective factor by allowing girls to see beyond immediate life circumstances, such as poverty. Girls who value and aspire to educational achievement tend to have a compelling sense of the future (Benard, 1991).

—Physical development: During puberty, a greater number of physical, emotional, psychological, and social changes occur simultaneously than at any other developmental stage. Girls who enter puberty close to the time of their immediate peer group are most likely to master this transition successfully (Brooks-Gunn & Reiter, 1990). Delaying sexual activity offers girls a protective factor against unwanted pregnancy and other risks that could lead to delinquency.

—Family-school-community support: Youths who have a strong bond with a family member or a trusted adult outside the family are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors. Families foster positive development in girls by providing a nurturing home environment; setting clear limits; teaching cultural identity; communicating expectations; and monitoring the whereabouts of their children. Schools provide more protective factors by

setting clear policies and high expectations; providing health education that may prevent girls from engaging in risky behaviors (such as early sexual experimentation or substance abuse); teaching problem-solving and communication skills; identifying learning disabilities; and offering early remediation to keep academic development on track. Similarly, communities can help build resilient girls by fostering positive identity development, including strong cultural or ethnic identities. By working together, families, schools, and communities can provide a network of support for girls (Benard, 1991).

Gender-specific programs are designed with an understanding of the connection between risk factors girls face at adolescence and protective factors that can help them avoid delinquency.

Risk Factors

Early sexual experimentation

Academic failure

History of sexual abuse

Low self-esteem

Dysfunctional family system

Racism

Sexism

Substance abuse

Protective Factors

Delay of sexual experimentation

Academic success/progress

Positive sexual development

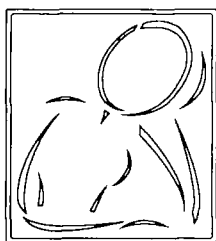
Positive self-esteem

Positive family environment

Positive *minority* identity

Positive gender identity

Prosocial skills and competence



SUMMARY

Encouraged by national policy, a number of states have taken groundbreaking steps to assist female delinquents by planning for gender-specific programs. Gender-specific programming keeps the specific needs of girls and an understanding of female adolescent development in focus throughout the planning process. Gender-specific programs are comprehensive, providing services across a continuum of care. Programs are designed recognize the risks and dangers girls face because of gender, especially a history of abuse or other forms of victimization. They encourage resiliency factors and life skills that help girls make a positive transition to womanhood and prevent future delinquency.

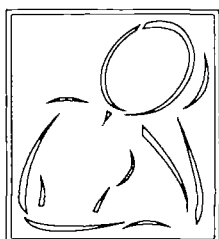
Chapter 3

COMPREHENSIVE, GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES

- ***What is the best overall approach?***
- ***What are the elements and features of promising programs?***

AT A GLANCE

Gender-specific programs encourage healthy attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles, and promote social competence in girls. Key program elements and intervention strategies aim to help girls within the juvenile justice system by addressing issues in the context of their relationships to peers, family, school, and community.



WHAT IS THE BEST OVERALL APPROACH?

Just as no one path leads a girl to trouble, there is no single solution to female delinquency. Effective programs work with girls in all sorts of ways and in a variety of settings and share some common wisdom about what adolescent females need to overcome the challenges that can interfere with healthy development.

Delinquency prevention for girls is proactive. It focuses on creating healthy attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles. It gives individuals the power to meet the challenges of life events and transitions, and skills to help them realize their potential (Girls Incorporated, 1996). By providing activities that promote social competence, programs give girls needed opportunities to safely explore their strengths and recognize their weaknesses in a variety of contexts.

Gender-specific programming works to boost girls' confidence at the critical point of adolescence, when their self-esteem is at risk of plummeting. A gender-specific approach deliberately introduces, models, and reinforces strong, positive messages about being female. These messages teach girls that they have options in life, challenging persistent sex-role stereotyping that would have them believe otherwise.

A gender-specific program promotes the health of the girl and her community. When prevention works to uplift an individual girl, her increased health, vibrancy, and competence benefit her larger community. Delinquency prevention at the community level extends these positive, proactive messages and fosters change that will benefit all girls.

Gender-specific strategies include:

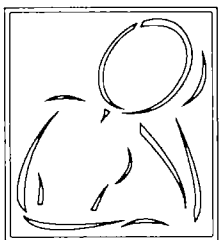
—Providing information: Girls need accurate, honest, and timely information to help them understand the consequences of high-risk behavior and make healthier life choices (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1993; Tobler, 1992). Information that speaks directly and effectively to delinquent girls can puncture the denial, myths, and false rationalizations that may have sustained their risky behaviors. Good information is delivered with respect and in a manner that girls can understand. It motivates them to listen—and to act (Glenn, 1996; Rothman & David, 1985). Reaching the target audience may require the involvement of messengers from outside the program, such as crisis workers, teachers, counselors, peer educators, or members of the media (National Institutes of Health, 1989).

—Delivering education: Educating delinquent girls involves more than teaching them the rudiments of reading and math. It means educating girls to be able to meet the complex challenges of life. Intervention strategies teach girls how to get along in life, including specific skills such as decisionmaking, problem solving, negotiation, anger and stress management, and assertive communication (Botvin & Botvin, 1992; Newman & Newman, 1995). Preventive programs prepare girls to be competent by teaching vocational and job-seeking skills, money management, and literacy. Girls who have a history of academic failure may need help to overcome their learning deficits or cope with learning disabilities (Hodges, Giuliotti, & Porpotage, 1994). Alternative learning approaches may be helpful in serving girls who have failed to thrive in mainstream classroom settings.

—Providing alternatives: Intervention strategies are designed to help delinquent girls make major changes in their lives. For many girls, this may mean giving up specific behaviors or ending relationships that are now perceived as risky or unhealthy. Effective programming will provide replacements for these “missing pieces” of a girl’s life. Alternatives to delinquent behavior can include volunteer activities, extracurricular programs such as sports or the arts, urban or rural exploration, or any other activities that build positive life skills (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1993; Fisher & Harrison, 1997).

—Mobilizing community and professional support: Community resources can greatly expand the network of support for delinquent girls. Adult mentors who understand prevention strategies can be powerful allies and positive role models for girls. Mobilizing community support involves outreach efforts to draw adults into a program, orientation and training to educate them about prevention strategies, and monitoring to ensure that adult volunteers and girls maintain active and healthy relationships (Caliber Associates, 1995; Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1993).

—Providing group and individual activities: Comprehensive programming addresses behavior in context. As a result, programs deliver services to match each individual girl’s needs, geared to her developmental level, while also providing group activities.



WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS AND FEATURES OF PROMISING PROGRAMS?

The specific elements and features of gender-specific programs vary, depending upon such factors as the specific needs of the population being served, the size and scope of the program, and the goals of the sponsoring agency. Promising programs, however, share most of the following elements and features:

1. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT: Gender-specific programs are organized to create an environment in which girls can make positive life changes. Cohesion and cooperation among staff, for example, can counter chaotic and pathological family experiences many girls bring into treatment (Acoca, 1995). Managing by teamwork gives girls a chance to see adults modeling cooperation, respect, and good communication skills. A case management approach serves girls' needs for connection with a caring adult; consistency; and networking to plan for coordination of services across a continuum of care.

2. STAFFING PATTERN: In reviews of promising programs conducted for this report, the single most favorable aspect was invariably identified as a charismatic or "authentic" program staff. Staff who had "been there" themselves, who "walked the talk," seemed to have a better understanding of the issues girls were facing in their own lives. Girls expressed respect for the real-life experiences of staff members who could communicate on a level the girls could understand. Girls noted their relationships with specific staff members as key factors in their program participation and successful progression.

When possible, staffing should reflect the diversity of the population being served to foster ethnic identity. Many gender-specific programs hire all female staff. Women staff members are important in providing good role models and modeling healthy relationship skills. However, male staff can also provide effective treatment to girls, and both male and female staff will have unique life experiences that can be used positively in their interactions with girls. Many girls may not have had positive experiences with men in the past, especially if they were sexually abused or exploited by males, or if they grew up in households headed by women. In addition to offering positive role models, male staff can provide frank but clear feedback on how some men might perceive females.

3. STAFF TRAINING: For some staff members, gender-specific programming will be a completely new concept. All staff, both male and female, may have preconceived ideas or biases about female issues. Their preconceptions about the juvenile justice system may be based solely on experiences with young males. Effective staff training allows for staff

to share a common set of understandings about girls and to convey consistent messages to program participants. Gender-specific staff training focuses on:

- Program understanding: All staff, including those in non-counseling roles, should understand the vision, mission, program goals, and objectives of gender-specific programming.

- Adolescent female development: If staff understand adolescent female development, then they can allow girls the freedom to act age appropriately. For example, girls are more likely than boys to question rules and to ask for explanations to their questions. Staff need to recognize this as a desire for verbal engagement, not as a display of insubordination or lack of compliance (Acoca & NCCD, 1998). They should also understand that females are more likely to request and accept help.

- Risks and resiliency: Staff need to understand the importance of risk factors and protective factors in girls' lives. Because a history of sexual and physical abuse is widespread among girl offenders, for example, girls in secure residential facilities may feel revictimized if asked to submit to strip searches, searches of their personal belongings, or pelvic examinations to determine the extent of their sexual activity. Staff can be sensitized to focus on girls' strengths, such as the courage that has helped them survive victimization, or their willingness to pursue positive changes (Acoca & NCCD, 1998).

- Training also provides an opportunity for staff to explore their own personal developmental history, such as recalling their own self-image and life experiences during adolescence. Male staff will be made aware of issues unique to girls, for example, the high incidence of sexual abuse among this population. Informed staff who have addressed their personal issues will be better equipped to provide guidance and direction to these girls. For example, staff who have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in their own lives need to address these issues. Otherwise, their ability to work effectively with girls may be compromised (Acoca & NCCD, 1998).

- Knowledge of culture: Cultural sensitivity should be addressed during staff training, so that staff are familiar with the cultures, heritages, and languages of the specific populations being served. In gender-specific programs, staff value diversity and participate in an ongoing examination of stereotypes regarding race and culture.

- Assessment: Training teaches staff to anticipate and respond to the needs of individual girls and make appropriate referrals. For example, staff may be expected to evaluate whether a girl's health complaints merit medical attention. Additionally, they need to be trained to distinguish between behaviors that may be related to mental disorders and those signifying disciplinary problems (Acoca & NCCD, 1998). Staff are trained to identify, assess, and treat female victims of physical and sexual abuse and neglect.

