THE NEEDS OF FEMALE JUVENILE OFFENDERS

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THE NEEDS OF FEMALE JUVENILE OFFENDERS

A Project

by

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Division of Criminal Justice
Abstract

of

THE NEEDS OF FEMALE JUVENILE OFFENDERS

by

Nancy Rocha

This project assesses the needs of female juvenile delinquents, as well as examines current programs that have been implemented and are aimed specifically at helping female offenders become rehabilitated. Individual offenders’ personal experiences in the juvenile justice system and crucial factors that should be considered for any program aimed in helping with the rehabilitation of female juvenile delinquents are identified. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of incarcerated female juveniles asking them about their personal lives, family backgrounds, juvenile hall experiences, etc. This sample as well as facility staff were interviewed asking them questions about the programs available for female offenders and recommendations for future gender based programs.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Daniel Okada, Ph. D.

_______________________
Date
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband, Angel A. Torres, who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time. Te quiero mucho bebe. A mis padres dedico este logro y espero que aunque no me lo digan en palabras, se sientan muy orgullosos de mi. Creo que valio la pena los enojos que les hice pasar al irme de la casa y vivir en Santa Cruz. Los quiero mucho.
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INTRODUCTION

The growing number of females being incarcerated calls for more gender-based programming along with a new understanding of the needs of female juvenile delinquents. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI, 2006), the number of female offenders arrested in 2006 increased 4% over 2005. The number of females arrested for robbery alone rose 21.7%. Arrests of females for drug offenses also increased by 11% during these same years. “A comparison of arrest data from 1997 and 2006 showed that, nationwide, the number of males arrested decreased 7.1 percent, but the number of females arrested increased by 4 percent” (p. 3).

According to the Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics (2005) of all persons arrested in 2005 nationwide, 76.2% were male and 23.8% were female. When compared to data from three decades ago, in 1973, males accounted for 84.7% of all arrests while females compromised 15.3% of all arrests. Further, according to the National Institute of Corrections (2004), in 1999, an estimated 28% of all violent females in custody were juveniles; 4 out of 10 of these offenders were under the influence of alcohol or drugs during their arrest. The Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics indicates that in 1998, an estimated 950,000 women were under the care, custody or control of correctional agencies supervising 85% of these offenders in the community.

Females have continued to receive unequal treatment in their contact with the criminal justice system. Research by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
Prevention (OJJDP) shows that the number of female juvenile delinquents entering the juvenile justice system has grown steadily over the last two decades (OJJDP, 2003). It has only been recently that policymakers have recognized the need to pay attention to the needs of these offenders. As the American Bar Association (ABA) indicated in the 2001 publication *Justice by Gender*,

> Girls are the fastest growing segment of juvenile justice population, despite the overall drop in juvenile crime. Over the past two decades we have witnessed an exponential rise in the number of girls in detention facilities, jails and prisons; likewise, arrest rates of girls in almost all offense categories have outstripped that of boys over this same time period. While juvenile crime rates—particularly those of violent crimes—have steadily increased since peaking in 1994, arrest, detention, and dispositional custody data show an increase in both the number and percentage of girls in the juvenile justice system—a trend that runs counter to that of boys (p. 1).

Female offenders are increasing not only in the number coming in contact with the system, but also in the number of delinquent offenses they commit. They represent 15% of all juvenile arrests for violent crimes, 57% for running away, and 29% for curfew and loitering violations (OJJPD, 2003). Further, it was reported by the OJJDP that “this increase has important implications on many State service delivery systems, which often underestimate the numbers and are ill-prepared to deal effectively with the female juvenile offenders” (OJJDP, 2003, p.3).

According to the U.S. Department of Justice’s (USDOJ, 2006) *Annual Report: Women in Prison*, between 1980 and 2003, the female percentage of juvenile violent crime arrests increased, with the overall increase related primarily to aggravated assaults. Mandatory arrests for domestic violence, coupled with an apparent increased willingness to report these crimes to the authorities, yielded a greater increase in female arrests for
assault. Between 1980 and 2003, the female proportion of juvenile arrests increased for simple assault, vandalism, weapons possession, liquor violations, and curfew and loitering violations. It was further discovered that females were more likely than males to be held for simple assault, technical violations (like missing curfew and not attending school) and status offenses.

Much of this new concern stems from findings by the FBI and the OJJDP indicating a growing female participation in crime; however, the question being raised is whether girls are really becoming more criminal or whether they are being punished more severely for offenses that could be handled informally. Communities facing these increased numbers of delinquent girls need to develop and provide appropriate prevention, intervention, and treatment alternatives that address the root causes of girls’ delinquent behavior and promote safe and healthy communities where girls can be educated, cared for, and prosper.

A review of the literature illustrates the lack of programs available to address the needs of these offenders. Female delinquents have not received any “real” attention from researchers, or policy planners, and only recently female offenders have become a subject of interest. For example, Messerschmidt states: “Women are almost invisible in a system designed for males and informed by theories developed and tested on boys” (Messerschmidt, 1997, p.39).

On average, females comprise 5% of the incarcerated population worldwide (National Institute of Corrections, 2004). There is a growing consensus that the observed increase in female offenders has most likely resulted from changes in judicial processes
(e.g., sentencing practices) rather than true differences in female criminal behavior (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). Moreover, the average female offender is poor, uneducated, and lacking in employment skills (Blanchette & Brown, 2006).

There is a need for gender-specific programs if the increase of potential young females becoming career criminals is to be curbed. The limited research that exists suggests that females become involved with the juvenile justice system mostly due to status offenses such as running away, prostitution, curfew violations, and rebelling against parental authority (Chesney-Lind, 1995). As Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004) point out, programs for juvenile delinquents almost exclusively concentrate in the needs of boys with little to no regard to the needs of the girls:

Programming for girls clearly needs to be shaped by girls’ unique situations and to address the special problems girls have in a gendered society. Unfortunately, traditional delinquency treatment strategies, employed in both prevention and intervention programs, have been shaped largely by common-sense assumptions about what youth—generally boys—need, and even then, these problems fail to recognize boys’ gender management strategies and problematic dimensions. There is a tremendous shortage of information on programs that have been proven effective with girls. Indeed, many studies that have evaluated particular approaches do not deal with special gender issues and frequently programs do not even serve girls. (p. 88)

The OJJDP (2002) notes that young women present unique treatment issues based on their maturation and development needs. It is important for juvenile justice professionals and policymakers to understand that the nature and causes of girl delinquency is often different from that of boys. The American Correctional Association (1993) concludes that girls in the justice system have: 1) histories of physical, emotional and sexual abuse; 2) have family problems; 3) suffer from physical and mental disorders;
4) have experienced academic failure; and 5) are easily pressured by older males. Girls also are developmentally different from boys and girls’ involvement in delinquency is often connected to conflicts with family, friends, or their significant others. The ABA (2001, p. 27) notes

As the number of girls in the justice system continues to climb, it is imperative to provide better programs and services for girls to divert them from formal juvenile court proceedings. While it is true that some girls need to be in secure, confined settings, the vast majority of delinquent girls can be more appropriately dealt with in culturally component, gender-specific programs that are developmentally sound.

Due to the nature of their offenses, which are primarily non-violent, female offenders are often a lower risk to public safety than their male counterparts. Thus, this population presents a unique opportunity to implement and expand community corrections alternatives and intermediate sanctions without compromising public safety.

As the American Correctional Association reports (1995, p. 91)

In the 1990s, the issues related to girls in the juvenile justice system have taken a number of tracks. Public concern centers on the increasing number and severity of violent crimes committed by teenage girls, and the roles played by girls in creating or adding to violence in schools and communities. Within the system, it is generally recognized that the needs of girls who enter the system and require care and treatment are not adequately met. It is safe to assume that if conditions for boys are less than satisfactory, the conditions for girls are much worse.

Juvenile justice administrators, such as court officials, probation officers, attorneys, and juvenile detention facility staff must recognize and make the necessary changes to address these needs. Staff must recognize either through training or job selection that these offenders have unique treatment needs. Most of these offenders have been victims of domestic abuse, and in many cases, have been sexually abused, resulting
in lowered self-esteem. “Sixty percent of women under correctional authority in the year 2000 reported they were physically or sexually assaulted at some point in their lives, and 69 percent of these women reported the assault happened before they were 18 years old” (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004, p. 5).

It is vital to recognize that gender-based programs designed to treat female juvenile offenders should empower these young women and guide them toward a pro-social path. Programs should provide young women with the necessary tools to survive and escape a life of abuse without having to enter the criminal justice system to feel safe. Females need programs that promote relationships of trust and interdependence with other women already present in their lives. Friends, relatives, neighbors, church or other social groups can be important providers of insight, strategy, and strength. Girls need mentors who reflect a “rootedness” in realities of their own lives. They need mentors who exemplify survival and growth as resistance and change. The American Correctional Association (1998, p.108) notes:

Little is known about the characteristics of programs that serve women and girls or about the criteria or elements that make for effective programs and promote successful client outcomes. This lack of attention makes it critically important to document program characteristics that are related to positive outcomes for this population so promising program models can be presented to the criminal justice community.

The purpose of this project is to assess the current programs that have been implemented and aimed at helping female offenders become rehabilitated and also investigate what needs to be done in order for the juvenile justice system to successfully address the needs of these offenders and reduce the number of females entering juvenile
detention centers. This research will address emerging perspectives regarding evaluation and programs for female offenders in correctional settings and will also examine the following issues:

1) Why do we need gender-specific programs?

2) What do effective programs look like?

3) What can be done to reduce the incarceration of girls?

This research will provide an understanding of the needs of females as they differ from males while in the juvenile justice system, as well as offer recommendations to create more effective rehabilitation programs for these delinquents and provide them with the necessary tools to become successful adults. As a probation officer, I see the need for gender-specific programs on a daily basis. This research stemmed from a need to have a better understanding of the types of services these girls need in order to stay away from a criminal lifestyle.
Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In *The Female Offender*, Lombroso (1920, p. 5) described female criminality as:

An inherent tendency produced in individuals that could be regarded as biological atavism, similar to cranial and facial features and one could expect a withering away of crime if the atavistic people were prohibited from breeding.

Then, criminality was regarded as a physical ailment, like epilepsy. Reading the work of Lombroso helps us understand the many myths that surround women in general and female crime and deviance in particular. Society has created stereotypes that are expected for each gender. Girls and boys do not share the same life experiences, social expectations, or problems. Therefore, there should be no expectation that any form of treatment adequate for boys would be adequate for girls. As Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004, p. 88) indicate,

Girls on the economic and political margin, particularly those who find their way into the juvenile justice system, share many problems with their male counterparts. They are likely to be poor, from disrupted and violent families, and having problems at school. In addition, however, girls also confront problems unique to their sex: notably sexual abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, depression, unplanned pregnancy, and adolescent motherhood.

