MISSOURI JUVENILE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION

Gender Responsive Guidelines - Taking a Look at Female Justice Involved Youth Through a Gender Lens

September, 2014

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify, facilitate and enhance Missouri's commitment to preventing female juvenile delinquency and promoting positive development of at-risk girls. To improve the ability of the Juvenile Justice System and related service providers to identify and address the specific and unique needs of at-risk girls and juvenile female offenders.

The process of change and growth is not always easy and can be interrupted and stunted especially for girls made particularly vulnerable due to stressors such as histories of traumatization, poverty, familial instability and lack of so-

MJJA has been the recognized leader in Missouri on matters of state and national juvenile justice issues for over 30 years.

At First Glance

Female youth are the fastest growing segment of the Juvenile Justice System. Nationally, girls comprise approximately one-third of all juvenile arrests. In 2000, females accounted for 28% of all juvenile arrests compared with just 19% in 1990 (Snyder, 2002). The types of offenses that girls are committing vary from that of boys and just as importantly the reasons for why girls are committing offenses are often times different from that of boys as well.

Girls entering the juvenile justice system come under the purview of the system with a host of commonalities that distinguish them from their male counterparts. These commonalities are often times highly correlated to their unique trajectories that catapult their entrance into the legal system and often bringing them under Court jurisdiction. For instance, female justice involved youth present with higher rates of personal victimization, mental health and co-occurring disorders, self-harming behavior, strained family and relationship dynamics, poor self-esteem and lowered academic efficacy. 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, 1998) More often than not, these unaddressed factors continue to serve as the catalysts for continued behavioral issues resulting in sinking girls further into a system that through misintention often times criminalizes their behavior.

Historically the juvenile justice system was designed to address the needs of adolescent boys with a focus on ensuring community safety as their offenses often times posed a threat to the safety and welfare of others. Conversely, the types of offenses girls frequently commit are status offenses and simple misdemeanors. These types of offenses pose minimal to no threat to the community. Approximately 78% of arrests of girls for crime index offenses are not for violence, but for larceny-theft, or shoplifting (FBI, 2000). Because female offenders have been less of a threat to the community, they have historically been ignored until recently. For that

However, nationally the number of female youth entering the juvenile justice system has grown and rate of decrease in arrests has not declined at the same rate as that of males. A 1995 study of Missouri's young female offenders revealed that population represented 31% (25,176) of all referrals to juvenile court - a figure that was 6% higher than the nation average of 25%. By 1998, the percentage of Missouri's female referrals had climbed to 33%. Although crime is decreasing both nationally and in Missouri as well. The rate of decrease for girls is significantly less than that for males. In Missouri from 2004 – 2013, referrals declined more for males 32% than for females 24% (OSCA, 2013). Accordingly, as the number of female youth entering the juvenile justice system has increased so must the level of service and attention pro-
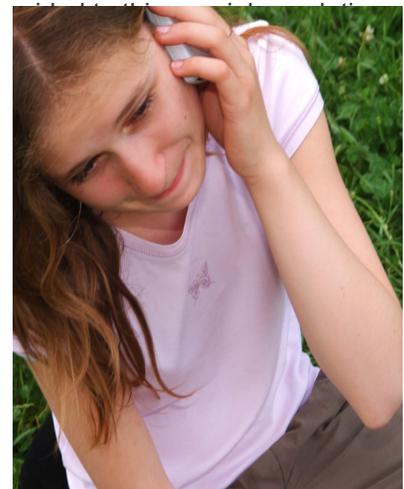
"It's not what you call me, but what I answer to."

~ African Proverb

The Female Offender

According to the arrest statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the overall rate of juvenile arrests decreased from 1994 to 2004 (Snyder, 2008). However, in taking a look at the overall rate of adolescent crime one could easily fail to recognize critical variations in rates by gender and how patterns in offending separate.