4. INTAKE PROCESS: Beginning with their intake into a gender-specific program, girls should be treated as individuals. Assessment and orientation are opportunities for the staff to learn more about each girl and the path that has brought her into contact with the juvenile justice system. Girls in detention facilities need to receive comprehensive assessments that will assist providers in determining the girls' programming needs both within and outside the context of the detention facility. Intake in gender-specific programs includes:

—Assessment and orientation: Like triage in a health-care setting, intake provides an opportunity to assess and rank the girl's needs according to seriousness and to make decisions about the care and network of services needed to put her on the path to wellness. The process should include assessments of risks and resiliency factors to gain a picture of the "whole child" (Acoca & NCCD, 1998). A thorough assessment will screen for substance abuse; physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse; wellness; medical and mental health history and any other concerns that are population-appropriate. Case managers assess and rank girls' needs, paying particular attention to information relevant to gender and culture.

Girls who have experienced violations of trust in the past may express resentment, fear, or hostility at intake. Orientation is an opportunity to deliver the message that each girl will be treated with respect by trustworthy adults who will not abuse their power. Staff should be trained to listen closely to what the girls say and how they say it. It's also important to listen for what they do not say. Their omissions can be just as significant as the information they do share.

—Culturally relevant information: Girls from minority groups may benefit from working with intake staff who share their cultural or racial heritage or who understand their culture.

—Service plan: Assessment is used to develop a network of services and a treatment plan unique to the specific issues of the individual girl. Specifically, a treatment plan should address issues of victimization, low self-concept, poor identity formation, and ineffective decisionmaking skills.

5. EDUCATION: Education in gender-specific programs addresses the needs of the whole person, including her academic, social, and life skills.

—Academic: Girls who have struggled with school, who have dropped out, or who have a history of truancy will need help to get back on track academically and develop the higher-level skills (in math, science, and technical fields, for example) that will help prepare them for economic self-sufficiency. Girls may need special help or alternatives to traditional classroom instruction to cope with learning disabilities, overcome learning

deficits, or change negative attitudes about their ability to learn and the value of education. Because girls tend to value relationships, they may benefit from cooperative learning environments in which problem solving is a group task.

Academic assessment at entry into a program creates a baseline against which the girl can measure her increased competencies in such areas as math, English (written and spoken), and computer literacy (Acoca & NCCD, 1998). A complete academic history should include the girl's perception of her own academic strengths, weaknesses, and areas of special interest. Assessment should include screening to detect any learning and/or perceptual disabilities and help the girl recognize her own best learning style (how she uses auditory, visual, and kinesthetic functions to understand, process, and express information). When disabilities are detected, girls need to know that learning disabilities are unrelated to intelligence. Ideally, a specialist will help her to overcome or compensate for any learning disabilities, and also recognize her own academic strengths. For example, if a girl has difficulty processing information visually, she may find it easier to learn using audiotapes.

Specific program components may include preparation for higher education, career development, vocational training, high school completion or GED diploma, or English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

—Women's history and culture: Curriculum uses materials that speak to the girls' heritage and life experiences. Planning celebrations in honor of Women's History Month, African-American and Hispanic history months, for example, can add to girls' appreciation of their identity and heritage.

—Life skills: Real-world educational opportunities help girls understand how learning relates to life skills. Effective programs help girls make connections between what they study in the classroom and what they will need to know to thrive in the real world. Mentoring programs, guest speakers, and visits to worksites enable girls to make personal connections with women who are successful in the world of work.

—Women's issues: Research shows that girls may not be aware of how they have been affected by sex-role messages. A focus on women's issues offers an opportunity for girls to see how their lives have been shaped by economic disparity and poverty, victimization, relationship dynamics, and lack of positive role models. Education should point out the possible links between such issues as child abuse and substance abuse.

"I changed my thinking patterns, and I'm just sick of screwing up. Now I have goals set for myself."

—Participant, Southern Oaks Girls School

—Arts-based curriculum: Effective programs offer girls a chance to overcome patterns of silence or passivity. Alternative modes of expression, such as those incorporated into an arts-based curriculum, offer girls a way to find their voice and express themselves creatively. Arts-based curriculum programming may include visual arts, dance, drama, music, creative writing, or a combination of art forms.

—Physical development: Effective programs teach girls to understand what is happening to their bodies during puberty as a positive, normal aspect of becoming a woman. Girls who have matured earlier than their peers may need special attention to overcome feelings of alienation or peer-group rejection, which can put them at greater risk of delinquency.

—Sexual development: Because early sexual experimentation puts girls at increased risk of delinquency, sexuality education is a component of effective programs. Gender-specific educational programs teach girls that their bodies belong to them; that they have choices about how and when to explore their sexuality; and that they have power to set limits in relationships. Because so many girls who become delinquent have a history of sexual abuse, sexuality education can also help them separate past abuse from healthy sexual relating.

6. SKILLS TRAINING: Effective programs help girls discover their strengths and adopt prosocial skills. Specific program components may include:

—Assertiveness training, which helps girls who have felt victimized or passive find their voice, express choices, explore options, and set limits in relationships.

—Self-esteem enhancement, which teaches girls to appreciate and respect themselves, rather than relying on others for validation. Giving girls opportunities to be successful and to master new skills will give them a greater sense of their own value and competency.

—Empowerment training, which teaches girls to set and reach goals, recognize their own capabilities and strengths, and develop leadership skills. Giving girls the opportunity to help design, implement, and evaluate programs teaches them leadership skills. Victimization treatment empowers them to choose not to be a victim in the future.

—Physical training, which develops girls' sense of physical competency and strength. Programs may incorporate obstacle or challenge courses that involve positive risk-taking, teamwork skills, and personal commitment to reaching goals.

—Self-defense training, which teaches girls to define and recognize danger. Victims or witnesses of past abuse or violence benefit from learning practical ways to defend themselves in the future. They also learn to see themselves as survivors, rather than as victims.

7. PROMOTE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT: Effective programs teach girls that development is a life process. If they have gotten off a positive developmental track due to life challenges or risky behaviors, they can make changes and get back on track. A variety of program elements promote positive development, including those that address:

—Problem solving: By learning to solve problems in a variety of contexts (such as academics, group activities, and community projects), girls develop confidence in their own skills and increase their self-esteem. By learning effective decisionmaking and problem-solving skills, girls develop alternatives to risky or unhealthy behavioral practices.

—Positive relationship skills: Girls who have grown up in dysfunctional families may not have seen positive relationship skills modeled by adults. In addition, they may feel responsible for the family's problems if they have internalized blame. Effective programs give girls an opportunity to learn positive relationship skills and recognize negative consequences that can result from unhealthy relationship dynamics.

—Community-based initiatives: Programs that involve girls in community projects enable them to develop skills while promoting positive development. In such programs, girls typically work in teams to choose, research, plan, and implement projects. They hone leadership skills, practice effective communication and problem-solving skills, interact with adult role models, and have an opportunity to contribute to the life of their communities.

—Development to womanhood: Effective programs present girls with a positive model of being female that counters negative or narrow sex-role stereotypes. Programs such as "rites of passage" celebrations honor a girl's development to womanhood as a positive life event. These program elements encourage positive gender identity development, and are based on an understanding of girls' development as it relates to self-concept, self-esteem, physical development, and sense of social competency.

—Discovery of strengths and abilities: Preventive programming encourages girls to engage in self-discovery and personal growth. Effective programs offer girls a variety of outlets to discover and affirm their strengths and abilities, without regard to narrow gender stereotypes. Given options, girls may discover they excel at sports, art, music, dance, academics, vocational, or technical fields. Girls who are already mothers need encouragement and role models to discover their capacity to be a strong, nurturing parent.

8. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING: Effective programs don't attempt to compete with girls' need for relationships. Instead, programs address girls' behavior in context by focusing on the choices they have made (both positive and negative) as a result of relationships. Activities to build healthy relationship skills include:

—Women's issues groups, which build on girls' tendency to listen to and nurture others in interpersonal relationships. Group settings provide opportunities for girls to explore such issues as how females are socialized to be passive and without voice; gang membership, which offers girls a sense of affiliation within a negative context; and relational aggression, in which girls may deliberately inflict harm on a relationship by engaging in "backstabbing" or "triangulated" relationship dynamics (in which, for example, a girl may feel she has to "put down" or reject one friend in order to become closer to another). Programs should monitor relationally aggressive behavior, including inappropriate nonverbal communication such as rolling the eyes or body language that projects the message, "I don't care." Girls need to develop skills that enable them to share their concerns in a way that won't harm their relationships. They need a safe place to explore their intense feelings and an opportunity to voice their concerns without encountering rejection. Program strategies should facilitate assertive communication.

—Group therapy. Effective programs use therapy groups because this delivery method offers specific benefits to girls, not because groups are more time efficient or cost-effective than individual therapy. In particular, group therapy settings provide a safe, secure place for girls to address painful experiences related to family dysfunction, sexual abuse, substance abuse, or other situations in which they may have felt isolated, ashamed, or at fault. In group work, girls discover they are not alone in dealing with these issues. They can safely break their silence and express themselves openly.

9. CULTURALLY RELEVANT ACTIVITIES: Programs that value diversity work to counter negative stereotypes about race and culture that some girls may have internalized. Diversity activities promote individual pride, teach respect for the ethnicity of others, and stress similarities to the major culture.

—Dynamics of cultural interaction: Program staff need to be aware that girls bring different cultural patterns to their interactions. These patterns may involve different perspectives on space and time, ways of solving problems, and styles of interacting. Sensitivity to these differences will help address the diverse needs of all girls. Girls of different cultural backgrounds (including those with disabilities) may have communication styles that conflict with the preferred modes present in mainstream culture. This will require flexibility and cultural sensitivity to differences on the part of staff. For example, some cultures do not place the same importance on direct eye contact or have different standards for appropriate speaking volume.

—Language use: Program providers' language use and fluency can affect a program's credibility with minority populations. Effective programs communicate in the home language of a girl and her family. This may require bilingual/bicultural services, interpreter banks, and outreach efforts to overcome language barriers and connect girls with appro-

priate community resources. This would also apply when working with girls whose native language is English, but who speak in a vernacular that is not understood by those English speakers not living in the same community.

"Before I came here, I thought it was the woman's fault she got abused. Now I know that it's never her fault."

—Participant, *Harriet Tubman Residential Center*

—Protective factors: Effective programs recognize and reinforce those racial and ethnic family systems that promote resiliency in girls. Such family patterns may include kin help arrangements, which promote strong family bonding; messages encouraging women to be self-reliant and self-sufficient; involvement in churches and belief in spiritual values; strong work ethic; and promotion of community connection and identity.

—Curriculum adaptation: Incorporate curricula and materials that emphasize active student involvement such as cooperative learning groups, project-oriented tasks, and the use of manipulatives, visual aids, and models. Creating a learning environment that is open to diverse perspectives improves learning for all students. Incorporating some or all of the following strategies will help to maximize the participation of all girls:

- Have a bilingual group leader or co-leader or use bilingual assistants when programs include girls with limited English-speaking skills.
- Incorporate the contributions of original and non-Western cultures. For example, some American Indians used willow bark to treat fevers. Willow bark contains salicin, a key ingredient of aspirin. Many mainstream U.S. Americans are unaware of the contributions of the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America to agriculture, astronomy, mathematics, geology, botany, and nutrition.
- In introducing concepts, ask girls: "What is the history of the concept? Who first discovered it?" This opens the discussion to the cultural dimensions of a topic.
- Provide contact with culturally appropriate role models.
- Provide information about past culturally appropriate role models.
- Challenge students' and other people's attitudes or stereotypes about traditional occupations for women.