The juvenile justice system needs to recognize that differences exist and address these needs by creating programs specifically designed for the treatment of girls. Developing and employing interpersonal skills to successfully interact with diverse populations is very important. Patience to wait for change to occur, along with a strong belief in one’s ability to effect change is also crucial. According to Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross (1992), by approaching crime prevention from a multi-level
community-based empowerment perspective instead of seeking a single solution, success
is more likely:

As individuals become more conscious of themselves and the nature of their
problems, they were likely to re-evaluate their values, problems, and themselves
and the nature of their problems, and themselves both affectively and cognitively.
The more central their problems were to their self-identity, the more their
reevaluation involved altering their sense of self. They struggle with questions
such as “How do I think and feel about living in a deteriorating environment that
places family or friends at increasing risk for disease, poverty, or imprisonment?”
(p. 1109)

The juvenile justice system needs to implement programs for girls that
specifically deal with cognitive behavior. As girls are aware of their surroundings and
see the choices they need to make to improve their lives and themselves, they realize they
must change their behavior because their environment will likely remain the same. Girls
in the juvenile justice system tend to blame their criminal behaviors on their background
and the crime-infested areas from where they come. They concentrate on the fact they
live in “ghettos” and that there is nothing they can do to change that. They need to
realize they do not need to change their address in order to change their ways. Blanchette
and Brown (2006) examined the rate of how girls are being incarcerated, not because
they are more criminal, but because the type of offenses they are committing are “getting
the attention” of law enforcement. I have seen many girls who enter the juvenile justice
system for fighting at school, breaking things around their homes, having heated
arguments with their mothers, or having physical altercations with their siblings. In the
past, these acts would get them suspended or even expelled from school, now these
behaviors earn them a trip to a juvenile detention facility and juvenile court.
Blanchette and Brown (2006) reported that because many of these young women are runaways, they are out on the streets and forced to engage in “survival crimes” such as prostitution, stealing, and drug related offenses. They further indicated that females get more upset than males when they experience social network or interpersonal problems, especially those involving family and friends. Abusive and failed relationships are another major cause of strain, as well as the failure to be treated fairly by others. The juvenile justice system must dedicate programs serving the needs to these girls, to help keep them safe and protected instead of punishing them with secondary victimization in juvenile hall. The ABA (2001) notes the following:

With the high incidence of girls’ runaway behavior, many programs focused on control rather that the provision of effective support for girls to become successful and to grow beyond the trauma that often drives their runaway behavior. Few programs for this population of girls have sufficient funding to undertake a formal evaluation of their services. Consequently, it has been difficult to fully identify which program elements are effective (p.13)

According to the National Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC; 2003), one in three girls and one in six boys will be sexually exploited before adulthood. Approximately one in seven youths online (10-17 years old) received a sexual solicitation or approach over the internet. Sexually abused children are four times more likely than their peers to be sexually exploited. In the United States there are reports of over 300,000 children forced into prostitution every year (CSEC, 2003).

Recent changes in public policy have made promising improvements in dealing with sexually exploited children. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently signed Assembly Bill 499 into law (October 2008), which is designed to provide a safety
net for minors who have been forced into prostitution, child pornography, or human trafficking. Under this legislation, a pilot project in Alameda County was created to provide training and wraparound services to treat sexually exploited children through diversion programs. These programs offer counseling, school placement assistance, job placement assistance, and in most cases, parenting and birth control classes. Whereas in the past, girls found to be involved in prostitution would typically be charged as criminals and sent to juvenile hall, now they are seen as victims not as criminals (CSEC, 2003).

A large number of girls were arrested and charged with prostitution, when in reality they were being exploited by pimps who encouraged them to be on the street, with no money, no food, and presented as easy targets. The project in Alameda redirects these girls from juvenile hall to the Child Protective Services, and, instead of girls being arrested, the pimps are now taken to jail for child exploitation and human trafficking. Alameda County realized the need to re-label these girls from “prostitutes” to “victims of exploitation.” More projects like this one are needed throughout the country to stop the exploitation of our girls and provide them with the services they need.

Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004) focus specifically on the types of problems girls face every day and the types of programs and services these girls need. These girls share many distinct characteristics, including: (a) family fragmentation; (b) victimization outside the juvenile justice system; (c) victimization inside the juvenile justice system; (d) in many cases, serious physical and mental health disorders; (e) separation of incarcerated mothers from their children; (f) widespread school failure; (g) the breaking point—early adolescent; (h) non-violent offenders.
It is important to recognize the needs of these girls before we can come up with a plan to develop the programs they need. By having a general understanding of the type of problems they face, we have a general understanding of the types of services they need. It is almost impossible to develop a successful program when one does not know the population being served, in this case, female juvenile offenders.

Although many female and male offenders have participated in different programs to prevent and treat juvenile crime, it is still unclear how males and females differ in regards to what motivates them to commit crimes. Some of the different life experiences for boys and girls identified by Albrecht (1994) are issues of sexual and physical abuse, runaway behavior, mental health issues such as suicide attempts and other significant self-destructive behaviors. Albrecht highlights a study conducted by Timmons-Mitchell (1995) that estimated that 84% of girls as compared to 27% of boys had evidence of serious mental health symptoms, perhaps, stemming from their higher rates of abuse.

Further examination reveals that 79% of female offenders in custody have clinically depressive or anxiety symptoms, and have a concurring substance abuse problem (Albrecht, 1994). One of the main points Albrecht makes is that a large number of the girls who come in contact with the juvenile justice system have bigger problems that need to be addressed, other than their petty theft behaviors, running away, or poor school attendance. Albrecht indicates these girls are being labeled as “criminal” for the behaviors they exhibit when they are trying to deal with the issues going on within their homes.
Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004) call for a “relabeling” of these girls. Through the process of re-labeling, actions that are currently defined by authorities as “criminal” or “violent” like school fights, or fights with parents and siblings, would be considered “problems with family dynamics” and these girls would not end up in juvenile halls.

Simons, Simons and Wallace (2004) give an example of an argument between a girl and her mother that eventually turned into a pushing match between the two. In the past, this situation would have been addressed as a child welfare case; however, today, this is labeled as a violent assault, resulting in the girl’s immediate arrest. A situation like this one could have been addressed at home; however, since it is now considered an “assault”, it has to go in front of a judge for disposition in juvenile court.

Simons et al. (2004) conclude that changes in law enforcement policy and practice have increased the number of females in the juvenile justice system, not the actual actions by the girls themselves. According to the OJJDP (2006), between 1980 and 2003, the female percentage of juvenile violent crime arrests increased and has been greatly influenced by mandatory arrests for domestic violence and other law enforcement policy. The 14,590 female offenders held in 2003 accounted for 15% of all offenders in custody. Females were more likely than males to be held for simple assault, technical violations, and status offenses in 2003. “Girls are still far more likely than boys to be held for status offenses and girls are less likely to be held for violent offenses. Essentially, 6% of girls and only 1% of boys are incarcerated for status offenses” (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004, p. 79).
According to national statistics collected by the OJJDP (2003), between 1.3 and 1.4 million youths run away from home each year with girls contributing over half of all runaways. About 25% of these females become prostitutes in what Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004) call “survival sex.” With no financial support from parents or relatives, runaway girls are easy prey for sexual entrepreneurs looking for susceptible victims. When girls need to survive while out on the streets, and they lack the skills to get and maintain a job, the “easiest” route for them is prostitution.

Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004) further argue that there should be an examination of status offenses, especially for the females coming in contact with the juvenile justice system. Chesney-Lind and Pasko exemplify a girl who came into the juvenile justice system with an “assault” charge after throwing cookies at her mother. Did her action warrant the response she received? How necessary was incarceration? Actions conducted by males would not get the same response.

It is difficult to provide an appropriate assessment to the court when the female offenders’ problems typically relate to family dysfunction, failure in school, victimization at home, and other “technical” violations (curfew violations, poor school attendance) that would not be considered criminal if the offenders were adults. Because of their victimization and abuse in the family, these adolescents run away from home and are forced to turn to a variety of crimes, such as prostitution and theft, to survive while living on the streets (Cernkovich, Giordano, & Lanctot, 2008, p. 8).

Male administrators of female detention facilities serve a population they do not understand or appreciate. According to Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004), most female
juvenile offenders have been victims of abuse, and they act up in response to that abuse. Chesney-Lind and Pasko note that some experts estimate that roughly 70% of the victims of such abuse are girls. Considering these facts, administrators should know more about the population they are serving. They should take into consideration the type of programs their facilities need in order to prevent these offenders from coming back to juvenile hall.

Since California has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the country, the criminal and juvenile justice administration is attempting to reduce not only the juvenile crime rate but also the institutionalization of youth. It should be noted that as female juveniles continue to be incarcerated for running away, prostitution, petty theft, and battery at school and at home, their incarceration is costing the state millions of dollars. This money could better be used in community programs to prevent future crime and help with the rehabilitation of these girls.

Programs that focus on rehabilitation, care, aftercare and reintegration are needed. There needs to be more educational opportunities and job opportunities for juveniles who are starting their lives, and who have had difficulty adjusting to society. Incarceration is not a deterrent. Many of the juveniles I work with have expressed how they “learn” new tricks while they are incarcerated. Most juvenile detention facilities mix offenders based on their age, and not the seriousness of their offense. Girls who are incarcerated for running away are interacting with those detained for aggravated batteries, possession of drugs, and other felonies. They talk to each other, learn new ways to “get away” with crimes, and are even tempted to try an array of drugs.
It is important to understand why a large number of girls are becoming part of the juvenile justice system. For example, Belknap, Holsinger and Dunn (1997) report that:

1) There is a connection between the rising number of girls and young women arrested for criminal activity and their previous victimization by family members;

2) Girls living in housing projects infested with crime seem to have two options, they either become victims or they become the victimizers;

3) More girls are carrying weapons for self-protection; and

4) Girls seem to blame themselves for their own victimization.

These findings shed light on what may be causing the increase in female incarcerations. If we pay close attention to these findings, we can see that female offenders need programs that are going to help them survive difficult situations and prevent them from turning to crime.

Mallicoat tells us, “Statistics on juvenile crime tells us that the majority of female offending is nonviolent in nature or results of technical violations of probation. Yet girls who are detained spend significantly greater amounts of time in detention compared to boys” (p.4). She further argues that gender bias is likely to occur when girls behave in a way that is not “appropriate” for their gender. In other words, when girls exhibit hostile or aggressive behavior, it is likely they will be arrested. However, if girls “behave” in a way they are “supposed to” law enforcement officers tend to be more “lenient” and an arrest is unlikely to occur.

Walsh (1985) writes that a key component in the assessment of minors in the juvenile justice system is the probation officer who monitors their cases. She notes that
the probation officer is in charge of putting the prevailing philosophy into practice by
presenting to the court assessments of “individualized” offenders and making
recommendations consistent with those assessments. Walsh indicates that it is crucial for
probation officers to remain unbiased in regards to sentencing based actions, not gender.

I am a probation officer. It has been my experience that females receive blatant
differential treatment from the juvenile court. Females receive harsher sentences when it
comes to “risky” behaviors such as running away, more so, than their male counterparts
who engage in similar behaviors.

When females enter the juvenile justice system, they initiate a cycle of facing a
judge, being sentenced, ordered to abstain from drugs, participating in counseling, and
being ordered to remain home at all times under parental supervision. This can be very
challenging for an adolescent female who has a dysfunctional family, who may be a
victim of abuse in her home, and whose only way to escape this abuse is to run away.

Running away is a particularly gendered offense. It often is a response to a girl’s
risk of victimization (especially sexual assault) in her home; however, when girls run
away they are more likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system than are
boys who run away (Mallicoat, 2007, p. 28).

Chesney-Lind (1988) argues that abuse by family members, especially sexual
abuse, plays a special role in the explanation of female delinquency. While abuse may
lead to delinquency among males, females are much more likely to be the victims of
sexual abuse. Their age and runaway status rule out attempts to gain legitimate work.
Life on the street, including involvement in activities like prostitution, leads to further
abuse and exploitation. The police and juvenile courts often provide little assistance to these females. In fact, such females are frequently arrested and returned to their home environment where they may suffer further abuse (Agnew, 2005).

The juvenile may want to obey the orders of the Court, but eventually her home life becomes unbearable and she feels compelled to take her only alternative, leaving. When she leaves, she violates probation and a warrant may be issued for her arrest. Once she is arrested and brought back to Court, the cycle continues until something changes at home (which is rare) or she is removed from the community and committed to a placement or group home facility. “Despite having less serious offense histories, we found that girls were more likely than boys to be recommitted to residential treatment, regardless of the seriousness of the new offense” (Cernkovich et al., 2008, p. 7).

Agnew’s (2005) research on the family and delinquency focuses on four major aspects of the family. The first aspect is family structure, which has to do with the size and composition of the family; here it is argued, for example, that “broken homes” contribute to delinquency. Family dynamics are crucial when preventing juveniles from participating in criminal activities. When parents are supervising their children diligently and teaching them values and morals, it decreases their chances of being involved with the juvenile justice system.

Agnew’s (2005) second aspect is parental and sibling deviance. This explains how when the parents and siblings are involved in a life of crime and they are in the criminal justice system, juveniles see this as a “normal” way of life and become used to dealing with the police and other law enforcement officials. They learn to mistrust
authority figures and see them as enemies. When parents go to jail, prison, or are on parole or probation, their children see this as a “normal” part of life, therefore, they lack respect for authority figures, which not only includes law enforcement officials, but school officials as well.