Girls who break the law may not be perceived as a danger to society because, traditionally, they have come into contact with the courts for nonviolent status offenses such as curfew violations, running away, or unruly behavior (Chesney-Lind, 1998).

According to one study, "girls [are] 170% more likely than boys to be referred to juvenile court for status offenses" (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1998, p. 17).

Sickmund and Snyder (1999) assessed that law enforcement officials refer "fewer than half of the formally processed status offense" cases to court.

It is estimated that 72% of status offenders are referred by their parents for behavior such as being beyond parental control (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1998).

Status offenses are only applicable to juveniles due to their minor legal status as have not reached the age of majority. Status offenses such as truancy or running away and are considered less of a community threat than they are a threat to the juvenile committing them.

The behaviors that girls have presented with when being referred to the juvenile justice system have often times been perceived as simply problematic or troubling conduct versus criminal in nature. However, this perception is changing as arrest rates are shifting and girls are increasingly being taken into custody and charged with misdemeanor and violent offenses. Although juvenile crime is still predominantly a considered a male problem, female delinquency and violent crime rates have risen significantly over time.

- Between 1980 and 2000, the juvenile arrest rate for girls increased 35% (Snyder, 2002).

- From 1991 through 2000, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault increased by 44% for girls, it declined 16% for boys (Snyder, 2002).

- According to Juvenile Arrests 2007 Bulletin, between 1998 and 2007, juvenile arrests for simple assault decreased by 4% for males and increased 10% for females (OJJDP).

- Between 1989 and 1993, the relative growth in juvenile arrests involving females was 23 percent, more than double the 11 percent growth for males (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996).

- In 2000, females younger than 18 comprised more than one-fourth of the total juvenile crime index arrests, including murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor

While status offenses continue to account for the majority of cases involving girls, females are now more likely to be arrested for robbery, assault, drug trafficking, and gang activity – juvenile crimes only recently considered the exclusive domain of young males (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996; Calhoun, Jurgens & Chen, 1993).

Missouri state arrest rates parallel national rates. In Missouri's Juvenile and Family Division Annual Report (2013) data revealed that law violations at the misdemeanor level were the most common allegation for both male and female offenders. However, within gender the percentage of referrals for misdemeanors was higher for females (88%) than for males (75%). Conversely, males were referred at a higher rate (25%) for felonies than their female counterparts (12%).

Processing

National data reveals that crime rates are decreasing for both girls and boys however the rate of decrease has been slower for girls. Since 1997, there has been an 18% decrease for boys who are incarcerated compared to only an 8% decrease for girls (Sickmund et al.) Missouri's data reveals similar patterns of decrease which denotes that Missouri's female youth are not exempt from national trends in offending.

Not only are girls being increasingly arrested for crimes once committed almost exclusively by males, they are being referred to the juvenile justice system at younger ages as   well.

Law Violations by Charge Level and Gender

GENDER		FREQ.	%
Male	Misdemeanor	11,234	75.21
	Felony	3,702	24.79
Female	Misdemeanor	5,259	88.07
	Felony	712	11.92
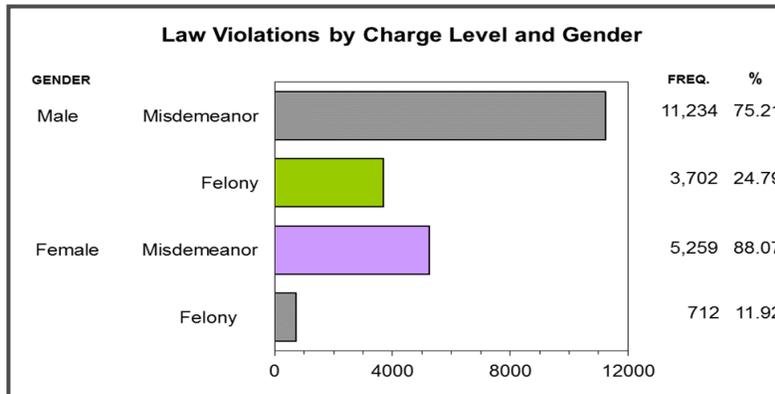
Female Development Theory

As girls transition through adolescence their experiences and the challenges they encounter are unique to being female. They meet a variety of changes that impact and transform their physical bodies, psychological functioning, emotional wellbeing, identity development, social status and their relationships. Not one aspect of their

From 1987 - 1991, the number of 13 and 14 year old girls in juvenile court increased by 10 percent (Bergsmann, 1994).

