

Girls and Delinquency:

Using Research to
Develop Good Practice

National Conference on Juvenile Justice
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Session Overview

- OJJDP's Girls Study Group –
Major Findings, Implications
- CT State Girls' Programming –
Achievements and Lessons Learned
- OJJDP resources on Girls Delinquency

OJJDP Girls Study Group

Understanding and Responding to Girls' Delinquency

The Study Group Concept

- OJJDP sponsored 2 earlier Study Groups in the 1990s:
 - Study Group on Serious, Violent Juvenile Offenders
 - Study Group on Very Young Offenders
- Multi-disciplinary group of researchers and practitioners
- Designed to develop a comprehensive research foundation for understanding and responding to offending, causes, correlates, and interventions
- Both efforts enhanced understanding and helped to focus prevention and intervention efforts

turning knowledge into practice

OJJDP's Girls Study Group Major Findings & Implications

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RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute

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What is the story with girl's violence?



Lack of research focused on girls....

- “Not only are there a limited number of studies that focus specifically on female offending, but many important studies also either do not include females in their samples or do not analyze the female data separately.”

- - Kruttschnitt, 1994, Loeber and Farrington, 1998;
 - West, Houser, and Scanlan, 1998

Girls Study Group

- Multi-disciplinary group of researchers and practitioners
- Convened to
 - Study patterns and causes of female delinquency and
 - Identify effective strategies to prevent and reduce female involvement in delinquency
- Funded in 2004 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and coordinated by RTI International

Girls Study Group – Ultimate Goal

To develop the research foundation that communities need to make sound decisions about how best to prevent and reduce delinquency and violence by girls

Girls Study Group Members

Robert Agnew – Emory University

Elizabeth Cauffman – University of California, Irvine

Meda Chesney Lind - University of Hawaii at Manoa

Gayle Dakof - University of Miami

Delbert Elliott - Director, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado

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Candace Kruttschnitt - University of Minnesota

Jody Miller - University of Missouri-St. Louis

Merry Morash - Michigan State University

Darrell Steffensmeier - Pennsylvania State University

Giovanna Taormina - Executive Director, Girls Circle Association

Donna-Marie Winn – UNC/Duke University

What works for Girls



Literature Review

Program Review
and focus groups

Secondary Analysis

Risk Assessment and
Treatment Focused
Instrument Review

Overall Juvenile Arrest Trends

- Juvenile arrests generally decreased between 1996 and 2005, but the decrease was greater for boys than for girls
 - The exception to the general trend was arrests for simple assaults, which increased for girls while decreasing for boys

Percent Change in Male and Female Juvenile Arrests for Violent Crimes, 1996–2005

Type	Girls	Boys
Aggravated assault	–5.4%	–23.4%
Simple assault	24.0	–4.1
Violent Crime Index	–10.2	–27.9
All crimes	–14.3	–28.7

Source: Uniform Crime Reports, 2005—Table 33 (FBI, 2006)

Key Issue

- Is the narrowing gender gap in assault arrests (simple assault, aggravated assault) due to a change in the underlying behavior or to changes in reporting policies?

Behavior Change Hypothesis

- Arrest trends reflect changes in girls' underlying behavior toward more violence.
- Changes may be brought about by:
 - more stress in girls' lives today
 - more messages favorable to female-perpetrated violence
 - diminished social controls due to breakdowns in family, church, community, and schools

Policy Change Hypothesis

- Arrest trends are a by-product of changes in policing and arrest policy.
- Policy changes may include:
 - Zero tolerance policies in schools
 - Domestic violence arrest policies
 - Insufficient number of community placement alternatives for juveniles
 - Less tolerant societal attitudes toward juvenile females

Data Sources

To examine whether girls' delinquency trends reflect changes in underlying behavior or changes in enforcement and arrest policies we used:

- Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)—arrest data
- Monitoring the Future (MTF)—self-report data
- National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)—victimization data

What do the trends suggest?

- UCR data showed an increase in the female percent of arrests for assaults but victimization data from the NCVS and self-report data from the MTF showed boys and girls remaining relatively stable over the 20-year period.
- Findings support policy change hypothesis – that the avenues to prevent or punish violence have grown enormously and in ways that have affected female more so than male youth.