Agnew’s (2005) third aspect is the quality of family relationships. When juveniles have poor relationships with their parents, they lack the ability to have and maintain healthy relationships. When juveniles have nurturing parents, they do not have the need or the desire to involve themselves in criminal activities. The fourth aspect is parental socialization which has to do with the extent to which parents teach their children to conform or deviate. This is again very important when talking about parents teaching their children respect. When children are taught to respect others, criminal activities are less likely to occur, because that child knows right from wrong and knows about the consequences for misbehaviors. Children who suffer the consequences of their negative actions learn how to restrain themselves and how to stay out of trouble with law enforcement.

Heidensohn (2006) recommends that all professionals working with young prostitutes should think of them not as potential offenders but as victims. The claim is that no child (legally defined as anyone under the age of 18 years old) can consent to prostitution; most young people are coerced into it, at any rate, the men who either recruit them into prostitution or buy sex from them are child sexual abusers and should be prosecuted.
Mallicoat (2007) argues that girls are significantly more likely to be described as not criminally dangerous, to suffer from a poor relationship with their families, to lack support, and be out of parental control. Girls are also significantly more likely to have a record of poor school attendance and a history of running away. If the parents and schools work together to correct these issues while the juvenile is at home, there would be no need for the juvenile justice system to get involved. Most of these young women come in contact with the juvenile courts for minor offenses that could have been handled at home.

In 1974, the federal government passed the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The Act was created to reduce the incarceration of status offenders, mainly girls. This same Act was revised in 1992 with one major change: it provided financial support for states to develop gender-specific programming. Gender-specific programming was an attempt to provide alternatives for intervention for status offenders.

Naffine (1996) expands on the recognition of gender bias in criminology:

Criminology has been developed and presented as a study of men (by men) and their relation to crime, but it is a study that is uninterested in men (as men) and that fails to recognize the consequent specificity, limitations and underlying assumptions of the discipline. Crime, men and masculinity have an intimate relationship, so intimate that we often fail to see it, and so intimate that it can seem natural. As lesser criminals, women have often been regarded as inept or unambitious. As law-abiding citizens they seem to lack the offender’s energy and drive (p.8).

Naffine concludes that because most women in the criminal justice system have been ignored and most of the literature refers to the relationship between men and crime, there is little known about what causes females to commit crimes and how to deter them
from committing additional crimes. According to the USDOJ (2001), the number of women in state prisons grew 75% from 1986 to 1990. Nearly half of all women in prison are currently serving sentences for non-violent offenses, 71% had served a prior sentence of probation, and 20% had previously served a sentence as a juvenile. What is critical is the fact that two thirds of these women have one or more children under the age of 18. Further, more than half these women were under the influence of drugs during the time of their arrest.

One of the problems surrounding the incarceration of women is that, like the juvenile justice system, historically, jails have been designed to operate for the detention of male inmates. Females constitute such a small number of the jail population that they have been overlooked and underserved. Although their numbers are small, women’s incarceration rates have nearly tripled in the last ten years. As with juveniles, these women do not receive the services they need while incarcerated and have very limited access to any services once they are released (National Institute of Corrections, 2004).

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC, 2004) reported that jails are having difficulties providing incarcerated women with services such as: 1) adequate housing, 2) adequate bed space, 3) adequate programs, 4) job placement assistance, and 5) mental health and substance abuse programs. NIC further reports that since most of these women are mothers, they are often taken away from their children who end up with relatives or even in foster care. These women need support and guidance and the necessary tools to maintain the family unit they have destroyed.
Banks (2003) argues that any woman who commits non-violent crimes should be given the opportunity to remain home and participate in community-based programs that will provide them with vocational training, and substance abuse treatment, and be ordered to participate in programs designed to promote self-sufficient and productive lives. She argues that these women should be given the opportunity to remain home to care for their families. This sentiment is shared by Simons et al. (2004), who advocate that:

Legal sanctions such as arrest, official labeling, and incarceration have a deleterious “snowball effect” as they undermine the delinquent’s life chances with regards to schooling, employment, and marriage. These sanctions increase the probability of involvement in deviant behavior. Jail time and length of incarceration are strong predictors of unemployment and job instability. Unemployment and job instability, in turn, have been linked to an increased risk for crime. Similarly, past research has shown that a committed romantic relationship reduces the chances of criminal behavior, but antisocial behavior and incarceration reduces the chances of involvement in such relationships (p.111).

In a report by the American Correctional Association (ACA, 1993), the need for programs specifically designed for women in prison is addressed. The ACA relates that programs need to be developed to specifically deal with the inmate’s history of abuse and neglect, their role as a parent, as well as their low education levels and poor work skills.

This report further advocates for an increased use of sentencing alternatives that can preserve families and reduce prison overcrowding. The ACA argues that “these alternatives can be used with minimal risk to the community and potentially positive effects on the female offender and her family” (p.99).

Eaton (1993, pp. 55-56) brings up an interesting point about women in prison in stating that,
Within the prison, each woman is closed off from the wider society. She returns to society disoriented and disempowered. For her, the choice seems to lie between returning to a former way of life or going nowhere. Excluded from society, she was stripped of all her possessions, of her dignity. She has less, she was made less. Yet on release, a woman is faced with a series of demands. She is expected to obtain a home, a job, establish or re-establish personal relationships and her primary goal is to get her children back, which she won’t be able to do without a home or a job.

When women are released from prison, they are expected to have everything in order. They are expected to have a decent home, a job, and be financially stable. These high expectations lead women to return to a life of crime to provide for themselves and their families. When we fail to provide women with the services they need in order to remain clean and sober and away from a life of crime, we are setting them up for future and continued failure. If the criminal justice system were able and willing to provide gender-based programs for female offenders, the recidivism rate would decrease.

The following programs exist nationwide and have been used as models on which to design other programs to help female juvenile offenders. These programs are operated by non-profit organizations working for one common goal: to help reduce the number of females incarcerated. They are community oriented and obtain referrals from schools, juvenile detention centers, and other non-profit agencies.

**PACE Centers for Girls, Inc. – Florida**

The Practical Academic Cultural Education (PACE, 2008) Center for Girls, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides a non-residential delinquency prevention program in locations throughout Florida. PACE targets the needs of females 12 to 18 who are identified as dependent, truant, runaway, delinquent, or in need of academic skills.
PACE accepts referrals from the juvenile justice system, the Department of Children and Families, schools, community services agencies, parents, family members, friends, and self-referrals. Its purpose is to intervene and prevent school withdrawal, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and welfare dependency in a safe and nurturing environment.

PACE programs provide: 1) academic education, 2) individualized attention, 3) a gender-specific life management curriculum, 4) therapeutic support services, 5) parental involvement, 6) student volunteer service projects, and 7) transition follow-up services. Every girl at PACE sets individual educational and social goals that are focused on earning a high school diploma or GED, re-entering public school, attending college, getting vocational training, joining the military, or the entering the private workforce. After program completion, PACE continues to monitor each girl's educational and personal development for three years of follow-up case management.

PACE operates 16 centers throughout Florida and pre-teen centers (girls ages 8-11) in Broward and Manatee Counties. Since its creation in 1983, PACE has served over 17,000 girls. PACE works with over 2,000 girls who have graduated from the program and have been placed in different home settings. Participation is voluntary and girls can remain in the program for up to three years after their placement. PACE success rate demonstrates a significant (60%) reduction in runaways; placement in after school employment (11% increase); and dramatic improvement in school earning credit (90% increase).
Lawanda Revoira, president of PACE, credits this success to the special attention that is given to the girls by the staff. Their goal is to focus on the special needs of troubled girls. The program’s success is based on its focus of providing community-based services customized to the self-defined needs of the girls. Revoira (2006) states that it is crucial for the staff to listen and form a partnership with the girls. One of the most important lessons girls learn is that violence is not a part of a successful life. PACE teaches girls how to avoid violence and how to prevent it.

**Girls Incorporated – Nebraska**

Girls Incorporated (1996) serves girls ages 9 to 11 years of age. It is based in Omaha, Nebraska with 134 local affiliates as well as more than 1,000 locations across the country. Girls Incorporated works to help girls become “strong, smart and bold.” It offers 10 hours of self-defense as well as violence prevention programs. Girls Incorporated helps prevent the cycle of violence by teaching girls to “speak out, speak up and defend themselves.” It provides self-defense courses that teach verbal defenses, karate moves, and techniques to break free from holds and grabs. It also teaches girls the skills to respond effectively to violence in their homes, schools and communities and to utilize anger about violence to fight injustices such as racism and sexism.

Girls Incorporated developed research-based informal education programs that encourage girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual, and emotional challenges. Major programs address math and science education, pregnancy and drug abuse prevention, media literacy, economic literacy, adolescent health, violence prevention, and sports participation. Girls Incorporated receives 77 % of its revenue from public
support—corporations, foundations, government grants, and individuals. The remainder comes from affiliate dues, fees, interest, and dividends. More than three-quarters of the organization's functional expenses go directly to support program services for girls.

Girls Incorporated programming can be offered anywhere in the United States, including Girls Incorporated centers, schools, churches, community centers and housing projects. Girls Incorporated informs policymakers about girls’ needs locally and nationally. The organization educates the media about critical issues facing girls and teaches girls how to advocate for themselves and their communities, using their voices to promote positive change. The majority of Girls Incorporated centers are located in low-income areas and provide a weekly average of 30 hours of after-school, weekend, and summer activities.

Alternative Rehabilitation Communities-Pennsylvania

Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC) in Pennsylvania is a secure residential treatment facility offering care for girls 15-18 years old. ARC was founded in 1975 to serve delinquent adolescents, and opened Zimmerman Home in 1981 after the Department of Probation indicated a lack of resources or options for girls in the juvenile justice system. ARC’s program philosophy is focused on results. Their mission statement says that if the outcome of their behavior, actions, and attitude is not good for their students, then it is not worth doing it. They are the role models for their students. Therefore, their behavior, actions, and attitude must always be presented positively.

Girls are referred to the program by the Pennsylvania 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
1) educational difficulties, 2) substance abuse, 3) dysfunctional families, 4) involvement
with older males, 5) gang affiliation, 6) codependency, 7) physical and sexual abuse, 8)
lack of self-esteem, and 9) repeated running away. 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. As girls progress
through the program, they work with staff to plan for a smooth reintegration into the
community.

The girls who are coming into contact with the juvenile justice system need
guidance more than punishment and they need programs designed to address their needs.
These girls are not getting adequate attention at home, in school or in their community. It
is sad to realize that the fate of most of the girls involved with the juvenile justice system
could have been prevented if someone had been paying attention to them before they
stood in front of a juvenile court judge. The task of caring for these young women should
have been addressed by Social Services, not the juvenile court.

It appears that in most cases, a girl’s needs are ignored until she becomes part of
the juvenile justice system. Even then, instead of getting the help she needs to succeed,
she finds limited resources, no adequate gender-based programs, and no services to help
her with her particular needs. It is a shame to recognize that these girls are not getting the
services they need in order to help them have a fulfilling life as productive members of
society.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

I gained access to all female minors in custody at the Yolo County Juvenile Hall between 2003-2004. I was able to talk to these girls and ask if they would be willing to be interviewed for this project. All volunteered to participate. Written permission was obtained from my supervisor to conduct the interviews with the girls. An interview was conducted with my supervisor asking her questions relating to the female wards. Interviews were conducted on weekends when these juveniles had free time and would not miss class or other important counseling sessions. I explained that these interviews were not work related but were in support of my college degree.