Boys and girls run away from home in comparable numbers however, arrest data indicates that girls are arrested at a greater frequently than boys (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 1992).

In 1999, girls constituted 27% of juvenile arrest, however, they accounted for 59% of juvenile arrests for running away (OJJDP, 2000b).

One in five girls in secure confinement is now aged 14 or younger. Although their offenses are typically less violent, girls who break the law are sometimes treated more harshly than boys who offend (Davidson, 1982).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention determined that between 1988 and 1997, the use of detention for girls increased 65% vs. only 30% for boys.

Girls are more likely to be detained for minor offenses and technical probation or parole violations (OJJDP, 2000a).There are fewer community-based services for girls. As a result, girls are twice as likely to be detained, with detention lasting five times longer for girls than

cial support. The majority of research regarding female criminality has focused on women in the adult correctional system. However, in the past decade there has a been a purposeful focus on increasing our knowledge and understanding of the unique developmental issues particular to girls as well as understanding their patterns of offending and pathways to delinquency. There is a growing body of research supporting the theory that just as boys and girls develop differently in many ways due to their gender, there are also "developmental pathways to delinquency" that are gender related as well. (Belknap and Holsinger, 1998).

The *pathways perspective theory* asserts that gender plays a distinctive role in criminality. Belknap (2001) has found that the pathway perspective incorporates a "whole life" viewpoint in the study of crime causation. Belknap and Holsinger (1998) assert that "girls and boys trajectories into delinquency may be partially gender specific – with gender differences in developmental processes, resulting problem behavior, and social and official responses to troubling behavior." In a 2002 report from the National Institute of Corrections, it was purported that recent research has established that because of their gender, women are at a greater risk of experiencing sexual abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and single-parent status. As such, "Pathway(s) research has identified such key issues in producing and sustaining female criminality as histories of personal abuse, mental illness tied to early life experiences, substance abuse and addiction, economic and social marginality, homelessness and relationships."

According to the *relational theory* and female development model, females are motivated by relationships. "Females are far more likely than males to be motivated by relational concerns…Situational pressures such as threatened loss of valued relationships play a greater role in female offending" (Steffensmeier & Allan, 1998). In Dr. Carol Gilligan's research on psychological theory and female development, she stresses that female gender identity may be threatened by separation whereas for male gender identity development, separation is a developmental task (1982). Studies of female criminality reveal that criminal involvement often evolves through relationships with family, friends or paramours. The lack of positive and healthy relationships for developing youth can have far reaching implications causing healthy development to be delayed or crippled.

Trauma and addiction theories propose that the two risk factors are often interrelated and highly correlate. We know that females entering the criminal justice system present with high rates of both prior or current traumatization as well as histories of substance abuse. Substance abuse is "a relationship characterized by obsession, compulsion, non-mutuality, and an imbalance of power" (Covington & Surrey, 1997). Females are relationship oriented and research suggests that they often begin using substances in the context of a relationship frequently to preserve the bond with a substance abusing boyfriend. Likewise, women use substances to numb the pain of nonmutual, nonempathetic, and even violent relationships (Covington & Surrey, 1997). "The connection between substance abuse, trauma and mental health are numerous. For example, substance abuse can occur as a reaction to trauma, or it can be used to self-medicate symptoms of mental illness; mental illness is often connected to trauma; and substance abuse can be misdiagnosed as mental illness" (National Institute of Corrections, 2002).