—Ethnic identity: Ethnicity can play an important role in positive identity formation. In addition, because girls tend to value relationships, they may be protected by seeking membership in a group defined by race or ethnicity. If a girl relates positively to others like herself, she comes to appreciate that part of herself that is defined by ethnicity.

—Adaptation of service delivery: Program activities need to be scheduled so that they do not conflict with family responsibilities, such as the need to care for younger siblings. In addition, competitive, informal, and often noisy environments may cause problems for girls who are used to more formal, quiet, or structured environments, or for girls who prefer group-oriented, cooperative environments.

10. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES: Effective programs encourage girls to explore and prepare for careers. Role models from career fields women have not traditionally pursued, such as math and science, can counter subtle messages about which fields are open to or appropriate for women. Professional-technical training helps girls see how their interests, abilities, and skills mesh with real-world job opportunities, and reinforces the message that education is a critical life tool.

"They taught me to make better choices."

Participant, Project Safe Place

11. HEALTH SERVICES: Effective programs provide girls with comprehensive health services, promoting physical and mental wellness. Many adolescent girls have a history of unmet health needs, especially those who have been runaways, homeless, or living in poverty. Screenings offer an opportunity to detect health concerns; plan for appropriate treatment, monitoring, and follow-up; and provide individualized health education. Screenings should include a complete health history, including anemia, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV), eating disorders, substance abuse, hearing and vision problems, infectious and communicable diseases, and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Medical staff should be aware of the health problems more likely to affect girls of color, who are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system. Diabetes, for instance, appears with greater frequency among African Americans (Acoca, 1998).

Medical staff also need to be aware of other issues that may be affecting an individual girl's health. A history of victimization, for example, indicates a need to screen for emotional concerns, such as flashbacks to the abuse, suicidal thoughts, and other possible symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Acoca, 1998). Symptoms such as irritable bowel syndrome, an outbreak of herpes, or stomach cramps may reflect a physical response to stress or crisis (Reed, 1994). Some girls may have a dual diagnosis of both substance abuse and a co-occurring psychiatric disorder (Acoca, 1998), such as an eating disorder or a tendency to self-mutilate. Both issues will need to be addressed in treatment.

Programs that focus on wellness promote good nutrition, exercise, reproductive health, disease prevention, and stress management. Health care also teaches girls to value and respect their bodies.

12. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES: Effective programs provide recreational activities that give girls challenging, positive experiences. Recreational activities are especially valuable as alternatives to delinquent behaviors (acknowledging the counseling adage, "If you take something away, there better be something to replace it.") Participation in sports, arts, volunteer activities, or a variety of extracurricular programs affords opportunities to end isolation, develop new skills, explore interests, relax, develop self-confidence, make friendships, feel creative, and replace self-destructive behavior with positive, life-affirming experiences.

13. RESPONSIVE SERVICES: In dealing with hard-to-reach ethnic populations, programs may need to seek outside support and services. Involving individuals who are familiar with a particular culture, such as trained lay therapists, paraprofessionals, or peer counselors, may help bridge the gap between service providers unfamiliar with ethnic customs, beliefs, and practices, and families in need of resources to help their daughters avoid or overcome delinquency.

14. MENTORING: Effective programs give girls a chance to interact with females who have mastered life challenges of their own. In particular, girls benefit from programs that incorporate:

—Gender-based role models. Strong, capable women provide girls with positive role models. They demonstrate the positive aspects of womanhood and counter negative or narrow messages about women. Programs should recruit mentors not only from the professional world but also from the girls' community.

—Role modeling: Older girls who have developed positive social skills benefit from opportunities to act as mentors to younger girls. Mentoring programs can be mutually beneficial. The older adolescent gains a chance to be nurturing and caring. The younger girl can identify with her mentor as a female who has overcome her own challenges.

15. PEER ACTIVITIES: Effective programs recognize the importance of peers to adolescent girls. Although negative peer pressure may have been a factor in a girl's delinquency (i.e., involvement in girl gangs), positive peer relationships can be a protective factor to prevent delinquency.

—Positive peer relationships: Adolescent female groups offer girls social support from within their own peer group. Group programs provide a chance for girls to develop positive relationship skills and create a positive sense of affiliation with their peers.

16. FULL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT: Effective programs build positive family support for girls. Parents are involved in the treatment plan. Program elements that strengthen and uplift families include:

—Discussion groups: Parents working to address dysfunctional family issues benefit from a chance to talk with other parents who are facing similar challenges. Discussion groups give parents a chance to learn and reinforce the positive skills that their daughters are developing. Psycho-educational groups focus on female development and female identity formation.

—Home visits: When a girl is to be returned to the family setting after her confinement in a residential program, home visits are especially important. Family dysfunction may have been a major contributing factor to her delinquency, and family intervention may be necessary before she is released. Home visits enable case managers to make assessments and develop a network of support services to assist the family.

—Mother-daughter bond: By reaching out to involve a girl's mother or another significant female family member (such as a grandmother or an aunt), effective programs strengthen the bond between mother and daughter. Research indicates that a strong, loving mother-daughter bond builds a girl's self-esteem and can help her resist peer pressure to engage in risky behavior. Programs may involve mothers and daughters in working together on community projects, or provide cultural opportunities (such as arts-related field trips or ethnic celebrations) for mother and daughter to experience together. Similar activities for fathers and daughters are provided when feasible.

17. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: By involving girls in their communities in positive ways, programs help girls see themselves as contributing members of society. Projects teach girls that they have real power to make changes in their neighborhoods and communities. Community involvement offers opportunities for:

—Community activities, service projects, field trips, all of which enable a girl to explore the world around her in a positive context

—Leadership skills, giving girls responsibility to organize groups to research and create projects

—Recreational activities, giving girls chances to have fun with their peers in positive ways

—Career exploration, exposing girls to new career fields and introducing them to role models in the workplace

18. SPECIFIC TREATMENT CONCERNS: Delinquent girls may need specific treatment to address serious issues that may have long-term consequences. Gender-specific programs use a combination of individual and group therapy to help girls address and overcome personal issues that have interfered with positive development during adolescence. Issues may be interwoven and complex. Specific issues that may require treatment include:

—Substance abuse, which may be both cause and consequence of delinquency. Treatment needs to address underlying issues related to substance abuse, such as a girl's history of sexual abuse, or substance abuse and co-dependency within her family. Effective programs include highly structured phases linked to clearly defined tasks, privileges, and consequences (Acoca, 1995). In gender-specific programs, these phases are based on an understanding of female adolescent development. An individual treatment plan should be developed for each girl and her family. Treatment should be integrated with medical care, especially for girls dually diagnosed (experiencing substance abuse and co-occurring psychiatric problems). Case management can help girls receive the ongoing care they need both during and after treatment.

—Prenatal and postpartum care: Comprehensive programming addresses the needs of both the teenage mother (or mother-to-be) and her baby. For the mother, prevention focuses on wellness during pregnancy and postpartum; parenting skills to reduce the likelihood of child abuse; and reduction of risky behaviors that could lead to another unplanned pregnancy before she reaches adulthood. Whenever possible, the father should be included in programming.

—Well baby and day care: Programs serving teen parents need to include comprehensive health care for babies and toddlers. Day care allows teen mothers time to focus on their personal issues, such as education and therapy. Involving mothers in day-care programs also offers them an opportunity to practice parenting skills in a safe, structured environment, while maintaining a strong bond between mother and child.

19. RE-ENTRY INTO COMMUNITY: Effective programs prepare girls for re-entry into the community with support designed to help them avoid repeating risky behaviors. Treatment plan includes assessing and developing resources to assist girls with re-entry, including mental and physical health care, educational, and vocational services. Re-entry services aimed at reducing recidivism among female juvenile delinquents may include:

—Aftercare: Effective programs provide a seamless continuum of care that does not end when girls return to the community. Keys to aftercare are "graduated support" (a gradual withdrawal of services rather than an abrupt end) and long-term monitoring by an aftercare worker. A structured program for helping girls return successfully to the community includes discussions, presentations, and counseling to prepare them for re-entry. A series of short furloughs can ease the transition by reintroducing girls to the community a little at a time. Aftercare workers—who help develop the girls' overall service plan and stay informed of their progress throughout their stay in the program—spend time with the girls before they leave the program in order to build trust and rapport. (Cowles, Castellano, & Gransky, 1995; Milan, 1996).

Chances for successful re-entry are best when aftercare includes placement in employment or an educational program, with ongoing links to appropriate social services, including health care, mental health services, and services that strengthen the family. Girls with histories of sexual abuse and/or substance abuse may need intensive ongoing treatment.

For youths with a high likelihood of repeat offenses, the Intensive Aftercare Program model developed with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention supports five principles to cut the risks of recidivism (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1995):

- Preparing the youth for progressively increased responsibility and freedom in the community
- Facilitating the involvement of and interaction between the youth and the community
- Working with both the offender and community support systems, including families, peers, schools, and employers, on the qualities needed for constructive interaction and a youth's successful community adjustment
- Developing new resources and support
- Monitoring and testing the youth and the community on their ability to deal with each other productively

20. EVALUATION: Effective evaluations help demonstrate which approaches are most useful in working with girls. Evaluations also expand the body of knowledge in this under-researched field, and can help communities and policymakers implement effective, cost-efficient, comprehensive services to help girls (Fetterman, 1996). Evaluation strategy should be built into programming from the earliest planning stages, throughout implementation, and on through the life of the program. As a management tool, evaluation gives information back to the program for the purpose of changing it, improving it, and renewing it (CRA, 1998).

Evaluation includes a number of benefits (CRA, 1998), including:

- Knowledge of where to focus energy for program improvements
- Help in determining when a program is falling behind schedule and when to make mid-course adjustments
- Knowledge of and ability to document program success
- Documented evaluation results to use in fundraising efforts
- Knowledge among staff that they are making a difference
- Ability to report success to program board, staff, funders, and policymakers

Gender-specific program evaluations are logical. They follow a feasible plan to solve identifiable problems. Typically, researchers and service providers jointly examine the risks facing adolescent girls, then list the protective factors that minimize risks of delinquency. Through discussion and problem-solving, service providers and evaluators determine which interventions will be attempted by the program. These interventions are then linked to measurable objectives.

—Goals, strategies, components: How much improvement does a program aim to accomplish? What resources are available to meet those goals? These questions lead to the setting of specific program goals. Then, strategies are developed to reach those goals. Program staff typically implement the intervention strategies.