The wards gave me their permission and completed the questionnaire and follow-up interviews. The data presented here are drawn from their responses to the questionnaire and responses to the interviews. The consent form and research materials were reviewed and approved by the juvenile hall supervisor. Steps were taken to increase the likelihood that the girls answered honestly to the questions by assuring them anonymity, that their names were not going to be used, and confidentiality that this information was not going to be shared with their parents or probation officers. The interviews were designed to collect information across several domains and topics, such as their backgrounds, past offenses, school life, home life and the programs they had participated in while at juvenile hall. Descriptive analyses were then conducted to examine the similarities and prevalent patterns of the girls’ answers.
Data collection came in two phases: a self-report survey followed by a non-structured, open-ended interview. I made it clear from the very first meeting that their participation was voluntary, that they did not have to participate, and that they did not have to answer any questions if they did not want. I made it clear there would be no reprimand if they refused to participate.

Interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. The goal in this research was to capture the girls’ individual experiences and what they believe are the services they need to remain offense-free and out of juvenile hall. A series of three interviews were conducted over a three month period. The first step after obtaining the girls’ permission to participate in this study was to administer a self report questionnaire (Appendix B). They had two weeks to complete the questionnaire. The first sets of interviews were conducted a few days after the questionnaires were collected. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour and were comprised of open-ended questions concerning their juvenile hall and life experiences. Topics were broad, which allowed each respondent to go in the direction she wished. Questions about their family life, school, jobs, friends, and boyfriends were asked. After the first interview, I stopped, read responses to the surveys, and returned to ask follow-up questions. To protect the girls’ privacy, their names have been changed in this report.

The research was exploratory in an attempt to gain their perspectives rather than impose my own. I interviewed two male probation officers and one female juvenile hall supervisor who interacted on a daily basis with the female minors as validity checks to what my respondents reported.
During the initial meeting with the girls, I explained that I was interested in the ways in which they had changed or thought about their lives based on their juvenile hall experience. The interviews were loosely structured and focused on three areas of their life: 1) life before juvenile hall, 2) life during juvenile hall, and 3) life after juvenile hall. All eight respondents participated in a follow-up second and third interview. All interviews were taped. At the end of each interview, I would try to focus on the positive aspects of the girls’ lives and their goals for their future. This left the girls in a positive mood with hope for their future outside juvenile hall.

The follow-up interviews were conducted in the same manner as the first interview. These follow-ups were necessary to determine if their feelings or worries had changed since the first interview. Most respondents found it a relief to have had the opportunity to re-examine their experiences. After conducting these interviews I found similarities to the responses they provided and what existed in the literature regarding the services needed to keep these girls out of juvenile court.

It should be noted that during this period I was the detention officer working on site. The possibility exists that the girls may have been responding differently during and after the interviews. In other words, the Hawthorne Effect could be present. I do not recall any specific changes in the girls’ behaviors before, during, or after the interviews. Based on their answers, I do not believe social desirability played a significant role in their answers; however, it is possible that some of their responses on the questionnaires were based on what they thought I wanted to hear. Further, when answering questions in regards to their drug use and criminal histories, they could have protected certain details
that they believed could have led them to have further trouble with law enforcement.

There is no way to verify the validity of their responses.
Chapter 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Of the eight girls in this study, three were 17 years old, two were 16, and three were 14 years of age. Their charges ranged from battery to burglary. Three of the girls had been arrested for their first time with burglary charges, four had battery charges, one had been charged with elderly endangerment, and the last was a referral from Yolo County Child Protective Services.

Four admitted to prostituting themselves while they were homeless during the time they were runaways. They stated that they needed money to buy food and to be able to survive on the streets. One of them, Deidre, told me that she sleeps with boys for money because, “I just like sex too much.” She reported that she had “at least” one abortion and two bouts of sexually transmitted disease. She told me she does not use birth control protection because she “does not need it”, and declares that she knows everything she needs to know about birth control. When asked if she has ever taken the “morning after pill” she asked, “What is that?”

Six out of the eight girls reported that they have been pregnant on at least one occasion in the last six months, one girl admitted to having a miscarriage. Along with contracting a sexually transmitted disease, three of the eight admitted attempting suicide at least once. When asked how they felt being incarcerated, all eight girls reported to being neglected by staff and being treated differently than the boys. All eight girls reported the boys get to do “all the fun stuff” while the girls get stuck in their rooms all day long.
Six out of the eight girls admitted to being addicted to drugs while two denied being addicts even though they admitted to using drugs daily when they were not incarcerated. These two girls alleged that they could stop if they really wanted. One explained that she does drugs to forget about her problems and to become immune to seeing her mom get beat up by her many “boyfriends.” Seven out of the eight girls started using drugs by the age of 12; one of them started at 11. None seemed to understand the long-lasting effects drugs would have on their physical and psychological health. When I told one of the girls about brain cells being damaged by heroin, she gave me a blank stare and asked, “What are brain cells?”

Rape was one of the more revealing topics in the survey. A survey question asked, “Have you ever been forced to participate in any sexual activity?” Five answered “yes” but when I asked for clarifying information during the first interview, “How old were you when you were raped?” one respondent looked at me and seemed very confused. She told me, “I have never been raped.” I showed her her survey where she had answered that she had been forced to have sex. She replied, “Ohh, I have been forced to have sex but I have never been raped.” I explained to her that forced intercourse was by definition rape. This seemed to make her very uncomfortable and she refused to answer any more questions.

When I asked another about rape, she told me the same thing. She said she had never been raped, but had been forced to have sex. A third girl told me that she had never been raped because the partner who forced her to have intercourse was her boyfriend at the time. Two girls told me that they do not believe they had been raped
because they did nothing to stop it. They told me that they said “no” at some time, but let
the guy continue what he was doing. They reported they were afraid to get hurt if they
pushed their assailant away.

Four of the girls interviewed received commitments of release on their 18th
birthdays. Three of the four were released to themselves because no one came to pick
them up despite the efforts of juvenile hall staff to contact their parents or guardians.
This was one of the most emotionally draining moments I experienced as a juvenile hall
staff member. Watching an eighteen-year-old girl released to herself, and seeing the fear,
anxiety, and most of all the sadness in her eyes when I opened the door that led to the
lobby and consequently, to their freedom, but to an empty lobby with no one to greet her
was sad. She knew as well as I did that she was completely alone, there was no one who
cared what she did or did not do, and of course, no one to teach her right from wrong.
Like many, she had grown up inside juvenile hall.

One thing I noticed was that many of the girls reported that they liked school, but
that they were not enrolled when they were arrested. Deidre stated that she avoids school
because “too many girls want to kick my ass.” They all reported being “B” students with
excellent school and behavior records. Seven out of the eight described themselves as
“exceptional students.”

Seven out of the eight girls I talked to denied belonging to a gang, but they
admitted that they “kick it” with a certain gang. They said that they had not been
“jumped in” to any gang, even though most of them wore gang colors and had tattoos
identifying them with a certain gang. I had overheard many conversations between male
wards saying that they had “pulled trains” on Deidre and Kayla, meaning that these girls had had sex with male wards back in their neighborhoods in order to be “jumped in” to their gang. When I asked the girls about this, they both denied the allegations.

After talking to all eight girls about their boyfriends, a very distinct pattern emerged. Seven of the girls blamed their boyfriends for their crime problems. One of them even said that she wished her boyfriend would be incarcerated for years, because that is the only way she could stay out of trouble. All of the girls interviewed were involved with older men. Two of the fourteen-year-old girls interviewed were with seventeen-year-old boys. The other fourteen-year-old was with an eighteen-year-old. One of the seventeen-year-old girls was with a twenty-two-year-old man, and the other three girls were with nineteen-year-old men.

The age difference has an impact on the girls. It is apparent from these interviews that their boyfriends have manipulated them. Many of them admitted that their boyfriends forced them to have sex and commit crimes. When asked why they did not stand up to them or leave them, they said, “I love him.” That is the rationale used in many of our conversations where they steadfastly refused to take responsibility for their actions.

These girls believe that their boyfriends have the right to treat them indiscriminately. Three of the girls live with their mothers and have never met their fathers. One of the girls lives with her grandmother, one lives with her father, and two have no parents but live with their guardians. Only one of the girls lives with both
parents. She told me that she would much rather just live with her mother because her father is “an asshole.”

Overall, all of the girls told similar stories. They came from a dysfunctional family and had been dating older men who got them into trouble. They all associate with gang members, even though none admitted to belonging to a particular gang. They all claim to enjoy school, even though they do not attend school.

When asked what type of services they needed to help them stay away from a life of crime and further involvement with juvenile courts, their answers were revealing. One stated that she received all the help she needed, and could not think of anything else she would need, but her own will power to stay out of trouble. One girl requested to have more after-school programs to avoid temptations while she is out of school. Two girls requested to have more sex education and pregnancy prevention information and counseling. These two girls also requested help with getting involved with religious services and participating in a church. Five of the girls wanted more assistance with obtaining job training skills and help with getting part time employment. Two girls stated that they needed help with decision-making skills and wanted to participate in after school programs with tutoring support. One of the girls indicated she would like to receive help with preparing to take the General Education Diploma examination, while another one requested help with college applications and financial aid. Only two of the girls requested anger management counseling, while one girl specifically requested help with conflict resolution while at school. Ironically, none of the girls thought they needed a gender-based program. I asked one of the girls if she learned anything from all the
services she received from juvenile hall in the last four years that she has been on probation. She claimed that she did not learn anything and that the programs were not helpful at all. She told me, “The programs don’t work because if you fuck up one time, you fuck up everything. They don’t give you a second chance.”
Chapter 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I began this research trying to answer three questions:

1) Why do we need gender-specific programs?

Girls are the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population. Girls have been constantly overlooked and underserved. The juvenile justice system needs to be responsive to the needs of female offenders to prevent them from turning to a life of crime. Most girls come in contact with the juvenile justice system for status offenses. Instead of labeling these activities as “criminal”, these cases need to be referred to the appropriate authorities (child protective services, schools, and community-based programs).

Girls have unique needs that need unique interventions. Incarceration does not solve their problems. Incarceration does not provide these girls with the skills to deal with a chaotic family life, to overcome abuse, or to improve school attendance and grades. In many ways, it seems that these girls are not asking for gender-specific programs, nor are they asking for “special treatment”, rather they are asking for basic, essential assistance. Needs such as sex education, after school programs helping them with school homework, family counseling, job placement assistance, parenting classes, life skills courses, and vocational training cross gender barriers.
2) What do effective programs look like?

Multi-level and multi-agency programs are needed to offer these girls the opportunity to learn how to deal with conflicts at home, at school and in their neighborhoods. For instance, after school programs that offer these girls tutoring services and assistance with homework would be beneficial. Programs should also include individual counseling for the girls and parenting classes for their parents. Programs should concentrate on the cognitive behaviors of these girls and offer an open forum for discussion between the girls and the staff serving them. By having open and honest communication, girls will feel comfortable enough where they can learn and prosper.

Gender-based programs need to provide the girls with the skills needed to survive in abusive households, abusive relationships and overall, detrimental life styles. Gender-based programs need to provide girls with basic needs such as assistance with housing, school, job placement, and coping skills. Most of the girls coming in contact with the juvenile justice system are distrusting and it is important to build a rapport before trying to “save” them from a life of crime. Skilled staff members are needed who will be willing to build relationships with these girls and have the patience to allow the girls to open up to them and accept the help.

Programs designed for females should provide the opportunity to learn right from wrong and to help them with decision-making skills. The juvenile justice system should help with the problems and issues that concern these offenders, such as sexual harassment, domestic abuse, problems with body image, self respect, sexual relations, birth control issues, and social pressures. Programs should address how these offenders
can be role models for their siblings. I agree with Kayla who reported that intervention with a priest would have deterred her from continuing her delinquent ways. Opportunities to address their spirituality through organized religion would be helpful and workshops that focus on better family relations would also increase proactive behavior.

Programs need to offer support and assistance to the girls who are or have been victims of abuse such as rape, domestic violence, sexual abuse and physical abuse. Staff members who can serve as mentors and role models for the girls they serve are needed. Programs need to address the self-destructive behaviors of these girls like suicide attempts, drug use, involvement with abusive romantic partners, and conflict at school and at home.