Risk Factors

In taking a look at the specific risk factors that justice involved girls present with, we find that there are factors that are of higher prevalence in this population and are believed to contribute to the increased risk of delinquent behavior and danger of recidivism. Frequently girls will present with a combination of risk factors that are inter-related and at times stem from one other in one way or more. Risk factors to consider are:

Trauma & Mental Health: Although girls may pose less of a threat to their community, they often times pose more of a threat to themselves. Prior victimization is a significant risk factor for girls who may turn to self-harming, destructive or unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with the grief and the loss they have sustained. This in turn can result in behavior that perpetuates the cycle of victimization. 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). The inward damage girls inflict on themselves can coincide with an outward expression of these struggles in the form of delinquency, such as substance abuse and emotional disorders (Kilpatrick, Saunders, & Smith, 2003).

Girls referred to the juvenile justice system present with high rates of victimization and are three times as likely to have been sexually victimized 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). "While both male and female children are at risk for abuse, females continue to be at risk for interpersonal violence in their adolescent and adult lives. The risk of abuse for males in their teenage and adult relationships is far less than that for females. (Covington & Surrey, 1997)."

- As many as 92 percent of girls in detention report having been victims of abuse (Acoca & Dedel, 1998).

- Approximately 2.5 million females age twelve and older are raped, robbed, or assaulted each year (Acierno, Resnick, & Kilpatrick, 1997).

- Even more alarming is a survey conducted by the National Crime Victimization Survey which found that in 1996, more than two-thirds of the rapes and sexual assaults committed in the United States remained unreported (Ringel, 1997).

Sexual abuse can have a profound impact on the developmental experience of girls and undoubtedly place them at higher risk of developing unhealthy coping mechanisms and problematic patterns of behavior. In a longitudinal study examining the correlation between maltreatment and delinquency, it was revealed that "being abused or neglected as a child increased the likelihood or arrest as a juvenile by 59 percent, as an adult by 28 percent, and for a violent crime by 30 percent" (Widom & Maxfield, 2001).

Recent research has suggested that there are biological and physiological gender differences in the way males and females interpret and process their environment and life experiences including trauma. Research regarding biological functions and psychological traits may contribute to gender related variations in responses to environmental conditions (Klein and Corwin, 2002). This may partially explain why boys and girls with similar environmental conditions respond differently to psychological stressors. One theoretical model examining individual-level factors proposes that although similar risk factors may play a role in both girls' and boys' delinquency, gender differences in underlying biological functions, psychological traits, and social interpretations can result in different types and rates of delinquent behaviors for girls and boys (Moffitt et al., 2001). In short, victims of traumatic circumstances process the events differently. Research has suggested that females have higher rates of emo-

reason, female offenders were once referred to as the "forgotten few" (Bergsmann 73-78).

According to a 2002 report from the National Institute on Corrections:

> Recent brain research describes neurological changes that are related to the experiencing of violence that has resulted in trauma. While some change in brain chemistry is immediate, chronic abuse may increase the severity of chemical changes. The biology of trauma has been the subject of recent research that suggests that childhood sexual abuse creates a cascade of neurological events that affect brain development and emotional behavior and produce a risk factor for the development of substance abuse (C. Anderson, 2002).

Female offenders have long suffered histories of physical and sexual abuse that are associated with psychological trauma and resulting problematic behaviors.