—Process and outcome evaluations: Process evaluation assesses what a program does on a day-to-day basis (i.e., What actually happened? Who received the service? What were the interventions? How often did they receive service? Who provided the intervention? How was a continuum of services developed?). Outcome evaluation assesses the impact of the program over time (i.e., Is the program effective? Does it work? Is the program supporting female offenders in making positive change and pre-

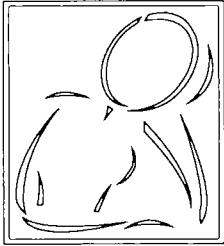
"I learned that I can't control some things, and of those that can, I can try to make the right decisions."

Participant, Southern Oaks Girls School

venting girls from entering the juvenile justice system?). Outcome evaluations may require a significant commitment of time, resources, and support (CRA, 1998). Most evaluations will assess intermediate outcomes rather than long-term impact (Linney & Wandersman, 1991). Intermediate outcomes are short-term goals that must be accomplished to have an impact on the number of girls entering the juvenile justice system.

—Feedback: Feedback provides information to those who can solve problems and redirect the organization. It's part of the learning process that evaluation provides. An evaluation plan should address how feedback will be communicated and to whom (Nadler, 1977).

More research is needed to determine the onset and course of female juvenile delinquency, and to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of gender-specific program models. Community-based programs serving this population may lack the evaluation resources to determine program effectiveness. College or university researchers may be able to provide these services in exchange for access to research populations. Creating links between service providers and researchers can provide an important mechanism for advancing gender-specific research and, eventually, helping to reduce the number of female delinquents.



SUMMARY

Gender-specific programs for female delinquents share key elements that boost girls' confidence and skills at the critical point of adolescence, allow them to get their development back on track if it has been interrupted or delayed by risk factors, and prepare them for a positive transition to womanhood. All staff who work with girls in juvenile justice settings need to share an understanding of the goals and philosophy of gender-specific programming. Each girl involved in a gender-specific program needs an individual assessment and treatment plan that will integrate services and put her on the path to wellness.

Appendix A

PROMISING PROGRAMS

ELECTION PROCESS. In an effort to learn about promising programs serving female delinquents or girls at risk of delinquency, Greene, Peters and Associates (GPA) pursued an ambitious selection process. For the first edition of this monograph (October 1998), they mailed nomination forms to more than 500 persons who have demonstrated an interest in juvenile justice issues. In addition, they met with representatives of the National Juvenile Justice Coalition and contacted organizations that serve adolescents across the country.

Nominations were received from 212 programs. After GPA requested information from each of them regarding program design and implementation, 87 programs responded. Of those, 14 were eliminated from consideration once GPA determined they did not meet minimum criteria for gender-specific programming. The remaining 73 programs were reviewed by GPA staff. Evaluation focused on the following areas:

General program criteria

- Appropriate intake assessment
- Use of intake assessment as basis for service/treatment plan or case management
- Family intervention/involvement
- Preparation for transition/reentry
- Cultural competency
- Follow-ups with agencies to which referrals are made to ensure accountability
- Formal, institutional interagency linkages
- Gender-specific program criteria
- Relevant to female development
- Issues of gender-specific programming are implicit in program goals, objectives, and/or mission
- Provide empowerment strategies (i.e., skill training, academic development, career/vocational training)
- Assessment and treatment of sexual abuse and related issues
- Ongoing gender-specific victimization training

After this review, 25 programs were identified as potential finalists. Independent consultants also reviewed some of the top programs using the same criteria. This two-tiered review process identified 16 programs as having promising, gender-specific components for serving adolescent female populations. From these 16 finalists, GPA requested additional information, such as program curriculum, staffing patterns, staff training, annual reports, and program goals. During site visits, GPA interviewed program staff, participants and, when available, girls' parents.

For the second edition of this monograph (August 2000), the 16 programs profiled in the original report were recontacted. Three community-based programs were deleted from this edition because they were no longer operating. In addition, juvenile justice experts from every state were invited to nominate programs for consideration. Nominated programs were asked to describe their services, with specific attention to gender-specific program components. From this process, three additional programs providing promising programs for female juvenile offenders were identified and added to the revised edition (Southern Oaks, Teen Quest, and Young Women Achieving Success), along with one community-based program (Project Safe Place).

Girls' observations

The majority of girls interviewed believed that their participation in a particular program had a positive, significant effect on their lives. Some girls said the program was "exactly what they needed" during a critical period in life.

Girls who participated in the program on a voluntary basis (typically, prevention and early-treatment programs) often expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to be together with girls who were like themselves. They tended to value group activities and individual attention from staff.

Not surprisingly, girls who had been involuntarily placed in programs (intervention and residential care) reacted differently. Many at first responded negatively to both the facility and the staff. They may have reacted with fear and anger to their loss of freedom. However, once they felt safe and comfortable with their new surroundings, and realized the program existed to help them, many girls changed their attitudes and behaviors.

Many of the girls were insightful about themselves and the value of gender-specific programs. They cited their participation in these programs as one of the main reasons they were not in more serious trouble, or even dead. They also understood that their personal growth would continue after they left a program. Because of their involvement with a gender-specific program, they understood that they now had a chance to reach their highest potential.

Of the 17 programs listed in this Appendix, the first 10 directly address the needs of the female juvenile offender population. The remaining seven, described in less detail, tend to be community-based programs aimed at keeping girls out of trouble. At a minimum, each program offers at least one promising component for effective gender-specific programming for adolescent females. Together, these 17 promising programs are increasing girls' options in a variety of settings. (See the following table for a quick look at the elements and features that characterize each program.)

Programs at a Glance

PROGRAM	LOCATION	PROGRAM SETTING	AGE GROUP/ETHNICITY	SPECIFIC GENDER RELATED PROGRAMMING	OTHER SPECIFIC TARGETED FACTORS
Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC) Gloria Zimmerman Memorial House	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Contact: Daniel Elby (717) 238-7101 (717) 245-0839 Fax: (717) 245-6392 E-mail: arcinc@ptdprolog.net	Residential Continuum of care	Ages 15-18 First come-first served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship building Victimization Nontraditional vocational training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting training Female sex offenders
Staff-Secured Detention Program for Female Juvenile Offenders, Girls and Boys Town USA	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Contact: Dawn McCray (215) 739-3742 Fax: (215) 739-5550 E-mail: paphisitedir@boystown.org	Detention	Ages 11-18 African American, Caucasian, Latina, Asian American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship building Staff training Life skills Victimization Date rape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIDS prevention Parenting training
Caritas House	Pawtucket, Rhode Island Contact: Susan Wallace (401) 722-4644 Fax: (401) 722-4867 E-mail: director@caritas-corkeryhouse.com	Residential	Ages 13-17 Caucasian, African American, Latina, Southeast Asian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual abuse Victimization Relationship building Staff training Women's studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol and drug treatment facility High-risk AIDS prevention
Life Givers	Fairbanks, Alaska Contact: Dana Burgan (907) 452-1274 Fax: (907) 452-1282 E-mail: fnalife2@mosquitonet.com	Residential	Ages 13-18 All groups, Native American priority, Pregnant and Parenting adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prenatal-postpartum care Well baby care & day care Staff training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol and drug treatment facility Positive ethnic identity
PACE Center for Girls	Headquarters Jacksonville, Florida Contact: Helena Almeida (904) 358-0555 Fax: (904) 358-0660 www.pacecenter.org E-mail: almeida@pacecenter.org	Day Treatment	Ages 12-18 All groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship building Staff training Life skills Positive gender identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small all-girls classes Community service Outreach
Pulaski County Juvenile Court, Volunteer Probation Officer-Teen Parenting Program	Little Rock, Arkansas Contact: Traci Weaver (501) 340-6700 Fax: (501) 340-7028	Probation	Ages 12-17 Teen parents African American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting skills Relationship building Matches teens & probation officers by gender and race 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires parental involvement

PROGRAM	LOCATION	PROGRAM SETTING	AGE GROUP/ETHNICITY	SPECIFIC GENDER RELATED PROGRAMMING	OTHER SPECIFIC TARGETED FACTORS
Division of Juvenile Corrections, Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Souther Oaks Girls School	Union Grove, Wisconsin	Secure juvenile facility	Ages 10-25 All ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's issue group • Independent living skills • Health issues • Social skills • Relationship building • Sexual abuse treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV peer mentor training • Anger management • Alcohol/drug abuse prevention • Black History • Create a Culture
Denver Area Youth Services (DAYS), Colorado Division of Youth Corrections, TEEN QUEST	Denver, Colorado	Secure residential treatment	Ages 13-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender issues in the media • Domestic violence • Close relationships • Social skills • Empowerment • Women's spirituality • Women recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse treatment • Drug and alcohol education • Cultural celebrations • "Return to the circle" spiritual program • Dance and art therapy
Harriet Tubman Residential Center	Auburn, New York Contact: Margaret Rice Harvey (315) 255-3481 Fax: (315) 255-3485 E-mail: htrc@localnet.com	Residential	Ages 12-18 Caucasian, African American, Latina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building • Staff training • Women's studies curriculum • Victimization • Self-empowerment skills • Positive gender identity 	
Young Women Achieving Success, 13th Family Court—Juvenile Division	Columbia, Missouri	Community-based	Ages 12-16 All ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building • Domestic violence • Peer support • Positive recreation • Communication skills • Responsible sexual behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse prevention • Self-defense • Eating disorders • Community service • Family relationships • Individual tutoring
City of Phoenix Parks, Recreation and Library Department—At-Risk Youth Division	Phoenix, Arizona Contact: Erik Kropp (602) 262-7370 Fax: (602) 262-7333 E-mail: ekropp@ci.phoenix.az.us	Community-based	Ages 10-18 All (represent community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building • Nontraditional career opportunities • Female development curriculum • Rites of passage program • Plan-it League basketball curriculum • Goal setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports • Leadership Development program • Collaborative