Programs must be created with a clear understanding of the characteristics and treatment needs of the clients served. A clear vision and mission statement must be developed along with goals and objectives to ensure that there is a basis for assessing whether any program is doing that for which it is designed. Program design and function should be driven by the treatment needs of the client, youth, and family. Programs should also be created with an obvious goal in mind. For example, if a program is designed to reduce recidivism among female juvenile offenders, the program should focus on providing the services needed to keep them busy and out of trouble. They want services in the community to help them with their schoolwork and job training skills to help reduce the recidivism.

Chesney-Lind and Pasko (2004) argue that gender-based programs that focus on rehabilitation, treatment, aftercare and reintegration are needed now more than ever.
More programs offering education and job opportunities for female juvenile offenders who are starting their lives and having difficulty adjusting to society must be created and maintained. Incarceration will not stop them from committing crimes; it will just encourage them to become better criminals.

It does not take many resources to make the necessary changes to serve the female offenders’ needs. It is fairly easy to institute changes in program adaptability independent of probation administration. It does not take much to “tweak” a program to meet the needs of incarcerated girls. The principle requirement is a desire to make things better with a little creativity to improve the services already in place. Female juvenile offenders are only increasing; therefore, we need to provide the services they need in order to prevent future generations of crime.

Most of the girls coming in contact with the juvenile justice system have problems larger than the petty thefts and running away for which they are being arrested. Juvenile justice administrators tend to have “tunnel vision” concentrating on the acts these girls commit instead of focusing on why they may be committing them. These girls need attention; however, not the attention of the juvenile justice system. Re-labeling or identifying the “crimes” and introducing an appropriate treatment is essential to helping these girls stay out of the juvenile justice system. By acknowledging that the girls who engage in prostitution may be victims not criminals, a message of hope could be sent to these girls who are often running away from a dysfunctional family where, more often than not, they have suffered from abuse and neglect.
The juvenile justice system should provide programs like PACE, which intervenes and prevents school failure, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and welfare dependency. PACE gets parents involved and provides girls and their families with follow-up services after they finish this program. PACE serves as a link between the girls and community-based services and programs. Another gender-specific program that has been shown to be successful is Girls Inc. Girls Inc. offers self-defense and violence prevention classes in order to teach girls how to respond to violence in a constructive way. Finally, a program like ARC, where staff members serve as role models and offers specialized treatment for survivors of rape and sexual abuse. ARC teaches these girls coping mechanisms to show them appropriate ways to deal with their pain and anger. All of these programs should be designed to target cognitive behaviors to start changing the way girls think and show them how they can change the way they look at the world they live in.

Alternatives are needed for these girls other than juvenile hall. Seven out of the eight girls lived in an abusive, one parent household. They reported that their only way out of this abuse was to run away from home. After running away, they “graduated” to prostitution, burglary, and an array of other crimes simply to “stay alive.” Most of the literature reviewed concurs that girls need to remain offense-free and away from the juvenile justice system.

Although I found that female juvenile delinquents have significant needs that are not being met through the juvenile justice system, future studies may wish to examine whether or not there is a significant decrease of girls coming back to the juvenile justice
system once these services are put in place. For example, some of the respondents indicated that they need after-school programs and job placement assistance to keep them “busy” and to prevent them from getting “into more trouble.” It would be interesting to check arrest statistics once these services are implemented to see if these services are making a difference in the girls’ lives.

3) What can be done to reduce the incarceration of girls?

Juvenile delinquency is a problem that requires comprehensive care and service delivery before youth become serious or chronic offenders. Delinquency prevention strategies should involve a range of stake holders including neighborhood residents and professional social workers. Prevention efforts should provide individual and family counseling, job training and placement, substance abuse treatment, and after-school programs. By having agencies such as schools, the courts, probation, child welfare services, and children’s mental health services working together, female juvenile offenders would receive the services they need without resorting to incarceration for non-violent offenders.

Although my research was limited to the small number of girls interviewed for this study, it was apparent that they all: lacked parental supervision at home, had older and deviant boyfriends, were sexually active, and had a history of drug use. Seven out of the eight girls lived in a single parent household, and although all the girls reported that they liked attending school, they were all credit deficient. Because I worked with these girls on a daily basis as their detention officer, there is a potential for a Hawthorne Effect. Future research could survey girls at a juvenile hall where respondents do not have a
relationship with the researcher and the researcher does not have access to their personal files. A juvenile hall with a larger female population, perhaps, in a more populous county could also provide different information.

The literature suggests that most of the girls coming into the juvenile justice system can be better treated outside the juvenile court. Through my experience as a probation officer, I agree that most girls are dealt with more effectively outside juvenile court but in spite of this there are a high number of girls who are criminally oriented and regardless of the programs offered to them, they are likely to commit to a life of crime. They are highly sophisticated, telling the judge what s/he wants to hear; however, they are clever and skillful manipulators who are used to getting what they want. It is imperative to recognize the kind of girls being served when considering the types of future diversion programs because we want to serve girls who are truly victims and not victimizers.
APPENDIX A

Consent Form

I am a student at Sacramento State University. I am working on my Masters degree and I am conducting a research project. I need your help with this project. The benefits of participating in this research will be that with your help we can better confront and understand the issues surrounding females in the juvenile justice system and we can provide alternatives to improve this system.

You might feel uncomfortable answering some of these questions because there may be things you have never admitted to no one before and you do not know who I am. You may also be concerned that your answers will fall into the hands of the facility administrators and retaliation may follow. I wish to assure you that these surveys and interviews are confidential. You do not need to put your name in any of the surveys, and I will never use your real name on my final report. I will use aliases in order to keep your identity private. Let me assure you that all of our conversations will be strictly confidential and no one else will hear our conversations.

You have the right to decline to be part of this project. If at any time you decide to quit, you can do so without penalty or retaliation. Your cooperation is 100% voluntary. Any questions you might have, you can address to me and I will do my best to answer them. There will be no compensation offered for participation. The following conditions have to be met if you wish to participate in this research:

1) You must be female
2) You must agree to be truthful

At the end of my research project I will provide the juvenile hall library a copy of my final research findings so that you can have access to it.

I will participate_______                                I will not participate_______
Signature___________________________________________ Date____________________
APPENDIX B

SURVEY FOR YOLO COUNTY JUVENILE HALL

1. What is your date of birth?

2. When was your first experience in the juvenile hall?

3. What crime or crimes are you being charged with?

4. How many days or months have you been here so far?

5. How many times have you been here? Circle the one that applies.
   
   1-2   3-4   5-6   6-7   8 or more

6. If you have been here in more than one occasion, how long were you here for the last time?

7. If you have been here in more than one occasion, what caused you to commit another crime?

8. Do you have any family members in jail? If yes, who are they? example: Mom, Dad, etc.

9. Do you belong to a gang? Which one?
10. Do you have any family members that belong to a gang? If yes, who are they?
   Example: Mom, Dad, etc.

11. Do your friends belong to a gang?

12. How long have you been a member of the gang? Skip this question if you are not in a gang.

13. Have you ever used drugs? Circle all the ones you have tried.
   Marijuana  Crystal Meth (PCP)  Ecstasy  Cocaine  Crack  Heroin  LSD

14. How often do you use drugs? Circle the one that applies.
   Every day  Every other day  Once a week  Twice a week  Once a month
   Never (skip next question)

15. How old is he/she? Skip this question if it does not apply to you.

16. How long have you been dating? Skip this question if it does not apply to you.

17. Is he/she incarcerated?
18. Have you ever been pregnant? At what age?

19. How many children do you have?

20. Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence, or have you ever been a witness of domestic violence? If yes, please explain what happened and who was involved.

21. Who do you live with when you are not in the juvenile hall?

22. Are your parents living together?

23. Have you ever been kicked out of your house? How many times and why?

24. Do you get along with your mother? Why or why not?

25. Do you get along with your father? Why or why not?

26. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

27. Do you get along with your siblings? Why or why not?
28. Do you have a step parent or step siblings? If yes, do you get along with them?

Why or why not?

29. Have you ever been forced to participate in any sexual activity? If yes, explain what happened.

30. Do you have or have you ever had any sexual transmitted diseases? If yes, which ones?

31. How many sexual partners have you had? Circle the one that applies.

   0-1   2-3   3-4   5-6   6 or more

32. Have you ever felt mistreated while in the custody of the juvenile hall? Please explain.

33. Do you have any medical or mental problems? If yes, explain.

34. Have you ever tried to commit suicide or have you ever thought about ending your life? If yes, how many times?

   0-1   2-3   3-4   5-6   6 or more

35. Do you go to school? If no, skip questions #36 and #37
36. What grade are you in?

37. What grades do you usually get?

38. Have you ever run away from home? If yes, how many times and why?

39. Have you ever been involved in any sexual activity for money? If yes, explain.

40. Have you ever carried any weapons? If yes, what type and why?

41. What kind of services and/or programs has the juvenile hall provided you with while incarcerated? Circle all the ones that apply, or skip the question if this is your first time in juvenile hall and you have not received any services as of today.
   a) School
   b) Individual counseling sessions
   c) Group counseling sessions
   d) Mental health providers
   e) Medical attention
   f) Pre-natal care
   g) Drug court
   h) Sex education
   i) Programs for females only
j) Job training
k) Birth control classes
l) Independent living skills
m) Victims awareness
n) Conflict resolution
o) Anger management
p) Parenting skills
q) Self-esteem building
r) Decision making skills
s) Vocational education
t) GED courses
u) Religious services
v) Other_________________

42. What kind of services and/or programs do you know the juvenile hall will provide you with after your release?

Circle all the ones that apply, or skip the question if you do not know the answer.

a) School
b) Individual counseling sessions
c) Group counseling sessions
d) Mental health providers
e) Medical attention
f) Pre-natal care
g) Drug court
h) Sex education
i) Programs for females only
j) Job training
k) Birth control classes
l) Independent living skills
m) Victims awareness
n) Conflict resolution
o) Anger management
p) Parenting skills
q) Self-esteem building
r) Decision making skills
s) Vocational education
t) GED courses
u) Religious services
v) Other

43. Do you think the juvenile hall services and/or programs will help you stay out of trouble? Why or why not?

44. How would you describe your experience inside the juvenile hall?
45. Have you observed any differences in how the male and female minors are treated inside the juvenile hall? If yes, give examples.

46. Have you seen any differences in the way male and female staff treat you? Explain.

47. Have you ever imagined how your life would be like today if you had been born a male? Describe.

48. Anything else you want to add? Any comments or concerns?
APPENDIX C
Interviews of Female Minors in Custody

Deidre

Deidre is a sixteen-year-old female ward who lives with her mother and has three sisters and a brother. She has never met her father. She reports being diagnosed with a bipolar personality. Her first encounter with law enforcement was a year ago. She is now on her fourth arrest and fourth time at juvenile hall. The first time she was arrested was after her eighteen-year-old boyfriend stole a car and asked her to come along for a joy ride. She reports that she did not know the car was stolen; she assumed the car belonged to her boyfriend’s friend.

She was taken to juvenile hall and released a few days later, signing a contract to behave and go to school every day. She explains that she signed the contract, but she never intended to behave or go to school. After this initial incident, she confessed that she “lost the fear” of juvenile hall and shortly thereafter she was arrested a second time for stealing items from a clothing store. When asked why she stole the items, she said that she did not have any money to pay for the items so the “logical” thing to do was to steal. This time she was detained for approximately two weeks.

She was sentenced to live in a group home for eighteen months, because she reported that her mother did not want her back home. The reason for this was that her mother discovered that she was having sex for money in her own home.
After two weeks in juvenile hall, she was placed in a group home away from Yolo County. She had only been there for a few days, when she stole the group home’s van and drove back to her boyfriend’s house. She was arrested and taken back to juvenile hall. She spent three months in juvenile hall waiting for a group home to take her in, or for her mother to take her back.

No group placement could be found because of her prostitution and running away. Eventually, her mother agreed to take her back, but with specific conditions that she go to school and to stop prostituting herself. She agreed and again signed a contract. However, a week after her release she was back at the hall having stole merchandise from another clothing store.