Substance Abuse: Trauma and mental health are linked to substance abuse and the link between female criminality and drug use is very strong. Research consistently indicates that women are more likely to be involved in crime if they are drug users
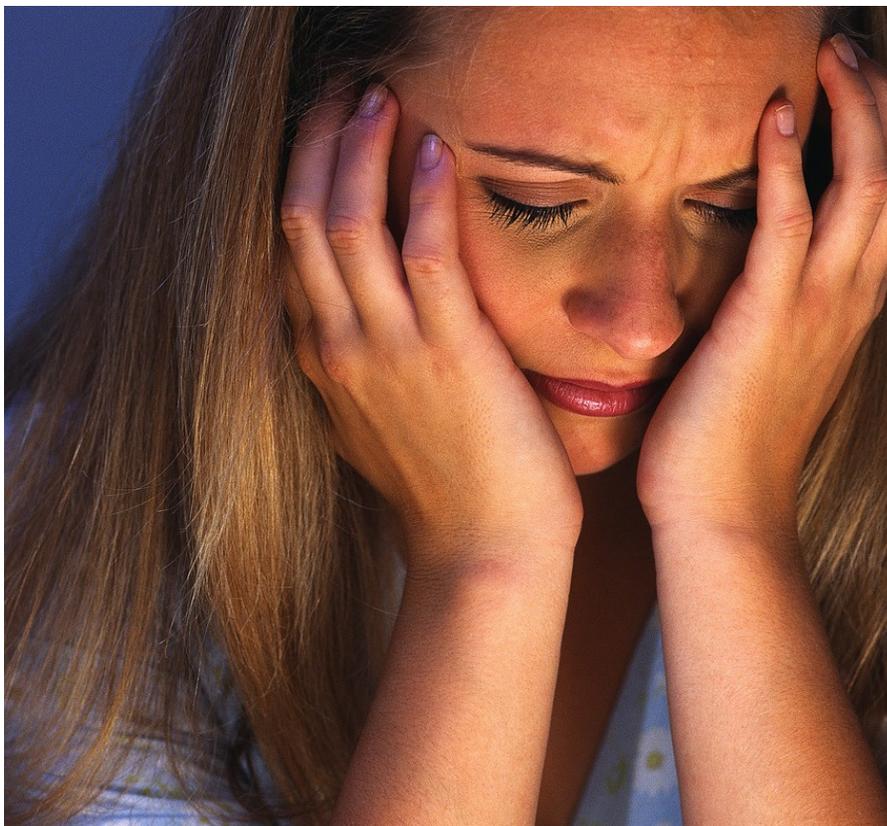
Connectedness: The relational theory suggests that relationships are critical in positive female development. Relationships first occur at home and then extend into the community. Studies of female offenders highlight the importance of relationships for females and the fact that criminal involvement often develops through relationships. Their connection with others is often a key to their involvement in crime (NIC, 2002).

Female delinquents are more likely to than the general population to grow up in a single-parent home. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1994), 42 percent of women grew up in homes with only one parents, usually the mother.

Justice involved females are more likely to come from homes in which at least one family member was incarcerated. Approximately 50 percent of females vs. 37 percent of males had an immediate family member who had been incarcerated (NIC, 2002).

The Relational/Cultural model, which defines connection as "an interaction that engenders a sense of being in tune with self and others and of being understood and valued" (Bylington, 1997). "According to this model, such connections are so crucial that many of women's psychological problems can indeed by traced to disconnections or violations within their family, personal, or societal relation-

Adolescence and Socialization: Adolescent is a time of transformation in many ways for both boys and girls. However, research has suggested that girls' self-esteem and self-efficacy significantly decline at the time they begin puberty. Dr. Carol Gilligan (1998) noted in her research that for adolescent females, their identity is developed in the context of their relationships with others. She described the adolescent experience as "hitting a wall" in which girls give up their sense of self to maintain and conform to social expectations in an effort to preserve relationships. Gilligan (1995) defined the term "psychological dissociation" as the crisis whereby girls silence their voices or their knowledge of their feelings, desires and opinions in order to stay connected in a relationship.