PROGRAM	LOCATION	PROGRAM SETTING	AGE GROUP/ETHNICITY	SPECIFIC GENDER RELATED PROGRAMMING	OTHER SPECIFIC TARGETED FACTORS
Diineegwashii	Fairbanks, Alaska Contact: Cyndi Nation-Cruikshank (907) 456-6306 Fax: (907) 456-6308 E-mail: din@alaska.net	Community-based	Ages 10-18 Alaska Native/American Indians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family management skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive ethnic identity • Alcohol and drug prevention
G.I.R.L.S. on the move!	Boston, Massachusetts Contact: Zahid Zahida Vides (617) 265-7040 Fax: (617) 265-6985 E-mail: zayvid@aol.com	Community-based	Ages 10-13 African American Latina/Hispanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building • Mentoring program • Life skills • Teen pregnancy • Dating violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol and drug prevention • Entrepreneur program • Career awareness • Academic tutoring
Nuevo Dia	Salt Lake City, Utah Contact: Marla Lepe-Colomenero (801) 521-4473 Fax: 801) 521-6242 Email: marla@la-familia.org	Community-based	Ages 10-15 Latina/Hispanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes mother/daughter bonding • Life skills • Study of Hispanic/Latina women • Positive gender identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive ethnic identity • School dropout prevention • Alcohol/drug prevention
Project Chrysalis	Portland, Oregon Contact: Stevie Newcomer (503) 916-5840 Fax: (503) 916-5771 E-mail: snewcome@pps.k12.or.us	School-based	Ages 14-17 Focus on girls with history of abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victimization • Relationship building • Staff training • Self-defense training • HIV awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol and drug prevention • Leadership skills
Project Safe Place, Jewish Family and Children's Service of Southern Arizona	Tucson, Arizona	Community-based	Ages 8-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse recovery • Enhancing protective factors • Individual, group, family counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent education • Family mentoring
Goodness I'm Female (T.G.I.F.)	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Contact: Inez Love (215) 851-1867 Fax (215) 940-0519 E-mail: HESHEMA@aol.com	Community-based	Ages 10-14 African American, Latina, Asian American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Life skills • Community service • Gender identity • Femininity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rites of passage program • Alcohol and drug prevention

Programs

Programs Serving Juvenile Female Offenders

Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC)

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

At a glance

Staff-secure residential treatment facility offering a continuum of care for girls ages 15 1/2 to 18 years; capacity, 15 girls; funded by individual counties and school districts

ARC, founded in 1975 to serve delinquent adolescents, opened Zimmerman Home for Girls in 1981 after the Department of Probation indicated a lack of resources or options for girls in the juvenile justice system. The girls' program is housed in a two-story, family-style home in a residential neighborhood. The bedrooms, on the second floor, accommodate up to four girls each.

ARC's program philosophy is focused on results: "If the outcome of our behavior, actions, and attitude is good for our students, then it is worth doing. If the outcome of our behavior, actions, and attitude is not good for our students, then it is not worth doing. We are the role models for our students. Therefore, our behavior, actions, and attitude must always be presented positively." Far from being a "whatever works" strategy, the philosophy emphasizes "choice theory." This reality-based approach reminds girls that they have control over their behavior and that they can choose positive and beneficial behaviors.

The all-female staff (approximately 75 percent African-American and 25 percent Caucasian) reflects the racial diversity of the participants. Staff training is intensive and ongoing. Full-time staff receive a minimum of eight weeks of training prior to working with girls. Part-time staff receive 32 hours of training by shadowing a senior staff person. Experienced staff share their expertise in formal training sessions and by serving as "peer coaches" with their colleagues. Teachers receive an additional two to four weeks of training, including observation of a current teacher. Gender-specific staff training includes discussion of such topics as, "What does it mean to be female?" and "Females and emotions." Staff positions include teachers, teacher's aides, counselors, and a counselor supervisor.

Girls are referred to the program by the Children and Youth Services Agency or the Department of Corrections. Their juvenile records vary, but many girls have been convicted of assault. They have faced serious risk factors such as educational difficulties, sub-

stance abuse, dysfunctional families, involvement with older males, gang affiliation, codependency, physical and sexual abuse, lack of self-esteem, and repeated running away. Codependency and sexual abuse are the most prominent factors.

Before being admitted to the Zimmerman Home, girls must complete an interview during which staff assess their willingness and readiness to work with the program. Once they become enrolled in the program, girls are encouraged to participate in the planning of their own treatment.

The staff at Zimmerman Home takes a holistic treatment approach, addressing issues related to the individual, family, and school. At intake, girls are evaluated for academic placement and receive an individual educational plan. Specific treatment needs are assessed, followed by development of an individualized treatment plan. A home visit is scheduled as soon as a girl is admitted to the program, to help parents understand how the program works and learn how they can help their daughter succeed. Parents are invited to attend their daughter's treatment plan meetings, and supervised weekly visits are permitted onsite for immediate family members.

A variety of life skills are targeted for development. Academic skills are addressed in onsite education. Classes have no more than 14 students. Each girl works at her own pace. Curriculum includes women's history and cultural programming. Recreational activities include aerobics, basketball, and field trips.

ARC contracts with vocational and technical schools to provide girls with twice-weekly career training in a variety of fields (including both female-dominated fields such as cosmetology and nontraditional fields such as auto repair). In addition, an onsite culinary arts program teaches job skills and offers certification.

The program encourages development of positive interpersonal skills. Positive relationships are modeled and nurtured by staff. Girls are encouraged to form positive relationships with staff members and with one another. Girls are also encouraged to help their peers make decisions that will keep them on the right track. If a participant violates a rule, the other participants are encouraged to attempt correcting her prior to involving a staff person. Specifically, ARC emphasizes the development of skills to enhance conflict resolution, parenting (for expectant teen mothers), assertiveness, decisionmaking, values clarification, and self-esteem. A program component called "Self-Awareness from Girl to Woman" promotes personal hygiene, emotional development, and self-acceptance of one's body. It gives girls a chance to explore female roles such as daughter, mother, and sister.

Treatment includes group and individual counseling to address issues such as victimization, substance abuse, and parenting. Because sexual abuse is one of the most prominent risk factors facing this population, ARC provides a specialized treatment component for

survivors of rape and sexual and physical abuse. Offender treatment is provided for female sex offenders and abusers. Case management is supervised by a staff psychologist, and each girl also has a personal counselor with whom she generally has daily contact.

As girls progress through the program, they work with staff to plan for a smooth reintegration into the community. Three home/community visits are conducted. Specific aftercare plans depend on each girl's individual needs, but can range from community reintegration to foster care.

Caritas House

Pawtucket, Rhode Island

At a glance

Provides a continuum of residential, prevention, and outpatient treatment programs for Rhode Island adolescent substance abusers and their families; oldest gender-specific, residential drug treatment program in the country; funded by Rhode Island Department of Health, supplemented by fundraising and sliding-scale fees

The Caritas residential program, located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, treats girls who are seriously abusing alcohol and other drugs. Founded in 1971, the program views the whole person in the dynamic context of total life circumstances. The underlying psychosocial model looks at the girl in terms of self and her relationship to family and the larger community. The program philosophy rewards hard work, commitment, and attainment of manageable goals, and fosters the development of social-competence skills.

Girls are typically referred by the Department of Children and Youth Services or the juvenile justice system, although there is an open referral process. Substance abuse is the presenting problem that must be evaluated through ASAM criteria before admissions can be made. Most girls face additional and related problems such as sexual abuse. Girls may also be the children of substance abusers; have a history of physical, emotional, and psychological abuse; and have a host of problems in all areas of their lives. They also have a history of suicide ideation and drug overdoses.

The rationale for program design is critical to treatment. It is designed to model a functional family and to respond to gender issues. The all-female staff are trained in gender differences. Program design incorporates many of the things that are missing in the lives

of adolescents presenting for treatment. These include structure, nurture, predictability, open communication, and respect for the individual. Treatment begins with assessment and orientation. At this stage, many girls express resistance and denial of problems. Once a girl has acknowledged her problems and becomes accustomed to the structured environment of Caritas House, she begins to progress through the three stages of treatment:

- Awareness
- Transition
- Community living

She can advance by setting manageable, incremental goals for herself and reaching them. Girls earn rewards only through their own hard work, commitment, dedication, and goal setting. They are also taught to recognize and appreciate their own resilience and strengths.

Girls need to fill gaps in their development because substance abuse caused them to miss valuable rites of passage. The program targets skills that are significant in substance-abuse recovery, especially social skills. Girls are taught to communicate their needs, to settle differences, to form healthy relationships, and to learn skills that will enable them to connect in a positive way with others. Staff members model these skills, and girls who have progressed in therapy are also encouraged to act as positive peer mentors.

Caritas House has found group therapy to be especially useful in working with adolescent girls who are more likely than boys to share their feelings and relate with one another in group settings. Daily therapy sessions focus on such issues as sexual abuse, eating disorders, sexuality, family issues, and self-esteem, as well as substance abuse. All these issues are addressed in the knowledge that gender plays an important role. The girls also have a primary sexual abuse prevention program as well as a women's study program, HIV/AIDS prevention, and a Rites of Passage program.

Families are encouraged to participate in treatment. The 28-year history has taught that parents present with similar problems as their children. Parents are nurtured and helped to gain the strength needed to be viable participants in their child's treatment. Because of gender issues and different socialization issues, parents have gender-specific group therapy in addition to parent groups and family counseling. In the early stages of treatment, when a girl may not yet be internally motivated to stop abusing drugs and alcohol, the family can provide external motivation to put her on the path to recovery. As treatment progresses, family counseling may focus on issues underlying the girl's drug and alcohol use. With her family, she discusses how to keep her commitment to recovery, how to deal with relationships and responsibilities, and how to avoid or rebound from relapse

as she prepares to leave the program. Siblings become involved in treatment to provide them with substance abuse education and primary prevention.

Caritas House provides structured aftercare and follow-up support as a girl makes the transition to community living.

Girls and Boys Town USA

Staff-Secure Detention Program for Female Juvenile Offenders

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

At a glance

Staff-secure detention with individualized treatment plans and programming for girls ages 11 to 18 years who are awaiting placement by juvenile court; capacity, 18 girls; funded by the city of Philadelphia, private donations, and a national endowment

Girls and Boys Town, which began serving homeless and delinquent boys more than 80 years ago (as Father Flanagan's Boys' Home), has evolved to become a multidimensional treatment agency for children and families. In 1979, the agency began serving girls. In 1988, it began to implement gender-specific programming to meet the unique needs of girls. In 1996, the Boys Town Detention Center for Girls was opened in Philadelphia in response to the city's request for a detention facility for female delinquents. It is housed in a three-story refurbished convent, with seven large bedrooms. The warm, colorful environment includes both classical art and more contemporary works celebrating ethnic minorities and women.

The philosophy at the girls' facility in Philadelphia is consistent with the organization's overall vision: "to change the way America takes care of her at-risk children" through "old-fashioned love and respect and new-fashioned science." Girls are encouraged to learn about themselves in relation to others.

The staff is overwhelmingly female and racially diverse (more than 90 percent ethnic minorities, predominantly African Americans with two Hispanics). By policy, male staff members never spend time alone with female clients. New staff members spend 120 hours in preservice training, one-third of which focuses on gender-specific issues such as attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity in girls, sexual acting out, female hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy prevention, and eating disorders. Inservice training is ongoing, with meetings held at least weekly. Staff positions include youth care

workers, senior youth care workers, case manager, staff supervisor, coordinator, interventionist, and site director.