She voiced no remorse over her crimes. She believes that as long as she does not physically “hurt” anyone, she is not doing anything wrong. Deidre has no children of her own, but she has been pregnant. She miscarried as her body was not mature enough to carry the baby to full term. When asked if she has ever been a victim of domestic violence, she proudly stated that she is not a victim but a victimizer. She admitted to hitting her boyfriend on various occasions for various reasons.

She stated that she was forced into having sex two years ago, when she was fourteen years old. One of her male friends forced her to perform oral copulation on him while she was visiting him at his home. After she made this statement, she stayed quiet for a few minutes and later declared, “Well, he did not force me. He was only screaming at me, “Do it, Do it, so I did it.” She kept denying the fact that she was forced into the
act. She was obviously uncomfortable to think of herself as a victim and to admit she had been forced to perform this act.

She reports that she has never run away from home but that she has been kicked out on several occasions by her mother. “My mom saw me in bed with boys.” I asked her why she was sleeping around with older guys, guys she claimed that she did not know. She boasted that she was having sex for money. She was not ashamed to reveal this, in fact, she seemed proud. She did it because it was fun and because she gets paid. When asked how many times she had done this, she assured me that it was only, “anywhere from five to ten times.” She claimed that the most money she has received for sex was $500. She said that she was fourteen years old when she started prostituting herself.

Changing the subject, I asked her if she had ever been mistreated inside the juvenile hall. She said that she always feels mistreated by staff members. She claims that girls do not get the same attention from staff as the boys do. Girls never get involved in doing kitchen cleanup since the boys are always assigned to do this job. She complains that girls never get to be together in the dorm like the boys.

In Yolo County juvenile hall, the wards are in charge of cleaning the kitchen after each meal. Wards see this job as a privilege because they get to eat the left-overs. The hall has a capacity for 35 minors, so whenever there are more than 35 wards, classrooms are converted into sleeping areas. Desks are taken out of the classroom and each ward is assigned to a plastic bunk bed. Being assigned to dormitory is also considered a privilege because each dorm consists of up to twelve minors. Wards feel that this is an opportunity
for a slumber party. Deidre says that she complains to staff about not getting to do what boys do, such as kitchen cleanup or a space in the dorm. She said that a staff member told her that girls “bitch too much.”

Deidre does not attend school. She says that too many girls there want to “kick her ass.” She claims she likes school; she just cannot go because she is afraid for her safety. Asked if she has ever carried weapons for her own safety, she reported that she carries pepper spray while out on the streets. She says that she has heard stories about girls getting assaulted while prostituting and this is why she protects herself with pepper spray.

When asked what other services or programs should be provided, she thinks that it would be better to separate girls from boys when discussing sex. She believes most girls are embarrassed to ask questions because the boys make fun of them. She reports she has had sexual transmitted diseases like gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and yeast infections. She claims that she always uses condoms while having sex, however this is in contradiction to her reports of having sexual transmitted diseases and having been pregnant more than once.

She tells me that she would like to talk to women who have been prostitutes in the past and learn from their experiences. She says that she has learned a lot from past guest speakers who have talked about their experiences and how they cope with illnesses like AIDS and cancer.

While she claims that she knows “everything” there is to know about birth control and protection from sexual transmitted diseases, when asked how many times she has
taken the morning-after-pill, she said that she does not know what that is or how it works. She says that if she were to get pregnant again, she would keep the baby. She thinks that she is now old enough and smart enough to be a responsible mother.

While talking to other staff members about this case, many have strong opinions about her. One male staff exclaimed that she is very “hoish,” in other words, she has sex frequently. He tells me, “she is nasty.” Another male staff member offered up information about her without being prompted. He tells me that some of the male minors have been telling him that she has had sex with them inside the classroom during school hours.

Deidre loves the attention she receives from males. She flirts with all the males, including staff members. Other staff observes that she is very promiscuous and that is why they try to keep her away from all the male wards.
Elena

Elena is 17 years old. She lives with her boyfriend, mother and three siblings. Her parents were divorced when she was younger and even though she does not live with her father, she claims to have a good relationship with him. The first time she was arrested and booked into juvenile hall she was 13 years old. She was arrested for elderly endangerment after having an argument with her 70 year-old grandmother. The neighbors heard the commotion and called the police. She was released to her parents and placed on probation. She tells me she was scared when she was arrested because she had heard horrible stories about juvenile hall. She reports that all those stories were not true, and that juvenile hall “is not that bad.”

The second time she was arrested was a few months after the grandmother incident. She stole from a clothing store and was again released to her parents and placed on probation. The court determined she needed to abstain from drug and alcohol use and had to submit to drug testing. She tells me every drug test she has taken thus far has been positive for drugs.

Elena states that she has been in and out of the juvenile hall since age 13 due to her substance abuse problem. She reports spending an average of $20 a week on marijuana and methamphetamines. She comes in and out of juvenile hall for violations of probation mainly due to positive drug tests. She spends an average of three to four days in confinement every time she comes to juvenile hall.

Elena has been arrested more than twelve times. She served one commitment at juvenile hall for three weeks, but soon after her release, she was arrested on another drug
violation. Elena tells me that she has never been pregnant, even though she does not use contraception. She has a nineteen-year-old boyfriend whom she plans to marry. She tells me that she has never been a victim of any type of abuse. She seems to be a competent student with average grades. She has never run away from home even though she claims that she does not get along with her mother. Elena reports she has never been involved in prostitution and has never carried any weapons.

Elena admits that her only problem is with drugs. She says that she has attended previous substance abuse counseling, but “nothing has worked.” She attends juvenile drug court on a weekly basis. She also participates in individual drug counseling as well as anger management counseling. She does not have any mental or health problems, and she has never been forced to participate in having sex.

The services she has received while in custody have followed standard mandates: regular school attendance, individual counseling, group counseling, medical attention, drug court, and anger management. When asked if the programs were helpful, she stated, “yes, they’re all right,” but then proceeded to say that even though she attends counseling and has to drug test on a regular basis, she still uses drugs on a daily basis.

Elena would like to stay busy by getting an after school job. She believes that by staying busy she will be able to stay away from using drugs. She reports that juvenile hall is “boring and a waste of time.” When asked if she thinks that female minors are treated differently than male minors, she says that she can see a difference. She would like to be in a dormitory and be able to talk to the other girls, listen to the radio and be able to “hang out” like the boys do in their dormitory.
She also states that she sees the differences between how the male and female staff interact with the minors. She believes that the reason why male staff try to avoid female minors as much as possible is because the girls might accuse the male staff of sexual harassment. This has happened in the past, and there is a liability not only when it comes to male staff interacting with female minors, but also with female staff interacting with male minors.

She does not give juvenile hall staff any trouble, she is polite and considerate. While incarcerated, she behaves and does her schoolwork. When she is not in custody, it is a different story. She admits she cannot say no to drugs. She believes that if a drug and alcohol program was available in which she could participate on a daily basis, maybe she would not have to come back to the hall.
Fabiola

Fabiola is a 17 year-old female who lives with her mother, father and two younger siblings. She gets along with her mother but she cannot stand her father. She reports that she has no respect for him and he hates the fact that her mother has to be in charge of everything. Her father does not work. She says he is just “lazy”. She claims that her father gets her into trouble because he is always calling the police to report her missing and running away.

She has been charged with several counts of burglary, battery and assault. She has been in the juvenile hall over ten times. The longest period was for two months and the shortest for two days. She keeps coming back mostly because of violations of probation. Her main problem is running away from home. She does not have any relatives in jail but reports that she has numerous friends incarcerated. She denies belonging to any gangs, but admits to “hanging out” with gang members.

Fabiola admits that when she is not in the custody, she uses drugs every day. She has tried marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, and crack. When asked if she has a boyfriend, she says “not really” although she reports that her boyfriend is incarcerated at the moment. He is 19 years old. Last year she got pregnant, but had a miscarriage. When asked if she wants children in the future, she says, “Hell no!”

She admits to having been a victim of domestic violence. She states that when she was 14 years old she was dating a 19 year-old man. He used to beat her whenever she disobeyed him. She stayed with him for three years before he was arrested and sent
to jail. I asked her why she did not leave him and she stated he was her “first” and “love kept me there.”

She reports she has never been raped, but that her 19-year-old boyfriend used to force her to have sexual relations all the time. I asked her if this was rape, and she replied, “Oh no, he was my boyfriend at the time.” She tells me that she does not use any contraception, even though previously she has been infected with a sexually transmitted disease. In fact, when she was only fourteen years old she contracted Chlamydia. In her 17 years, she tells me she has had more than six sexual partners. She lost her virginity when she was 14 years old.

Fabiola does not have any clinical medical or mental problems. She does, however, admit she tried to kill herself more than once, the first time when she was 11 years old. She attends continuation school when she is not in custody. She is a senior in high school. She claims to be a good student. She claims that she has never run away from home, but she does admit to disappearing for days, not letting her parents know of her whereabouts.

Fabiola denied having sex for money and denied carrying any weapons. While in the custody of the juvenile hall, she attends school, individual and group counseling, and she gets medical attention. She goes to drug court and attends birth control classes. After she leaves the juvenile hall, she will not receive any more of these services because she will be 18 years old.

She describes her entire juvenile hall experience as “long, boring, and very lonely.” She says that she would love to have a roommate, but she knows that only the
male minors get to have roommates. She also complains that the boys can go to
dormitory and be around other boys, while the girls are stuck in single cells for the
entirety of their stay. She does not hang out with girls inside or outside the juvenile hall.
She gets along much better with boys. She believes her life would be so much better if
she were male instead of female. She complains of the fact that when a girl has multiple
sex partners, she is labeled a “ho,” but if a male has multiple sex partners, he is labeled a
“player” and praised by his peers. She says that even though she sees differences in the
way female and male minors are treated inside the juvenile hall, she does not see a
difference in the way male and female staff treats her on an individual basis.

She craves attention. She is very flirtatious not only with the male minors but
with the male staff. She seems to get along with the female minors but it is obvious she
competes with them for male attention.

She has never been involved in any disciplinary incidents; she seems to behave
well while in custody. Even though she denies gang affiliation, every time she is booked
into the juvenile hall, she is wearing red clothing, symbolizing alliance with the
“nortenos.”
Gabrielle

Gabrielle is a 14 year-old female. She lives with her father and a younger brother. Her mother is not in the picture. She was first arrested a year ago, when she was 13 years old for stealing her neighbor’s car. When asked why she did it, she says she wanted to go “cruising” with her friends. She was planning on returning the car after she was done with it. She showed no remorse and stated, “It’s not like I hurt somebody.”

She did not spend a very long time in juvenile hall. She was in custody for about two weeks before she was released to her father. She was placed on probation and was ordered to abstain from drugs and alcohol. Soon after her release, she was arrested after testing positive for marijuana. She came back to juvenile hall less than a month after her release. She was in custody for about a month before she was released a second time.

Gabrielle stayed away from juvenile hall for about four months before getting arrested a third time. This time for burglary. Gabrielle, along with a female accomplice entered a residence with the intention to steal whatever valuables they could find. They took a digital phone along with some jewelry. The homeowner reported the burglary after finding his property missing and fingerprints all over his glass dining table. Fingerprints were taken from the home and matched to Gabrielle.

She was arrested and booked into the juvenile hall. She was then sentenced to eighteen months in an Oakland female group home. She stated that the night before her release she did not want to go. She wanted to stay in the area because of her new boyfriend. I discovered her new boyfriend is 17 year-old male in the cell next to hers. They had been talking every night after lights were out and according to Gabrielle, “fell
in love.” This particular male was booked for spousal abuse. He is married and has a child. He beat up his wife so badly that she was in the hospital for a week. This did not stop Gabrielle from “falling in love” with him.

She knows her “Prince Charming” is incarcerated for domestic abuse. She knows that he is married and has a child. She knows that he is a known “norteno” gang member. In spite of this, he told her all the things she wanted to hear and she fell for him. She was eventually released to a family member, only to return a few days later after she ran away from placement and hitchhiked back to Yolo County. She was again, arrested for violation of probation. She was happy to be back, excited that she was going to see her “boyfriend” again.