Gender roles and behavior expectations are largely engrained in youth through their cultural and family norms. However, the media also plays a significant role in this process often times sending conflicting and mixed messages about what it means to masculine or feminine. In the national bestseller Reviving Ophelia (1994), Dr. Pipher stated that "girls today live in a more dangerous, overly sexualized and media saturated culture…and as a society we protect our girls less in how we socialize them and at the same time we put more pressure on them to conform to the female role prescriptions." Current research suggests that males and females face different life challenges in large part due to the social structure of gender rather than actual biological differences. Therefore, mod-

Academics: In part to their developmental and socialization process, girls in the juvenile justice system have experienced poor academic success. Poor academic performance has been found to be a significant predictor of delinquency, especially for girls (Greene & Peters, 1998). A disproportionate number (26 percent) of female juvenile offenders have learning disabilities and may be a grade level behind. This contributes to a lack of self-esteem and frustration surrounding school and learning. (U.S. Department of Justice, 1994; Greene & Peters, 1998).

Girls who are the primary caregiver for siblings or substance abusing and or mentally ill parents often start their school day under tremendous stress, lack of sleep and preoccupation for the concern of others. Their ability to learn is stunted as a consequence. Girls are more often thrust into the role of caregiver in part due to their prescribed gender roles and possibly due to their propensity to nurture.

Girls have a tendency to internalize their frustration or to act out in a classroom setting as a defensive mechanism for either their inability to comprehend the content or due to their perceived academic inadequacies. Moreover, girls who feel that they have a lack of support or connection to school either due to poor peer relationships or the absence of an engaged and invested adult at school are more likely to skip classes or drop out altogether. While pregnancy is often seen as the primary reason for dropping out among young women, more than half reported other circumstances as their motivation for leaving high school. Among young women, family problems were mentioned as the most

Gender Responsive Methodologies

The body of knowledge regarding the developmental pathways to delinquency is growing as the need to know more about the female adolescent offender has taken center stage in the past decade plus. Through research, we have developed a greater understanding of the realities of girl's lives including their unique developmental experiences as well as the risk correlates for status and delinquent behavior. This knowledge base has allowed us to systematically address the specific factors through the process of prevention, intervention, treatment and restoration. Services and programming provided to girls that incorporates an understanding of female development and that is entrenched in the life experiences of girls is commonly referred to as gender responsive services or programming.

The goal of gender responsive services is to comprehensively address the unique needs and risk factors most commonly associated with girls as they develop with an emphasis on skill building, increasing self-efficacy and positive identity development. The goal is to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors with the knowledge that this will lead to a more positive development experience which in turn will lead to healthier and more whole individual.

For a more refined understanding, Bloom and Convington (2000) developed the following definition: Gender responsiveness means creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content, and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of the participants. Gender responsive approaches are multidimensional and are based on theoretical perspectives that acknowledge women's pathways into the criminal justice system. These approaches address social (e.g. poverty, race, class, gender inequality) and cultural factors, as well as therapeutic interventions. These interventions address issues such as abuse, violence, family relationships, substance abuse, and co-occurring disorders. They provide a strength-based approach to treatment and skills-building. The emphasis is on self-efficacy. as "creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content, and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of the participants."

At the national, state and local levels, there is a movement to use gender-specific programming to improve and create services 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 (Community Research Associates, 1997). Dr. Barbara Bloom and Dr. Stephanie Covington challenged juvenile justice professionals to apply the gained knowledge advancement regarding females in the fields of health, mental health, substance abuse and trauma treatment to improve services and programming to best meet their risk and needs. They stated "when the profile of girl offenders is compared to the profiles of adult women offenders, both in prison and community corrections, it becomes clear that they

In 1974, Congress enacted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act which has been reauthorized six times most recently in 2002. The 1992 reauthorization necessitates that states identify gaps in their capacity to adequately deliver services to juvenile female offenders. The Act requires that states include in their examination of the problem "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 services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency" (Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

In an effort to gain a more evidence based understanding of the causes and correlates of girls delinquency and how best to address the concern, the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention developed the Girls Study Group in 2004. The group, comprised of scholars, researchers and experts in fields such as sociology, psychology, criminology, gender studies, legal practitioners and girls' program development coordinators, were assigned the task of analyzing literature reviews, dataset analysis, and program instrument reviews through the course of a number of focused studies. They wanted answers regarding the risk and protective factors for delinquent girls, how they travel on the path to delinquency, what methods and programs are most effective in working with girls and how should the juvenile justice system respond to girls' delinquency. They conducted a series of studies and released the results in bulletins