Focus Group Findings



Girls Study Group Focus Groups

- Conducted a series of focus groups across the country
 - 50 young ladies aged between 13-20
 - 28 staff



Context of Girl's Violence

PEERS

FAMILY

JUVENILE
JUSTICE
SYSTEM

INTERNAL
CONFLICT

COMMUNITY



JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- System doesn't engage in effective early intervention
 - “We also see that the State intervenes sometimes at a pretty young age but they turn the child back to the home multiple times without a support network”
- No consequences to behavior
 - “Its like the first time I was on probation, I got out and did the same thing all over again.
 - “I don't know how many times I got caught and was let out two days later.”



FAMILY

- Abuse histories
 - “there’s so much neglect at a very early age, 90-100% of our case loads are neglect and sexual abuse”
- Lack of parental involvement
 - Parents in and out of jail
 - Limited boundaries on behavior
- Being raised by grandparents
 - Grandparents are not prepared – the youth today are volatile and grandparents can’t handle the issues kids are confronting.



Drugs and Gangs

- Family history of drug use
 - Seeing what everyone has that you don't have and just growing up with parents who do drugs and people who don't want to get jobs and think its easier to do some drugs instead of getting up in the morning.
- Family history of gang involvement
 - I know that a lot of us grow up in it. Both of my parents are gang members and their brothers and sisters are gang members so I grew up in that area and I met a lot of people...I was raised not to talk to police or anyone else. When you are raised in that type of home and I was raised to think this way – it is hard. That could get you in trouble



Sense of hopelessness

- “I would say that most of the young women feel so bad about themselves and have such low self-esteem they may not have the self respect to make good choices for themselves. It comes from not fitting in.
- “I mean when you think about it 50% of the kids in the system have moms who are addicts. So, its a mental thing. You might be fighting this girl cuz her momma loves her and I wanna beat her cuz she’s getting some food. How can you help somebody like that? What kind of program can help somebody like that?”

Context of violence...what can be done?

“Nothing, you still have to go home to the same thing and face it everyday regardless of what program you’re in. Any program they got is not going to take your mind off it. I started getting in trouble when I was 13 and I was going to these programs every Monday and Tuesday but I was still getting in trouble.



Why do we need gender responsive prevention?

“Girls become women and women become mothers and they are going to bring a whole new generation [into this world] so if you don’t invest in them now you end up paying later”





Gender differences in program needs

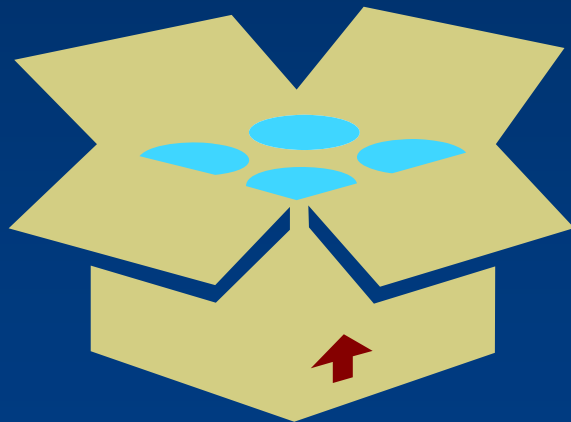
Girls and boys experience many of the same risk factors, but they differ in sensitivity to and rate of exposure to these risks.

...As a result, they may have different programming needs.

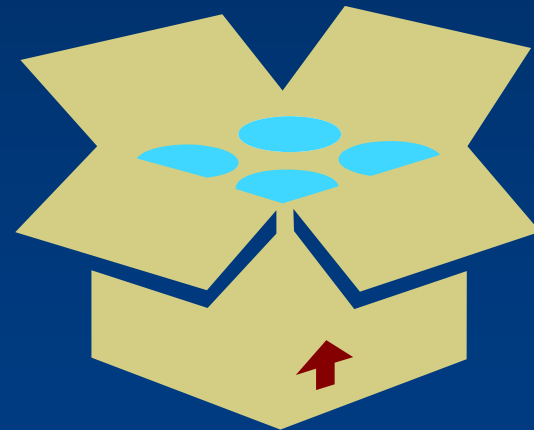
Program Review

- Identify the programs that show the most promise and effectiveness for prevention in community settings and intervention in detention settings
- Review published evaluations for programs designed to prevent and reduce female delinquency (May 2005 to August 2006)
- Apply *What Works Repository* criteria for determining effectiveness for girls.