Gabrielle has many cousins who belong to the nortenos gang, but denies any affiliation for herself. She tells me she “hangs out” with them, but she is not a member. When asked why she keeps coming back to juvenile hall, she tells me that she wants to be on her own, she does not want to live at home with her father anymore. She wants to follow her own rules and do whatever she wants.

Gabrielle reports that she had her first boyfriend when she was 11 years old. He was sixteen. She lost her virginity when she was twelve. She was pregnant at thirteen. She stated that her parents convinced her to have an abortion because they said they would not help her if she kept the baby.

She is sexually active and does not use contraceptive. I asked her if she has any sexually transmitted diseases and she says she has had “some” infections, but nothing serious. I asked her if she gets along with her parents and she says “no.” She has been
kicked out of her house many times. Her father kicked her out when she was 11. She went to live with her paternal grandmother but she was soon kicked out of there as well for not following her grandmother’s rules.

She next went to live with her maternal grandmother, and she was kicked out after she became pregnant. She refuses to talk about her mother, and it is not clear to what extent her mother is involved in her life. When asked if she gets along with her mother she says, “kind of, not a lot.” She has one brother, one half-brother and one older sister.

When asked if she has ever been forced to participate in any sexual activities, she tells me “not really.” When asked for clarification, she said that on various occasions, when she was alone with her boyfriend, she feels forced to have sex but she does not say anything to him and does not tell him to stop.

She admits that she has had at least six sexual partners and to her knowledge, has never had any mental or medical problems. She has never tried to commit suicide and she has never been abused. She tells me that she is a good student; she is a ninth grader and usually gets B’s.

She has never run away from home, although she has been kicked out on several occasions. She claims she has never been involved in sexual activity for money and tells me that she has never carried any weapons because she feels safe most of the time.

When asked about the kinds of services she has received while in custody, she mentions that she goes to school on a daily basis, and attends group as well as individual counseling. She gets medical attention and attends drug court. I asked her if these services have helped her in any way and admits they have. She now knows the effects of
drugs and the consequences. She does not want to end up a drug addict, but she also states that at this moment, she does not feel like she has a drug problem.

When asked what kind of programs she would like to participate in while in the juvenile hall, she says that she wishes juvenile hall had girl’s group like in Sacramento County juvenile hall. She likes Sacramento juvenile hall better than Yolo County juvenile hall because in Sacramento they separate the girls from the boys. She was in an all female unit with other female minors; she had the chance to be in one of the dormitories.

I asked her if juvenile hall scared her enough to keep clean and stay out of trouble; she said no, juvenile hall does not scare her. She sees the hall as a resort. It is just like a vacation. She sleeps, she eats, and she plays. She said that juvenile hall is better than her own home. At least she gets to eat three times a day. When she is not incarcerated, she uses drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, and crystal methamphetamine. She takes one or all of these drugs at least twice a week.

She sees a difference in the way boys and girls are treated inside the juvenile hall. She says the boys get away with everything, like eating the leftovers while doing kitchen cleanup. She also resents the fact that boys get to have roommates and be in a dormitory. She thinks that male and female staff prefers boys over girls because, according to her, girls are “drama.”
Helen

Helen is a 14 year-old female who came into contact with the juvenile justice system after Child Protective Services (CPS) took her out of her home and placed her in a group home. This is a different case scenario because she started her criminal career after being rescued from a negligent family environment. She was placed in a group home, but she absconded a few months later.

After she ran away, she joined the “norteno” gang and became a very active gang member. She has lived with her mother, one younger brother and three younger sisters who ranged in ages from 3 to 9 years old. She never met her father, but she does have an abusive stepfather. Helen and her siblings were placed in foster care after several referrals and investigations by CPS that revealed that the mother was taking drugs and grossly neglecting the children. The father was physically abusing the children as well as the mother. The kids had lice and their teeth were rotten. In one CPS report, it states that there were no beds in the one bedroom apartment and that the kitchen was full of rotten food.

The children were taken away but soon returned after the mother started attending Narcotics Anonymous as well as taking counseling and parenting classes. Helen was not reunited with the mother because she had fled from the group home and having a warrant issued for her arrest.

She was arrested after she stole a cell phone from one of her friends. The friend called the police and she was found living in a one-bedroom apartment with four other runaways. She had a knife on her possession which aggravated the charges against her.
After she was booked into the juvenile hall, it was discovered that she had not been attending school for the last two years. It was also discovered that she was using drugs on a daily basis.

Her probation officer tried to find placement for her outside the juvenile hall, but there were no relatives willing to take her. Her mother could not take care of her due to her own battle with drugs. The only option was group placement. It was hard to find a group home that would take her, not only because of her drug problem and violent behavior, but also because she is a lesbian with a history of sexual misbehavior.

By the time CPS removed her from her mother’s care and placed the mother in a rehabilitation center, the kids were suffering from malnutrition and the mother had several broken bones and bruises all throughout her body. The stepfather had been abusing her for years in front of the children. After CPS got involved, the stepfather was arrested and is now incarcerated.

When asked about having sex for money she admits to prostituting herself while she was “on the run.” She was hungry and knew that she could not go to any shelters, due to the fact that the police were looking for her. She needed money to eat and had no other way to obtain money. She would go to parties and offer “blow jobs” for money. She tells me this is how she survived six months on the streets.

When asked why she left the group home, she tells me that she wanted to be with her family. She hated being so far way from them. She could not visit them and they could not visit her. It was too much to handle. She claims that the group home staff mistreated her. She was constantly disciplined for flirting with the other girls in the
home. She could not help it. She was falling in love with one of the girls and when she found out the girl had a boyfriend she decided to get away from her by running away.

She has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and has been taking psychotropic medication. She was in the juvenile hall 118 days before a suitable placement could be found. After she was finally placed in a minimum-security facility, where she could attend school and have counseling available 24 hours a day, she ran away. She said she had no reason to stay.

After she ran, she did not get very far away. She was apprehended around the corner from the facility. She was taken back to the juvenile hall and has been there for more than 150 days. She has attempted suicide over 10 times while in custody of the juvenile hall. She claims that she had not attempted suicide before her confinement. She tells me that the stress of being incarcerated and not being able to see her mother and siblings caused her to attempt suicide.

Since being incarcerated, she has accumulated over 30 serious incident reports. These range from misbehaving, to not following staff instructions, to anger outbursts, and sexual misconduct. She has also been pepper sprayed on several occasions for threatening staff members as well as other girls in the unit. She says it is hard for her to behave and not act out. Due to her sexual misconduct she must shower alone. She admits to grabbing girls’ behinds whenever she gets the opportunity.

One of the things that I notice with Helen is that most of her sexual misconduct is because the other girls incite her. I have witnessed several incidents where girls fight over her. There was one incident where one of the other girls intentionally revealed her
breasts to Helen. She responded by grabbing this girl’s behind during line movement.

Helen was reprimanded while the other girl received a warning.
Irene

Irene is 14 years old. She lives with her mother and an older sister. Her father is absent and she does not know who her father is, her mother has refused to give her any information about him. Her older sister has a record in juvenile hall. The last time was just two days after Irene. Staff could see that Irene admires her older sister. They would always be together during activity time, flirting with all the male minors. Whatever the older sister did, Irene did too. Her older sister is her role model.

When asked about how she feels about her mother, Irene says she does not get along with her mother; therefore, she does not follow her rules. She tells me that her mother drinks and smokes and she has no right to tell her what to do. She does not approve of her mother’s many boyfriends; she thinks they are taking advantage of her because she gives them money.

When asked about her older sister, Irene says that they hang out all the time. They are friends. Her older sister has been in the juvenile hall three times. The first time she was arrested was for attempted robbery from a department store. Her mother was tired of her not listening or following her rules, so she decided not to allow Irene back in the house. She was placed in a group home outside of the county. She ran away and came back home, hoping her mother would have a change of heart and let her return. It did not work.

Her mother called the police and told them where her daughter was so they could arrest her. She was drunk and full of “hickies.” She told me that she was pregnant and wanted to see the nurse. The next day she found out she was not pregnant and was quite
disappointed. Irene tells me that her sister has been trying to get pregnant for the last two years. She had a few miscarriages, but that does not stop her from trying.

Irene has also being trying to get pregnant in the last two years. Even though she is only 14 years old, she looks much younger. Irene has been in custody on three different occasions. The first time was when she was 13 years old. She had been arrested for battery. She assaulted a fellow classmate causing such injuries that the victim ended up in the hospital. She was held in custody for five days. The second time was a month after the first incident, she was detained for a total of thirty days after being arrested for being drunk in public and vandalizing a car. The vehicle damage she caused was over $1,000.00.

The car belonged to an ex-boyfriend. She heard he was talking “shit” about her. She had been drinking at a friend’s house and decided to teach him a lesson by destroying his car. She did not fear going back to the juvenile hall because it was very “kick back.” The third time she was arrested, one month after her release, she stayed in juvenile hall for eight days. Again, she was arrested for being drunk in public.

During her last stay, her mother showed up at juvenile hall at two in the morning, screaming over the intercom and demanding to see her daughter. The supervisor explained to her that she had to return during daytime hours. She refused to leave and demanded to see her daughter. It was later determined that the mother had been under the influence of alcohol and was arrested for trespass after she refused to leave the front lobby.
While in custody, Irene has been disciplined for passing notes to the older male minors and inappropriately touching them. She seems to enjoy her time at the juvenile hall, saying that she gets what she needs and she has a lot of friends. She never causes any serious problems besides trying to talk to the boys.

She denied belonging to a gang, but admits to “associating” with nortenos. She admitted to smoking marijuana on a daily basis and has tried harder drugs. I asked if she has a boyfriend, and she said “no”, just a lot of male friends. When asked if she has ever been pregnant, she tells me that she has not. She does not have any children and she has only had sexual relations with her ex boyfriend, no one else. She lost her virginity at 13, to a 19 year-old man.

She says he was the one who introduced her to alcohol and marijuana. She was 13 when she met him and fell in love. I asked her if she kept their relationship a secret from her mother. She told me that she did not have to because her mother was never home and did not know her or her sister’s whereabouts.

It is obvious that her boyfriend plays a major role in her delinquent behavior. She has followed a distinct pattern. Whenever her ex-boyfriend is incarcerated, she stays out of trouble, but when her ex-boyfriend is out of jail, she gets into trouble. Every crime she has committed has been linked to her ex-boyfriend. The last time I spoke to her she told me her ex-boyfriend had dumped her and was going out with an older woman. She believes that if he stays with this woman and leaves her alone, she will stay out of trouble.
Julie

Julie is 16 years old. She has one of the longest records in juvenile hall. Her file consists of two volumes. She has been in custody 11 times in the past two years. She first came in contact with the juvenile justice system she was 14.

She is currently a ward of the court. Her father is in prison and her mother is deceased. She tells me that she has been in over fifteen different foster homes and group homes combined. She has been running away ever since she decided she was tired of feeling like an “unwanted guest in somebody else’s house.”

Julie is of Native American ancestry although her mother was Caucasian. She tells me that she loved her mother, even though they did not get along, but she has never had any communication with her father. She knows who he is but has no interest in contacting him. She knows he is in prison for murder.

The first time Julie came to the juvenile hall, she was detained for running away from a group home. Her social worker picked her up and she was released the same day. The second time was two months later when she was a passenger in a stolen vehicle. She was taken to juvenile hall and released to her social worker that same day. Three days after this incident, she ran away from home and when found by police, she attempted to flee from the officer. She was incarcerated for 90 days.

During those three months, she received many disciplinary actions. She fought with other girls; and she bullied the younger girls and tried to manipulate staff members. She was placed on room confinement, one of the harshest punishments inside juvenile
hall for failing to follow staff instructions in an emergency situation and for passing prescribed medication to another ward.

She was finally released to a group home. She was at this particular group home for three weeks before running away with her current boyfriend. They met inside the juvenile hall. He is seventeen years old and a validated “norteno.” She does not belong to any gang, but “associates” with the nortenos because of her boyfriend’s involvement.