In their first study and bulletin release titled, Violence and Teen Girls Trends and Context, they discovered that changes in mandatory arrest laws in cases of domestic violence as well as schools' zero tolerance policies regarding school fights were largely responsible for the increase in arrest rates of girls rather than an increase in girl's actual propensity to engage in violence as a whole. They determined that the impact of revised statutes and pro-arrest policies increase the likelihood that both boys and girls arrest rates will increase but concluded that the effects appear stronger for girls (OJJDP, 2008). "Researchers suggest that the increase in girls' delinquency is not necessarily due to a significant rise in violent behavior, but to the re-labeling of girls' conflicts as violent offenses (Chesney-Lind & Okamoto, 2001).

In their second study, Causes and Correlates of Girls' Delinquency, the group focused on the causes of female delinquency by reviewing over 2,300 literature pieces examining factors that lead to delinquency. They determined that family dynamics, a child's involvement in school, the neighborhood a child lives in and their access to community based programs impact the sexes equally. However, they determined that some factors can increase or decrease a girl's risk of delinquency more than a boy's. Factors such as early puberty, sexual abuse or maltreatment, depression and anxiety, and criminally involved romantic partners place girls at greater risk of delin-

factors increase resiliency in girls and discovered that support from a caring adult, success in school, school connectedness and religiosity played a vital role in mitigating inherent risks associated with female development. Subsequently, they discovered that despite these protective factors being present in a girl's life, other overriding risk factors were more influential leading to consequential and problematic behavior. "Their findings highlight the importance of considering girls' life histories when developing interventions for girls at high risk for delinquency" (OJJDP, 2008).

Further, The Girls Study Group examined the suitability of assessment instruments for delinquent girls and reviewed 143 risk assessments and treatment focused instruments in an effort to determine if they correctly determined a youths' risks and needs as well as if the instrument had favorable gender based performance. They determined that 20 instruments met both criteria (OJJDP, 2008). Additionally, the group sought to conduct an evidence based review of gender delinquency programs. They reviewed 26 promising and model programs in the Blueprint for Violence Prevention database as well as a review of 61 girls' delinquency programs. The results can be found in OJJDP's bulletin Girls' Delinquency Programs—An Evidence Based Review.

Effective service delivery for girls and young women requires providers are knowledgeable about the comprehensive differences in development. Programming and training should be gender responsive and reflect knowledge of the diverse backgrounds and issues of girls and young women.

Best Practices and Promising Strategies

Nation and state agencies and youth service providers have realized the need to consider the unique risk and needs of at-risk and justice involved girls in developing their responses to them and the services they provide. Gender responsive services comprehensively address girl's common risks factors associated with their gender as well as their needs. Several states are affecting change in their statutes, policies and procedures, and in the services provided to female youth. Current research is guiding this advancement and is commonly based on data driven research but also an understanding of how gender and female development impact the reality of girls' actual lives.

One such model developed by Dr. Lawanda Ravoira and Vanessa Patino Lydia, Girl Matters focuses on creating a gender responsive culture by aligning the theories with life experiences of girls. The curriculum is designed to provide youth service professionals with a greater understanding of what matters to girls. Ravoira asserts that:

> *In order to improve outcomes for girls, there must be a commitment to create a therapeutic milieu where all policies, practices and processes are derived from a gender lens. At its core, this culture must value the developmental differences of girls and embrace her life experiences. Before any change can occur, staff must understand the importance of safety, relationships, trauma, etc. and the role they play in her life experiences. When staff are deeply aware of the implications of these issues, they will have a better framework to confront and address the more difficult "acting out" behaviors.*

