

Definition of Gender-Specific Programming for Girls

[Programs] that are designed to meet the unique needs of young delinquent and at-risk females, that value the female perspective, that celebrate and honor the female experience, that respect and take into account female development, and that empower young women to reach their full potential.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

“The unique needs of females” means understanding that for many girls...

- Self-concept is reciprocal and fluid, largely based on how others view them and gender messages they receive from society, boys, other girls, music, videos, and the media
- Stereotyped gender messages girls receive from society, boys, other girls, music, videos, and the media influence self-concept
- Relationships guide their behaviors
- Feelings and emotions are central to how they relate and behave
- Desire to be peacemakers, mediators, nurturers
- Need to share experiences and feelings, and to be heard and affirmed
- Sexuality and romanticism are closely tied to feelings, and can be linked to objectification, vulnerability and risk of being victimized

“Value the female perspective” means...

- Supporting the expression of feelings, making connections, sharing
- Encouraging non-competitiveness with other females
- Acknowledging the diversity among females – that there are many ways to be a successful girl and woman
- Teaching that being female is a strength, not a vulnerability or weakness

“Celebrate and honor the female experience” means...

- Recognizing that the experiences of females and males are different, and should be valued equally
- Providing role models and examples of strong and successful girls and women from diverse backgrounds and cultures
- Providing support for girls' success as young women
- Acknowledging important life events through rites of passage and ceremonies
- Providing education regarding the female experience and women in history

“Respect and take into account female development” means...

- Acknowledging that the timing of girl's maturation is different from boys
- Assisting girls in dealing with the confusion of sex with love
- Encouraging and supporting their positive body image, and honoring individual differences
- Teaching girls to accept the normalcy of menstruation

“Empower young women to reach their full potential” means...

- Encouraging girls to believe in and use their physical strength and abilities
- Encouraging girls to know and value their own feelings and opinions
- Encouraging girls' natural creativity and innovation
- Encouraging girls to trust their own feelings, intuitions, and decisions
- Providing girls with safe and socially appropriate opportunities to speak up, speak out and advocate for their own opinions, beliefs and rights