She was arrested in Riverside, California while trying to visit her older sister. She wants to live with her but the court would not allow it. She believes this is due to her sister’s criminal record. After her fourth arrest, she stayed at the juvenile hall for four days before her probation officer made the decision to send her back to the group home she had ran away from earlier. This home was willing to give her a second chance and the county did not have anywhere else to place her. This home was a last resort. She ran away after four days of placement.

She was on the run for about a month before she was arrested again. I asked where she stayed during this period of time and she told me “on the streets.” When asked about how she got money for food, she said that one of her friends got her into prostitution. She slept with a “few” older men who gave her “a lot” of money. At this point in our conversation, I asked her if she had ever been forced to participate in any sexual activities. She told me that she had been molested in the past while she was in placement.

She described a situation she remembers when she was placed in a foster home where the father tried to touch her private parts while she was sleeping. She told her
social worker who did not believe Julie. She ran away soon after that incident. When asked if she had any children, she said no, but that she has been pregnant in the past. She had one abortion and one miscarriage when she was fifteen years old. When asked if she uses any contraceptive protection she said “no.”

I asked her why she is not protecting herself from pregnancies and sexual transmitted diseases. She responded, “I don’t know.” She has been with her boyfriend for almost one year. She tells me she loves him and she would like to marry him. Most of her fights inside the hall have been related to girls “flirting” with her boyfriend, but I have been a witness to many occasions where her boyfriend is the one seeking the other females. He seems to enjoy seeing girls fighting for his love.

He is very disrespectful towards her. I ask her if it bothers her to be treated this way, she responds, “He does not treat me that bad.” When asked if she has ever been a witness or a victim of domestic abuse, she says no, even though she admits her boyfriend “pushes her around” when he gets mad, after she goes out without his permission. She says her father used to hit her mother all the time, and that she would never allow that to happen to her. I tell her that “pushing around” is a type of domestic violence. She smiles and changes the subject.

She describes the circumstances surrounding her fifth arrest. After almost two months of being homeless, she was arrested and taken back to juvenile hall. She was detained for 20 days before being released to her sister. While at her sister’s house, she attempted suicide on two separate occasions. She was depressed because she was far
away from her boyfriend, who was incarcerated at the time, and she was grieving for her mother who had passed away from cancer.

During this time she had an abortion. She had gotten pregnant while prostituting herself. She had no idea who the father was and she did not want to have the child. After being with her sister for nearly six months, she decided she did not want to live with her anymore. She stole her sister’s car and drove from Riverside to Sacramento. She was arrested while at a friend’s house. The car was spotted by the police and was later identified as a stolen vehicle.

She was taken into custody where she stayed another 20 days. She was released to an aunt. She was going to school and staying out of trouble until her boyfriend was released from juvenile hall. Soon after that she tested positive for methamphetamine and once again she came back to juvenile hall. She was in custody for eight days. She kept returning for three days, two days, eight days for violating her probation conditions and being out late at night and testing positive for drugs.

She admitted to using marijuana and methamphetamines when she is not in custody. She told me “it’s fun” and that it is not a “problem.” She states that she could stop if she wanted to, but she has no plans to stop any time soon. She contradicts herself claiming that she does not have a problem but at the same time telling me she knows she is a drug addict.

Julie has been a ward of the court for the past six years. She has been diagnosed with depression and takes antidepressants daily. While in custody, she usually behaves. She does not bother the staff too much, but has on occasions been disciplined for picking
fights with the other girls. Recently, she was released to her seventh group home, this one in Riverside County.
Kayla

Kayla is 17 years-old. She lives with her paternal grandmother since both of her parents abandoned her when she was a little girl. She loves her grandmother, but does not always follow her rules. She came in contact with the juvenile justice system after she was involved in a fight during school hours. She stayed in juvenile hall for approximately fifty days before she was released to a group home. While at juvenile hall, she caused problems.

She constantly fought with the other girls, trying to intimidate them and show them she was the boss. She was involved in three fights in three months. This caused her to be labeled a “restricted” minor, separating her from the general population. As soon as she became part of the restricted population she started confronting other restricted population minors. She thought she could intimidate these juveniles the way she did to the general population minors. She did not understand that these minors are restricted for a reason. One incident in particular involving Kayla caused many procedures inside the hall to be changed.

Kayla was trying to show off to the other juveniles standing up to the biggest, strongest, most violent restricted resident. She was severely beaten by this male. She believed that because she was female, she could say anything she wanted to the male minors and get away with it. She confronted this one male by calling him a “stupid idiot.” He told her that if she did not stop “running her mouth,” he was going to “beat her ass.” She responded by saying, “Do it then.” She was struck in the head several times until staff members were able to restrain the male minor. By the time staff arrived, Kayla
had a bloody nose and a bloody forehead. The nurse checked her and found several
bumps on her head, and a black eye.

Kayla changed her behavior after this incident, but only when it came to the
males. She still tested the waters with the restricted female minors. Kayla has a very
volatile personality. She has a “tough-girl-don’t-mess-with-me” attitude. One can see
the combination of anger and sorrow in her eyes.

The first time I met with her I was sure she was going to decline my request to be
interviewed. I had asked on a previous occasion if she would like to talk to a counselor
about her problems, and she declined, saying that she did not want to talk to anyone about
her “business.” To my surprise she agreed to participate.

She proudly admits her alliance with the norteno gang. She tells me she joined
the gang shortly after entering middle school. She felt like she needed to belong for her
own protection. While in the gang, she made a lot of “friends.” She sees them as her
brothers and sisters, like they are part of her family. She stated that soon after she was
incarcerated, her friends planned her escape from juvenile hall. Unfortunately for her,
staff found out and she was placed on special program, which meant that she was
confined to her room twenty-three hours a day for three days. After this punishment, she
gave up on her plan.

After almost two months in custody, she was transferred to a group home. She
stayed there for forty five days before running away. When she came back to the hall, a
week after she was reported missing, she was pregnant. She decided to have an abortion.
When asked how many abortions she has had, she says that she has gone through two
abortions and three miscarriages over a four-year period. She does not use contraceptive protection because she does not want to, but claims to know everything there is to know about birth control and prevention of sexual transmitted diseases. She stated that she has never had any sexual transmitted diseases. When asked if she has ever been involved in sexual activities for money, she denies it, but in a later interview confessed to sleeping with older men for cigarettes.

The second time she was in confinement she was detained for about three weeks before they could find a group home willing to take her. She liked her second group home. She got along with the staff and the other girls. She graduated from the group home and moved back with her paternal grandmother.

This proved not to be a good idea. As soon as she got back to her old neighborhood, her old friends came around; she met her ex-boyfriend who got her involved in drugs and gang life. As much as she wanted to stay out of trouble, she was “too much in love” to stay away from this man. He was twenty-two and she was only fifteen. He had complete control over her.

Kayla came back to juvenile hall after failing a drug test that was administered by her probation officer. This time she was incarcerated for over four months. They were waiting for an opening at the girls’ boot camp and she had to be on the waiting list. When she was finally released, she was at the camp for about four months before being kicked out. She was causing too many problems and the staff could see no improvement in her behavior. She was once again released to the care of her grandmother. It did not take long before she was in trouble again. Her 24 year old boyfriend stole a car and she
was a passenger when the car was stopped. She gave the officer a false name and false
date of birth, but to her misfortune, one of the responding officers recognized her.

When asked about her many new tattoos she tells me that her boyfriend convinced
her to get them. She has a tattoo on her right shoulder that says “Jorge” her boyfriend’s
name. She also has four dots on one of her fingers as well as a heart in her back that has
her boyfriend’s name on it.

When asked what she plans to do if she breaks up with her boyfriend, she says she
does not think about that because they are going to be together “forever.” This is in spite
of the fact that she admits to being a victim of domestic violence at the hands of “Jorge.”
She admits she suffers from depression and she takes medication for her bipolar disorder.

The last time she was arrested, she was incarcerated for about three months. She
was placed in a group home where she stayed for four months before beating up one of
the other girls and trying to fight a staff member. She was once again booked into
juvenile hall. This time she was confined until her eighteen birthday, five months after
her arrest. She calmed down a bit, but she was still defiant and argumentative not only
with her peers, but with the staff as well.
APPENDIX D

Interviews of Juvenile Probation Officers

Probation Officer Smith

Probation Officer Smith is a female officer who has been working for Yolo County for the last three years. I asked her if she thinks more female juveniles are coming to juvenile hall. She believes females are starting to rebel against society. Society often thinks of females as passive, submissive, and weak. These girls want to show that they can be as tough and as dangerous as their male counterparts.

I asked her if she believes that working with girls is more difficult than working with males, she said “yes.” She says girls refuse to obey the rules and as often than not, end up pregnant, making their lives harder than before. She tells me, “I do not particularly like working with girls, most of the ones I have seen have a sexually transmitted disease. They prostitute themselves and they are just dirty.”

Stunned, I ask her what she is doing to help the girls under her care. She reports there are no programs designed for females; they have to attend regular drug programs and anger management programs that were originally designed for male minors. Most of these programs do not address the problems that most females face. The girls she talks to tell her that they do drugs as an escape from family and boyfriend problems. She believes that there should be programs addressing these needs.

I concluded by asking if she believes that the increase of female incarceration is going to keep growing, and she responded, “Of course. We are doing nothing to stop it. It won’t stop by itself.”
Probation Officer Lewis has been working for Yolo County Probation for five years. We met at a local coffee shop not far from the juvenile hall. I asked him why he thinks more female juveniles are coming in contact with the juvenile hall; he candidly said, “Nowadays, girls are whores. They will sleep with anyone for money.” He tells me that from his experience working with girls, the girls he has seen are usually charged with prostitution.

Even before I could ask him if he thinks it is difficult working with females, he tells me, “I hate working with females. They are always flirting with the male staff, trying to get a reaction from us. It’s like they want to get us in trouble for being friendly with them. They are always trying to touch me. I stay away from them as much as possible.” Like Officer Smith, he thinks that the number of female minors in detention will keep rising until female-based programs are created to address female needs.
APPENDIX E

Interview of Juvenile Hall Supervisor

Supervisor Cates has been at the juvenile hall for eight years, six as a detention officer and two as a supervisor. I met with her in her office on a Sunday afternoon. I asked what she believes to be the main factor in the rise of female delinquency. She says it has a lot to do with family disintegration. When kids grow up in an environment where drugs are abundant, physical and sexual abuse is present, and they have no one to look up to. They see themselves with no future; no goals to pursue. They live in violent neighborhoods where they have to belong to a gang in order to survive.

She also blames school officials who try to fix the “problem” by sending troubled kids to alternative schools, which only make the problems much worse. She also says that in her eight years working with juvenile offenders, 99.9 % of the time the problem lies with the parents. When asked if she thinks it is more difficult to work with female juveniles than males, she says “yes.” She states that girls are more difficult because they have more complex problems. Many of them have children of their own, which makes it more difficult to follow curfews or parental rules. They feel that they are adults and should be allowed to do whatever they like.

She recalls a story about one particular girl she had under her case. Mary was pregnant at the age of thirteen. She had gotten involved with a gang member who lived across the street from her. He was twenty years old. Her mother was always working and Mary’s stepfather was always drunk. She used to sneak out of the house and be gone
for days without anyone realizing her absence. After she gave birth, her stepfather wanted to kick her out of the house. She had nowhere to go. Her mother let her stay, but she had to follow strict house rules and a curfew she never had before. She ignored the curfew as well as the house rules. This infuriated her stepfather to the point that he beat her until she was unconscious. Mary refused to press charges because she did not want to be kicked out of their house and the only alternative she had was juvenile hall, where she could not keep her baby. Administration tried putting her in a foster home, but no one would take a teenage gangster girl with a baby.

Supervisor Cates believes that the juvenile justice system should have more gender-based programs that will help girls like Mary. When asked why Yolo County does not have any gender-based programs she says that they have a very small number of girls in custody and have no funding for special programs. She believes that the juvenile justice system will do something about it when the problem is so huge, it is out of control.
REFERENCES


Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC), Assembly Bill 499, California. (Swanson, 2003).