Girl Matters focuses on creating a gender responsive culture. Focus areas are not meant to be all inclusive rather to introduce professionals to the fundamental of a gender responsive environment that is designed to value and improve the outcomes for girls and young women. Focus areas include the Core Building Blocks: Safety Matters, Communication Matters, Relationship Matters, Emotions Matter (Trauma and Drama Matters) and Identity Matters. The sustaining Programming Building Blocks include: Brain Matters, Body Matters, Sex Matters, Spiritual Matters, Living Environment Matters, Social Support Matters, Career and Vocation Matters, and Motherhood/Parenting Matters. Ravoira and Lydia developed an accompanying curriculum, SAVVY Sisters, which is the practical application of Girl Matters and can be used in a variety of modules including independent study, individual session or group session with girls.

The Valentine Foundation (1990) nationally recognized as pioneers in their advocacy for social change on behalf of girls and young women for over 25 year has outline characteristics of female-responsive programming. Below, they list ten basic principles of what "gender responsive" programs should provide:

♦ Space that is physically and emotionally safe and removed from the demands for attention of males.

♦ Time to talk and conduct emotionally, "safe," comforting, challenging, and nurturing conversations within ongoing relationships.

♦ Opportunities for girls to develop relationships of trust and interdependence with 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 Afro-centric 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, and within the community.

♦ Opportunities for girls to create positive changes on an individual level, within their relationship, 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.

For yet another example stemming from gender responsive research, Bloom and Covington (2001) stated that in additional to relational and trauma theories as the foundation for services and programming for girls, the following guiding principles for gender-responsive services should be adapted in developing effective services:

- Theoretical perspective/s are used that incorporate girls' pathways into the criminal justice system.

- The programmatic approaches used are based on the theory/theories that fit the psychological and social needs of girls and reflect the realities of their lives (e.g. relational theory, trauma theory, substance abuse theory).

- Program development is based on theories that are congruent, consistent and integrated.

- Treatment and services are based on girls' competencies and strengths and promote self-reliance.

- Programs use a variety of interventions—behavioral, cognitive, affective/dynamic and systems perspectives—in order to fully address the needs and strengths of girls.

- Homogeneous groups are used, especially for primary treatment (e.g., trauma, substance abuse).

- Services/treatment address girls' practical needs such as family, transportation, childcare, school, and vocational training and job placement.

- There are opportunities to develop skills in a range of educational and vocational areas (inc. non-traditional vocational skills).

- Staff reflects the client population in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and language (bi-lingual).

- Female role models and mentors are crucial and reflect the racial/ethnicity and cultural backgrounds of the program participants.

- Cultural awareness and sensitivity are promoted using the resources and strengths available in various communities.

- Gender-responsive assessment tools and individual treatment plans are utilized and match

"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" (OJJDP, 1998). For further information on how to improve gender responsive services, develop gender specific policies or to gain a greater understanding of gender responsive matters please see the resource directory below:

detailing their findings.

Resources:

Missouri Juvenile Justice Association
http://mjja.org/

Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention – Girls' Study Group
http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/girlsdelinquency.html

Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention – Model Programs Guide
http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg

National Council on Crime and Delinquency Campaign
http://www.nccdglobal.org/what-we-do/center-for-girls-young-women

WYCA - Eliminating Racism Empowering Women
http://www.ywca.org/site/c.cuIRJ7NTKrLaG/b.7515807/k.BE84/Home.htm

Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center
http://www.seethegirl.org/

National Girls Institute
http://www.nationalgirlsinstitute.org/

Valentine Foundation
http://www.valentinefoundation.org/

One Circle Foundation
http://www.onecirclefoundation.org/orgs.aspx

For more information on how you can establish or improve services for girls in your community or to learn more about free gender responsive training opportunities, contact the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association:

Christina Gamblin
Gender Responsive Program Services Coordinator
Missouri Juvenile Justice Association
573-636-6101

The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) is a statewide, not for profit 501 (c) (3)organization whose mission is dedicated to promoting justice for children, youth and families within Missouri.

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