Random Assignment



Treatment



Control

Program Review: What Works Repository Criteria

- **Effective**

- Experimental Research Design (Randomized Controlled Trial)
- Statistically Significant Behavioral Effects
- Sustained Effects for at least one year
- At least one Replication (different implementation site and team)

Program Review: Findings

- Out of 61 programs cataloged, 17 had been evaluated.
 - None of the 17 programs met the criteria to be rated as “Effective
 - The majority of programs were rated insufficient evidence
 - Quasi-experimental research design that lacks sufficient methodological rigor or
 - Pre-Post test design or
 - Purely descriptive evaluation

Sustainability Issue

- 7 of 17 of the girls-only delinquency prevention programs in our sample are no longer operating.
- If the goal of evidenced-based programming is to ensure that practitioners and policy makers select proven programs to implement, support needs to be given to ensure that the most proven programs continue to operate after their initial funding period is over.

Program Review: Conclusions

- Evidence Based Programs should be supported and expanded
- Gender responsive programs need more focus on rigorous evaluations to determine effectiveness
- Effective gender responsive programs need to build in a sustainability plan at the program development phase

Next Steps

- Programs need funds and technical assistance for evaluations

Review of Screening and Assessment Tools

- To what extent has gender been considered in the development of screening and assessment instruments?
 - Conducted a review of risk assessment and treatment-focused instruments used for delinquency prevention, intervention, or treatment purposes with a specific focus on gender to determine which instruments appear to work equally well for girls and boys

Major issue

- ♦ Inappropriate diagnoses or misidentification of needs and strengths among girls
- ♦ Risk assessment instruments in particular:
 - ♦ May inaccurately identify behaviors (e.g., offending) if instrument does not account for low numbers of girls that might exhibit the behavior
 - ♦ Inappropriate or mis-classification of girls
 - ♦ girls may cluster into one category (such as low-risk) and you are unable to distinguish subgroups (high- and low-risk girls)

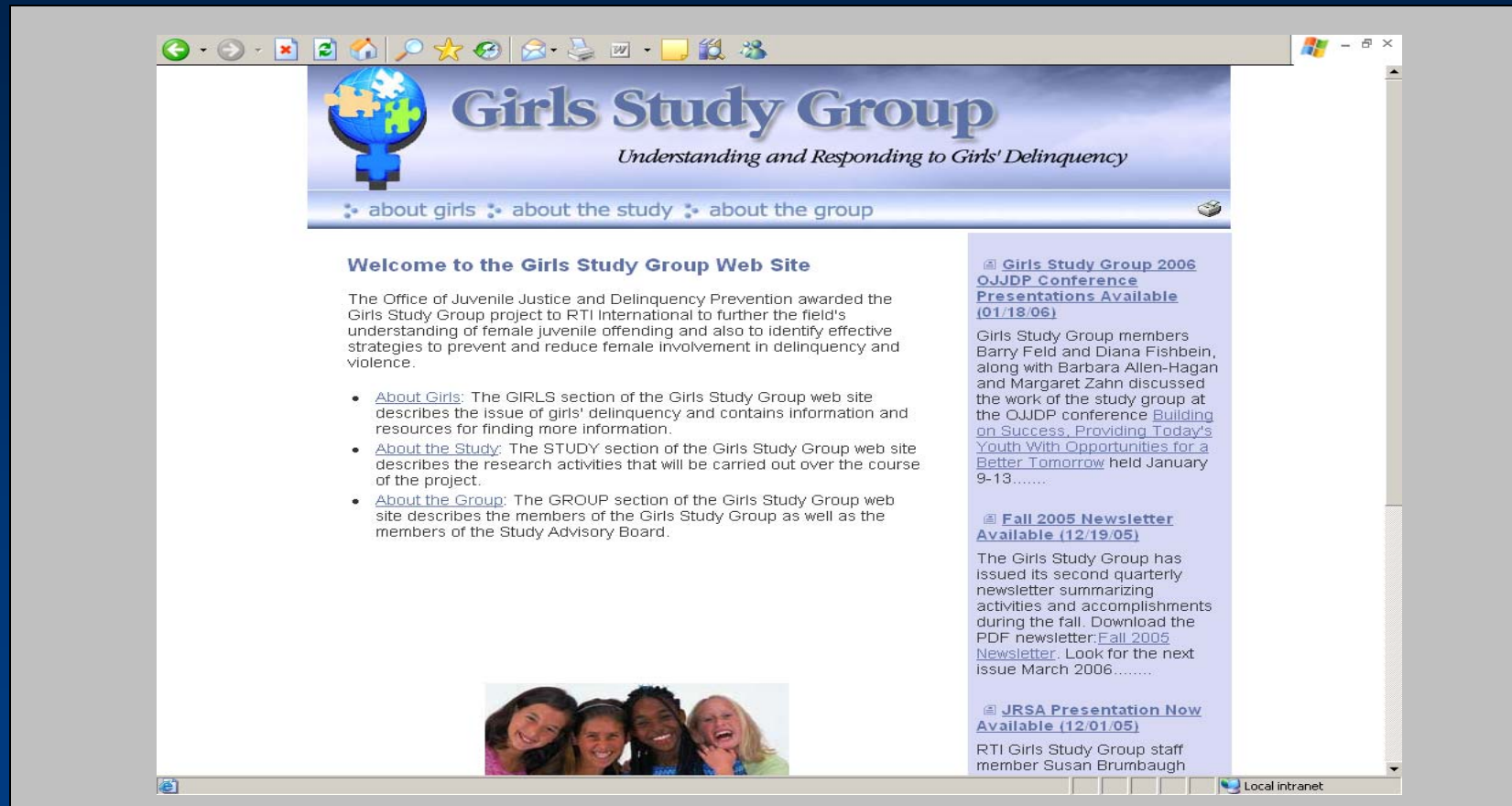
Determining “Favorable” Gender Performance