Girls are referred to the program by the courts. More than 90 percent are members of minority groups; 87 percent are from single-parent homes; the average age is 15. Many girls face multiple charges, often including person offenses or probation violation. Most girls have encountered a host of risk factors, including physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, risk of pregnancy, truancy, school dropout, history of aggressive or violent behavior, history of mental problems, attempted or contemplated suicide, developmental disabilities, and lack of adult supervision. Staff consider lack of adult supervision to be the most prominent risk factor, and also the factor likely to lead to all the other risk factors.

Although girls may stay at the center for only a brief time, Girls and Boys Town attempts to treat the whole child. Holistic treatment begins at intake, when each girl receives a comprehensive assessment and an individual treatment plan that is based on her specific issues and needs. Assessments follow girls to all subsequent placements. Individual treatment plans focus on long- and short-term goals, life skills, and inhibiting behaviors. Individual plans incorporate group and individual counseling, which may focus on specific female issues such as victimization and self-esteem. Girls also complete an individualized "treatment workbook." At intake, each girl is paired with a "buddy" from the staff who helps her become acclimated to the program.

Community reintegration is a key focus of treatment and programming. A girl's family is assessed soon after she enters the program, and treatment involves her family or guardian. Sessions with the "family interventionist" focus on specific issues and incorporate problem solving and behavioral counseling. As a result of meetings with the girl and her family or guardian, probation officer, and program staff, the interested parties agree to a contract about their expectations for the girl and her family or guardian's participation in proposed aftercare.

Life skills targeted for development are those deemed most likely to assist girls in making a smooth transition after leaving the program. They include communication, social skills, personal hygiene, independent living, goal setting, problem solving, anger management, and self-care. The program also promotes alternatives to negative behaviors. Staff encourage positive behaviors through the practice of "teaching," in which they give girls feedback on their behavior throughout the day. Girls also participate in academic classes and career counseling. Onsite recreation and field trips are offered as rewards for personal achievement.

Aftercare is provided for up to six months after discharge.

Life Givers

Fairbanks, Alaska

At a glance

Residential treatment program for Native American girls, ages 13 to 18, who are pregnant or parenting and also recovering from substance abuse (primarily alcoholism); capacity, seven girls and their infants and toddlers; funded by Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and the State of Alaska

Operated by the Fairbanks Native Association under the umbrella of Women's and Children's Services, Life Givers was founded in 1994 in response to increasing teen pregnancy rates among Alaska Native girls (one in five Alaska Native girls becomes pregnant each year). In addition to serving teen parents, the program also attempts to improve outcomes for their infants by preventing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Affect. Life Givers shares a new facility—including living quarters, gym, nursery, classrooms, and conference rooms—with an assisted-living program for elders. All areas incorporate Native American décor.

Life Givers is guided by the theory that culture is healing. Native culture and history provide girls with a life philosophy, a support system, and a lens through which they can view the world. The holistic program encourages girls' strength and resiliency, and promotes their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Fathers are encouraged to participate in treatment.

The all-female staff is predominantly Native American (53 percent). Prior to providing services, staff members are required to complete a nine-month self-study course on addictions. In-house training continues weekly on issues related to female adolescence, child care, substance abuse, parenting, and other topics. Staff positions include program director, data specialist, teacher, treatment coordinator, counselor, nurse educator, child-care specialist, night monitor, and mental health specialist.

Girls who enter the program are Native American and pregnant or already parenting (no more than three years). Girls are referred by the state department of youth services, adoption agencies, mental health clinics, and other sources. Most have substance-abuse problems, and many also have a history of sexual abuse or other victimization. Girls must be positively motivated to participate in the program. Their length of stay can range from three months to one year.

Intake begins with an assessment (including detoxification, if necessary). Girls then move at their own pace through four program phases, each of which is imbued with Native values and traditions. New Beginnings is a journey from chemical misuse and abuse to recovery. Balancing focuses on holistic health, including proper nutrition and mental, physical, and spiritual wellness. Family and Community Connections integrates the father of her child and other members of the girl's family into the treatment process. Sobriety Support incorporates planning and support for long-term sobriety and relapse prevention.

Throughout their stay, girls regularly meet with Alaskan Native Elders to build intergenerational relationships and learn more about their culture. As they move through the four program phases, girls focus on cultural history, cultural awareness, cultural diversity, and cultural integration.

Skills specifically targeted for development include parenting skills; personal responsibility; time management; goal setting and planning skills; social, life, and vocational skills; and health education (including sexuality, relationships, and family planning). Each girl has a personal counselor with whom she typically has daily contact. Individual and group counseling are provided weekly, and case management is ongoing. Health care includes prenatal and postpartum care. Education is provided onsite.

The girls' infants and toddlers receive comprehensive care, including developmental assessment, individual development planning, health screening, well-baby care, and day care.

Family involvement is encouraged. As soon as a girl enters the program, a home visit is scheduled to help her parents understand the program and learn how they can help their daughter succeed. Extensive aftercare services are provided to prevent relapse, and follow-up continues for one year.

PACE Center for Girls

Jacksonville, Florida

At a glance

Day treatment program offering comprehensive prevention, early intervention, and high school education to adolescent girls, ages 12 to 18, who are considered at risk of delinquency; total capacity, 1,820 girls at 17 centers located throughout Florida (optimal size per center is 40 girls); funded primarily by the Department of Juvenile Justice, with additional resources from school boards and private donations

Started by a small group of volunteers dedicated to making changes for girls in the juvenile justice system, PACE (Practical Academic Cultural Education) Center for Girls opened its doors in 1985 as an alternative to institutionalization or incarceration. The organization that began with \$100 in a bank account, a borrowed room in a Jacksonville church, and 10 girls ready to make a change in their lives has grown to include 17 centers across Florida, each one providing middle and high school academics, gender-specific courses, and a social services component.

PACE aims to improve the lives of at-risk girls by providing them educational opportunities to learn and grow and become productive citizens. Education is considered the key to helping girls develop self-esteem, envision a positive future for themselves, overcome life challenges, and live violence-free.

Staff members at each center tend to reflect the local community's ethnic composition. New staff spend two weeks in training, in the form of orientation and job shadowing. During their first year, employees must participate in 120 hours of training. Inservice training is ongoing and comprehensive. Gender-specific topics make up about 60 percent of staff training, and even general topics are presented with special emphasis on how they relate to adolescent girls. Each PACE Center employs an executive director, program managers, teacher/advisors, social workers, and an administrative assistant. The teacher-student ratio is one to 10.

An open referral procedure means that girls can be referred to PACE from any source, including juvenile court, family members, friends, teachers, counselors, or girls themselves. Each girl has an intake interview where a needs assessment is conducted. From the needs assessment, it is determined if PACE can meet that girl's specific needs. The typical girl at

a PACE center has not thrived in a traditional school setting because of a myriad of academic, social, and emotional issues. Most girls are behind in their academics. Seventy-five percent of the girls live at the poverty level; 45 percent are from single-parent homes; 31 percent have committed status offenses. Most have been exposed to a number of risk factors, including physical abuse (24 percent), sexual abuse (24 percent), and drug or alcohol use (45 percent).

Once a girl enters the program, she participates with her social worker and teacher/advisor in a comprehensive needs assessment. The needs assessment includes an initial home visit, academic assessments, vocational assessments, and interviews with the girl and her family. Individualized treatment plans are developed to outline each girl's educational needs and address treatment concerns. Face-to-face contacts are scheduled at least once each month with the girl and her family, and focus on the progress of the girl and any areas of concern.

Girls attend PACE academic classes for a minimum of 300 minutes a day, five days a week. In addition, they participate in individual and group counseling, volunteer service projects, and advisee groups. All girls also participate in SPIRITED GIRLS!, a gender-specific curriculum consisting of eight academic modules. The girls learn how to make positive life choices, appreciate cultural differences, learn of vocational opportunities available to them, and live violence-free. Students also serve as peer counselors to teach others in their school and in their community about healthy choices. Throughout the curriculum, girls develop self-esteem, learn decisionmaking skills, and build positive relationships.

Girls complete the PACE program either by completing their high school education, mainstreaming back to public school, or transitioning to a program to meet their specific needs. Transitional services and support continue for up to three years after girls leave the day program.

Pulaski County Juvenile Court Volunteer Probation Officer-Teen Parenting Program Little Rock, Arkansas

At a glance

Early intervention/probation program that uses volunteer probation officers to supervise first-time and nonviolent offenders who are also teen parents; capacity, 15 girls; funded by grant from OJJDP as part of larger volunteer probation officer supervision program

When Pulaski County Circuit Judge Rita Gruber noticed that many first-time offenders were “falling through the cracks” of juvenile court due to the heavy case loads of probation officers, she established a Volunteer Probation Officer (VPO) program to better supervise minor offenders and prevent future delinquency. Based on a model in Shelby County, Tennessee, Pulaski County’s VPO program began operating in 1992. Because of a high rate of teen pregnancy among girls on probation, and the special risks facing both teen mothers and their children, a gender-specific component was later added to supervise female offenders who are pregnant or parenting. Supervision and parenting education takes place through visits and phone calls to the girls’ homes.

The Volunteer Probation Officer program addresses teen pregnancy as an issue that spans three generations—the juvenile, her parents, and her child. The program not only aims to prevent teen pregnancy among offenders who are on probation, but also to increase the competency of those teens who are pregnant or already parenting. The in-home education and support provided to participants fits with the juvenile court’s philosophy of rehabilitating juveniles through the least restrictive means.

Because this program relies on volunteers to serve as probation officers, staffing is dependent on the success of recruitment efforts. Typically, the program operates with a staff of 120 Volunteer Probation Officers, of whom 10 to 15 have undergone extra training to work with teen parents. (All VPOs receive 10 hours of initial training; those in the teen parenting program receive an additional two hours of training focusing on parenting skills and female development.) Girls are supervised by female volunteers. Frequently, girls and their VPO are of the same race or share an ethnic background. The program employs an in-home facilitator, who is a licensed social worker, and a volunteer supervisor.

The majority of girls in the teen parenting program were born to teen mothers themselves. Seventy-four percent of the girls are African American, 26 percent Caucasian. Their most common offenses include shoplifting, battery, or status offenses. Many of the probationers have received poor or inadequate parenting and little adult supervision. They may have been exposed to parental substance abuse, personal substance abuse, and domestic violence (as witnesses or victims). Many have experienced chronic school failure and may have learning disabilities. Staff believe that many of the girls are seeking attention, love, and acceptance in negative ways.

The first stage of programming, after a girl is referred by Juvenile Court or Children and Family Services, involves 10 weekly home visits by the "in-home facilitator." Each visit, lasting from one to two hours, offers parenting education and positive skill development to the girl and her family. The girl's parents are required to attend at least the last four weekly sessions, when the topics include limit setting, supervision, birth control, and sexuality. After the first 10 weeks, follow-up supervision is conducted by a VPO who makes home visits or phone contact every week. Each girl also has an individual needs assessment and service plan, which helps connect her with other community resources.

The program enables girls to bond with a caring adult who provides a positive role model. Relationship building is a major emphasis of the program.

Southern Oaks Girls School

Union Grove, Wisconsin

At a glance

Secure residential facility for girls and young women, ages 10 to 25; capacity, 83; funded by Wisconsin Division of Juvenile Corrections

A secure facility operated by the Wisconsin Division of Juvenile Corrections since 1995, Southern Oaks Girls School delivers gender-specific programming to 83 girls and young women. Recognizing the unique needs of delinquent females, Southern Oaks attempts to both challenge girls and hold them accountable.

Southern Oaks is authorized to accept residents from ages 10 to 25, but the population typically falls between the ages of 12 to 17. Most of the girls have a history of abuse. On average, they are three grades behind in their education. When they enter the

program, they tend to have low self-esteem and lack a positive self-image. Many girls have medical, mental health, or emotional problems that have gone unmet prior to their arrival at Southern Oaks. Based on 1999 demographics, the population is predominantly Caucasian (42 percent) and African American (42 percent), and also includes smaller percentages of girls who are Native American (6 percent), Hispanic (6 percent), and Asian American (2 percent). A handful of girls (4 percent in 1999) are either pregnant or already parenting.

Staff are trained to understand the unique needs of female offenders. Southern Oaks employs a staff of psychologists, treatment social workers (who provide case management and treatment groups), reintegration social workers (who coordinate community reintegration, court appearances, and aftercare placement, and work with girls' families), youth counselors, teachers (for both academic and vocational education), and additional specialists. In 1999, the staff was approximately 75 percent Caucasian, 21 percent African American, and 3 percent Hispanic. About 75 percent of staff members are female.

After an initial intake period of up to 30 days, during which new arrivals undergo a multidisciplinary assessment to identify treatment issues and develop an education plan, girls are assigned to one of six small, self-contained living units housed in the two main buildings. A structured system of "levels" gives girls a clear set of expectations and clearly defined goals. They work their way from a very structured, secure environment to one where they become independent decisionmakers and prepare for their return to the community. Specialized treatment is provided for girls who need more intensive help with such issues as anger management, behavior management, or mental health needs resulting from victimization. The newest program component provides intensive treatment for up to six girls with severe mental health needs. An eight-bed transitional living facility, housed in a separate building and privately managed, may be the last step before reintegration to the community.

Southern Oaks is located in a pastoral setting on the grounds of a former institution for the developmentally disabled. The space includes room for gardens, which double as outdoor science laboratories. An adventure-based ropes and challenge course is designed to provide girls with the opportunity to build self-esteem, engage in cooperative problem solving, and experience healthy risk-taking. Southern Oaks also has its own Girl Scout troop; a monthly theme, related to Scouting activities, is woven into treatment groups and academic programs. Girls engage in at least an hour of physical education daily, to reduce stress and enhance wellness. They also have an hour a day for reflection and journal writing. Opportunities for spiritual growth are provided regularly.

Teen Quest

Denver, Colorado

At a glance

Secure, residential treatment facility for girls; capacity, 20; developed and operated by nonprofit Denver Area Youth Services; funded by Colorado Division of Youth Corrections and Colorado Department of Education

Teen Quest is a secure residential facility offering comprehensive, gender-specific services for girls committed to the Division of Youth Corrections. Since opening in 1994, Teen Quest has invested time and resources in staff and services to strengthen programming and provide a safe and structured environment. The 20-bed facility is housed in a cottage on the grounds of Mount View Youth Services Center.

Girls range in age from 14 to 19. Their average stay at Teen Quest is nine months. Currently, the population is about 30 percent Caucasian, 55 percent Hispanic, 10 percent African American, and the remaining 5 percent Native American, Asian, or other ethnicities. Many girls have a history of substance abuse. Some are pregnant or parenting. Nearly 90 percent suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome as a result of experiencing abuse or witnessing trauma. Staff counselors, teachers, or psychologists refer the girls for testing for learning or behavioral disorders. These assessments, together with prior referrals for special education, identify about 70 percent of the girls with learning or behavioral disorders. The majority are two or more grades behind academically when they arrive at Teen Quest. Testing is conducted to track their academic progress.

Since 1996, staffing and organizational changes have been instituted to improve gender-specific practices. Teen Quest has focused specifically on building on the strengths of staff members and encouraging them to model the behaviors that girls are asked to adopt. The program has changed how staff work with girls and dramatically reduced the use of physical restraints. A schedule has been adopted to provide consistency and predictability for both girls and staff. In training, the racially diverse line staff has examined such issues as gender roles, media depiction of women, and what it means to be female. Teen Quest has joined the national Girls Equitable Treatment Coalition and consulted with a nationally known gender specialist for technical assistance.

Although Teen Quest is housed in its own facility, it shares the Mount View campus with boys who are in detention. (The boys and girls do not interact or utilize recreation or food services at the same time.) To combat taunting or name-calling by boys, a policy has been enacted to address harassment and impose consequences.

Currently, Teen Quest counselors are all female, providing girls with positive role models. They have bachelor's or master's degrees and are supervised by a licensed clinical social worker. Teen Quest staff work with a consulting psychologist and psychiatrist and employs a certified drug and alcohol counselor.

Teen Quest's gender-specific program model for girls incorporates skill development, self-esteem building, identity building, empowerment, and development of healthy relationships (with self and others). Activities build on girls' strengths through a variety of experiences, such as keeping a journal, physical exercise, dance therapy, and art therapy. Individual counseling helps girls set treatment goals and monitor their progress. Groups focus on specific issues, such as grief and loss, conflict resolution, social skills, or domestic violence.

An onsite school provides a full academic program, adapted to focus on women's issues and to use relationships (such as peer tutors) to enhance learning. Classes include both core curriculum and electives, focusing on life skills such as parenting or vocational topics such as technology training.

Opportunities for recreation are provided daily in an effort to promote lifelong health and appropriate use of leisure time. In addition, Teen Quest has received state grant funding to develop an Integrated Health Fitness project, designed to offer girls and young women information, exercise, and support in areas of nutrition, health, fitness, and body image.

Planning for transition back to the community begins while girls are still residents of Teen Quest, and includes preparation for returning to work or school. Families are involved in planning if girls are to return home. Counselors keep communications open with girls after they leave Teen Quest, and graduates of the program are invited back to talk with current residents about their success and challenges in returning to the community.

Harriet Tubman Residential Center

Auburn, New York

At a glance

Residential "step-down" facility (between secure and group home) for girls ages 15 to 18 years who are considered minor or first-time offenders; capacity, 25 girls; funded by New York State Division for Youth with additional support from volunteers

The Harriet Tubman Center, opened in 1994, was one of seven new juvenile facilities built in New York with Title IV grant funding. Margaret Rice-Harvey, youth education coordinator, Patricia Pesoli-Bishop, community volunteer, and Inez Nieves-Evans, former director, developed a multicultural curriculum that highlights the rich history of women in the state of New York. The center is located on beautifully landscaped state grounds and includes four buildings: residential facility (with a private bedroom for each girl), gym/media center, workshop, vehicle storage building, and greenhouse. The walls are decorated with portraits of famous women.

With a goal of enabling delinquent girls to return to their homes as productive members of society, the Tubman Center delivers a unique blend of education and therapy. By learning about the accomplishments of women in history, girls come to understand that they have many options in life, and that they possess the self-determination to set and reach their own goals.

The staff includes both men and women (currently eight male and 22 female staff members), who receive 10 hours of gender-specific training before delivering services. At least 120 hours of additional training is required during the first year of employment and 40 hours each subsequent year. Staff positions include a director, assistant director, youth-division aides (levels I-III), youth-division counselors, an education coordinator, academic teachers, and youth recreation specialist.

Girls are referred to the Tubman Center by juvenile court. Typically, girls are status offenders, step-downs, or revocators. The most prominent risk factors the girls face include unstable home environments, lack of care, and poor bonding. Additionally, many girls have experienced substance abuse or physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Other risk factors relate to poor academic performance, domestic violence, negative peer relationships, family substance abuse, and family history of criminal involvement. Some girls have attempted

or contemplated suicide. The population is racially diverse (the composition changes, but is currently 25 percent Hispanic, 35 percent Caucasian, and 40 percent African American).

Girls progress through a structured program at Tubman Center. When they arrive, they are granted few privileges and are under close supervision. They progress by learning and exhibiting self-control, positive decisionmaking, and relationship-building skills. Gradually, as girls set and reach personal goals, they earn more freedom and move from a highly structured environment to one that relies on the individual girl's internal control and problem-solving skills. In the final stage before release, girls are involved in planning, researching, and making decisions about their own future. Throughout the program, girls receive group and individual counseling, case management, and peer support. Treatment is individualized.

Women's studies are incorporated throughout the program in an effort to expand girls' awareness of opportunities available to them as females. A resource center stocked with videos, books, and more than 1,500 biographical files teaches girls about resourceful, inspirational women of diverse cultures who have overcome obstacles and social resistance throughout history. The curriculum teaches girls to take pride in their gender, and to develop the determination and self-esteem to overcome sexist messages they may have heard throughout their lives.

A curriculum component called "Adelante" addresses victimization issues, promoting abuse awareness, prevention, and personal empowerment. Other targeted skills include conflict resolution, time management, anger management, stress management, and independent living skills.

As girls prepare to leave the Tubman Center, their families are involved in after-care planning. Staff also help girls locate resources in their home communities to provide follow-up support and services.

Young Women Achieving Success

Columbia, Missouri

At a glance

Interactive programming providing positive recreation and gender-specific education to girls, ages 12 to 16, who are under court supervision; capacity, 75; funded by Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act through Missouri Department of Public Safety and Juvenile Justice Advisory Group

Founded in 1998 to reduce subsequent referrals for girls already under juvenile office supervision, Young Women Achieving Success is a program of the Thirteenth Judicial Court, Family Court Services, in Columbia, Missouri.

The program has capacity for 75 girls, ages 12 to 16. Most girls have come into contact with the courts because of status offenses such as running away or other behavior that has put them at risk. Many have demonstrated need in the areas of sexual adjustment, drug and alcohol use, peer and family relationships, school attendance or academics, and exposure to domestic violence. Participants come from Boone and Callaway counties. The population is 64 percent white, 26 percent African American, 5 percent biracial, 3 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Asian.

Young Women Achieving Success is staffed by Deputy Juvenile Officers from Boone and Callaway counties, with assistance from several part-time program aides.

Grounded in research underscoring the importance of positive relationships to build resiliency and self-worth in adolescent girls, the program provides girls with opportunities for recreation and education within a supportive environment. Regular group meetings give girls opportunities to work closely with their peers and build trust in one another. Interactive programming brings girls together with staff for recreational activities, such as making pottery or bowling. Graduates of the program report that the chance to build a trusting, supportive relationship with a caring adult is one of the most valuable experiences the program offers.

Workshops and classes educate girls on topics geared to the female experience, such as effective communication, substance abuse, sex education, parenting, self-defense, rape prevention, eating disorders, and career planning. Girls also have a chance to become involved in community service activities.

The program works with participants' families to strengthen relationships at home, especially between mothers and daughters. Inclusive programming educates family members about issues facing girls and also provides a forum for sharing experiences between generations. For example, the program has hosted a mother-daughter workshop on domestic violence and a mother-daughter banquet.

On the eve of her graduation from the program, one girl described her experience:

"The day ... I was graduating from the group I thought, what am I going to do with my time? So I thought about all my accomplishments from the group. I think back to when I first started. I had just gotten out of a meeting with my juvenile officer. I tried making excuses for why I couldn't come to this group because it completely messed up my schedule. I decided I would skip group, and I realized after skipping a couple of times that they weren't going to give up on making me attend. After that, my attendance got really good. I started participating and giving my opinions in which I thought and believed. Look at me now—I'm graduating from the group with a positive attitude toward myself, life, past, present, and future."

—*Young Women Achieving Success Tribune*, July 1999

Programs

Community-Based Intervention/Prevention Programs

City of Phoenix, Parks, Recreation, and Library Department, At-Risk Youth Division

Phoenix, Arizona

Among the many city-funded programs that operate from community centers in Phoenix, several target preteen and adolescent girls with gender-specific programming designed to help them find positive personal and social fulfillment. Programs for girls include a women's issues group, designed to give African American girls a positive peer group and opportunity to discuss such issues as substance abuse, relationships, rape and date rape, and sexually transmitted diseases; "rites-of-passage" groups, designed to help girls of varied cultural backgrounds make a positive transition from adolescence to adulthood; "Mercury Plan It," a program in which players and coaches from a professional women's basketball team (Phoenix Mercury) teach basketball skills to high school girls, who then coach and officiate for elementary and middle school girls; "Girls Break Troupe" and "Activities Group," two dance troupes that also develop life skills and foster positive relationships.

Diineegwashii

Fairbanks, Alaska

Diineegwashii, funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, is a substance-abuse prevention program targeting Alaska Native girls. The philosophy is based on native cultural values, and most staff members (89 percent) are American Indian or Alaska Native. The program uses home visits and case management to strengthen bonds between the adolescent girl and her family and confront profound risk factors facing many Alaska Native girls (teen pregnancy rate of 20 percent for Alaska Native girls ages 15 to 19; school dropout rate of 12.6 percent; high incidence of sexual and/or physical abuse, substance abuse, runaways). Home visits teach life skills, cultural awareness, and family management skills to teen girls and their mothers. The program also includes field trips, success ceremonies, and family and community gatherings. During the program's first four years, none of the 77 girls enrolled became pregnant; only 2.5 percent dropped out of school; substance abuse dropped significantly; and girls and their parents accomplished important personal goals.

G.I.R.L.S. on the move!

Boston, Massachusetts

Girls Identifying Resources and Life Skills (G.I.R.L.S.) on the move! targets adolescent girls, ages 10 to 14 years, who live in subsidized housing in a Boston-area neighborhood, and who are considered vulnerable to risky behaviors. Funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the program serves a low-income population of African-American and Hispanic girls, most of whom live in female-headed households. Programming teaches positive life skills to help girls develop resistance to crime and delinquency, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, and academic failure. Program components include skill-building classes, career education, discussion about health and girls' issues, role modeling, mentoring by women, parent groups, and information and referral for girls and their families.

Nuevo Dia

Salt Lake City, Utah

Nuevo Dia, founded by Centro de la Familia, a community-based nonprofit agency, targets Latina girls ages 11 to 15 years who are school dropouts or at risk of dropping out. The program encourages academic skill building for the girl and her mother, and helps strengthen the mother-daughter bond. Mothers provide positive role models and gain new skills that enable them to help their daughters succeed in school. The 15-month program serves 25 mother-daughter pairs. Program focus includes academic skills, life skills, role modeling, sexuality, gender bias, assertiveness training, and relationship skills. Cultural awareness classes and field trips help connect mother-daughter pairs with their community and build positive ethnic identity.

Project Chrysalis

Portland, Oregon

Project Chrysalis, funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, is a two-year program for high school girls, 14 to 15 years old, who have been victims of sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse. Many girls also face additional risk factors (including substance abuse, academic failure, and economic disadvantage). Program components include weekly support groups and workshops focusing on life skills, self-esteem, drug education, and relationships; "Girls Empowerment," self-defense and assertiveness training, which teaches girls to define danger, practice street safety, differentiate between flirting and sexual harassment; and a one-day challenge course (held in a gym and offering group and individual physical challenges) designed to teach leadership skills, cooperation, positive risk-taking, persistence, and personal responsibility. High school staff serve as case managers. In addition to the 328 girls in Project Chrysalis, another 297 girls with similar backgrounds comprise a research comparison group.

Project Safe Place

Tucson, Arizona

Project Safe Place provides an intensive outpatient program for girls, ages seven to 17, who are at risk of delinquency because they have experienced significant abuse-sexual, physical, and/or emotional. The program, established in 1996 and sponsored by Jewish Family and Children's Service of Southern Arizona, Inc., aims to prevent delinquency by helping girls heal from abuse before they act out in ways that put them at risk, such as substance abuse, running away, or prostitution. For girls who are already involved with the court system, the program aims to decrease the likelihood of further delinquency through effective intervention. Project Safe Place also involves girls' families in treatment, which typically lasts for six months and involves individual, group, and family counseling, as well as parent education, community service, and family mentoring. Treatment focuses on enhancing protective factors for both girls and adults. Project Safe Place has the capacity to work with up to 35 girls and their families annually.

Thank Goodness I'm Female (T.G.I.F.)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

T.G.I.F., created by the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition and the Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network and funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, targets African American adolescent girls living in high-risk city neighborhoods. Program components include mentoring, life-skills education, and a rites-of-passage ceremony. Girls receive "Individualized Female Plans" that emphasize positive goals and ways to achieve them. Classes and presentations teach conflict resolution, problem-solving skills, hygiene, and etiquette, and address issues related to peer pressure, substance abuse, male-female relationships, and risky sexual behavior. Girls use their new skills to plan and implement their own rites-of-passage ceremonies. They also participate in community service activities. Volunteer mentors help the girls plan and achieve goals.

Appendix B

SAMPLE INTAKE FORM

COOK COUNTY JUVENILE FEMALE STRENGTH/NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Girl's Name: _____

Assessment Date: ____/____/____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Initial _____

Reassessment (circle one): 1 2 3 4 5 _____

Race (circle one): 1 = White Hispanic or Latino 5 = American Indian or Alaskan Native
 2 = White 6 = Asian
 3 = Black Hispanic or Latino 7 = Native American or Pacific Islander
 4 = Black or African American 8 = Other

Most Serious Current Offense: _____

Petitioned or Diverted (circle one)

JEMS Number: _____

Family Folder Number: _____

Complete this assessment using the best available information obtained by staff through observation, self-report information from the girl, family member(s), third parties (e.g., school personnel, employers, relatives outside the immediate family), reports from official agencies, and the results of formal evaluations. Select the best response for each strength/need item and add the scores for the 12 items to reach a total score.

Score

SN1. Family Relationships

- | | | |
|--|---|-------|
| a. Home environment stable, parent/caregiver displays appropriate parenting | 0 | |
| b. Lack of consistency with problems/discipline; frequent or multiple live-in partners | 2 | |
| c. Parent/caregiver has chronic problem that seriously impairs ability to care for the child(ren) | 3 | |
| d. Parent/caregiver destructive/abusive parenting patterns; has refused psychiatric/AODA treatment | 5 | _____ |

SN2. Emotional Stability/Mental Health

- | | | |
|--|---|-------|
| a. Well-adjusted | 0 | |
| b. Episodic behaviors, limited functioning | 3 | |
| c. Chronic behaviors, severely limited functioning | 5 | _____ |

SN3. Basic Needs

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| a. Suitable living environment | 0 | |
| b. Family has housing, some needs unmet | 1 | |
| c. Girl has left home | 3 | |
| d. Family is homeless | 5 | _____ |

SN4. Substance Abuse

- | | | |
|--|---|-------|
| a. No evidence of alcohol or drug use | 0 | |
| b. Experimentation with alcohol or drugs | 1 | |
| c. Periodic and/or regular use of alcohol or drugs | 3 | |
| d. Chronic alcohol or drug abuse problem | 5 | _____ |

SN5. Life Skills

- | | | |
|---|----|-------|
| a. Functions independently | -1 | |
| b. Requires supervision and/or moderate assistance | 1 | |
| c. Displays impulsive and risky behaviors | 2 | |
| d. Chemically or developmentally impaired, severe limitations | 3 | _____ |

SN6. History of Abuse/Neglect

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| a. No history | 0 | |
| b. Alleged but never substantiated abuse or neglect | 1 | |
| c. Substantiated physical abuse or neglect | 2 | |
| d. Substantiated sexual abuse | 4 | _____ |

Score SN7. Physical Safety

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| a. No threat or fear for her safety | 0 | |
| b. Girl has experienced threats or fears for her physical safety | 2 | |
| c. History of receiving threats of her physical safety | 3 | |
| d. Currently experiencing physical/emotional/sexual abuse or domestic violence; immediate threats | 4 | _____ |

	Score
SN8. Peer Relations	
a. Adequate social skills; uses leisure time constructively	0
b. Peer group is negative, her relationships are detrimental	1
c. Most activities are with negative peer groups, but no gang membership	2
d. Peers are delinquent and/or abusive, including gangs	3
SN9. School/Employment Status	
a. Successful in school and/or job	-1
b. Needs to enhance skills for future employment	1
c. Graduation expectations are in jeopardy	2
d. Cannot maintain educational enrollment or employment	3 _____
SN10. Social Supports	
a. Knowledge and use of existing resources	-1
b. Barriers exist that limit ability to access resources	1
c. No involvement in social support resources	2
d. Resources do not exist	3 _____
SN11. Motherhood	
a. No child(ren) and is not pregnant	-1
b. Parent (or pregnant), can meet basic needs of child and self	0
c. Parent (or pregnant), cannot meet basic needs of child and self	2
d. Parent (or pregnant), shows total disregard for self and child(ren)	3 _____
SN12. Health	
a. Participants in health care plan, uses good judgment affecting health	-1
b. Poor health conditions reoccur, inconsistent with self-care	2
c. Undiagnosed health problems, reoccurring symptoms, girl rarely or never seeks medical care	3 _____
TOTAL NEEDS SCORE	_____

Assign a needs level based on the total needs score:

Needs Level	Total Score
-------------	-------------

_____ Low	-5 to 11
-----------	----------

_____ Moderate	12 to 29
----------------	----------

_____ High	30 to 46
------------	----------

Top Three Priority Needs

Item Number/Description

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Top Three Strengths

Item Number/Description

1. _____

1. _____

3. _____

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