- ◆ An instrument was deemed to have favorable gender information if it met at least one of the following criteria:
 - ◆ Gender-based development—The instrument offers gender-specific norms or scoring, has gender-specific versions, or includes gender-specific items.
 - ◆ • Favorable gender-based analysis—
 - ◆ Validity and/or reliability do not differ by gender
 - ◆ Scores are not correlated with gender
 - ◆ Gender differences (or non-differences) are consistent with the literature (e.g., girls scored higher on mental health issues and boys on physical aggression)

Findings

- ◆ Among the 143 instruments reviewed – 73 instruments had favorable gender based performance
- This information summarized in a forthcoming OJJFP Bulletin
- We have created an online searchable database on the Girls Study Group website that has all of the information on the instruments used in our review.

For more information, visit:
<http://girlsstudygroup.rti.org/>



RTI Team

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- Jennifer Hardison-Walters
- Mark Pope
- Shari Miller
- Robyn Haynes
- *Margaret Zahn (former PI of Girls Study Group)

Building a Gender Responsive Juvenile Justice System



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State of Connecticut Judicial Branch,
Court Support Services

Progressive Systems Change In Connecticut

- ❑ Significant, increasing representation
- ❑ Research on girls; emerging literature on gender responsive practices
- ❑ CT Public Act 01-181
- ❑ Expectations from advocacy groups
- ❑ Girls voices

How Connecticut Defines Female Responsive

The conscious effort of a justice system to respond to the specific needs and strengths of girls through the development, funding, and monitoring of appropriate and effective sanctions and services for girls.

The Steering Committee for the Connecticut Alternative Sanctions and Services for Court-Involved Girls (Grant), February, 2000.

Development

To achieve a statewide system of services for girls, every public and private provider would have to adopt consistent approaches to:

- ❑ Active involvement of girls
- ❑ Encouragement of relationship continuity
- ❑ Combination of staff coaching and training
- ❑ Trauma treatment
- ❑ Gender-specific behavior motivation
- ❑ Intensive home-based services

Beyer, 2005



Programming Principles for Girls

- ▣ Physical, Emotional and Psychological Safety
- ▣ Relational, Strengths-based Approach
- ▣ Trauma Sensitive
- ▣ Family-Focused
- ▣ Culturally Competent



Three Key System Changes

1. Gender Responsive Detention Initiative
2. Development of Gender Responsive Service Models
3. Girls Probation Project

Creating a Gender Responsive Juvenile Detention System

*To establish a new culture throughout the Juvenile Detention System in Connecticut that **proactively** meets clients needs and teaches client-self management through gender responsive approaches and services*

Behavior Motivation:

The foundation of a safe culture

- ❑ Traditional behavior management systems are not rooted in research about girls
- ❑ Lasting change occurs when the system reflects an understanding of girls behavior and motivation
- ❑ Losing privileges becomes an opportunity to harm oneself.
- ❑ In the absence of relationships, rules inspire rebellion in girls
- ❑ Relationship and responsibility are the factors that motivate girls to achieve

Adopted from A Shero's Journey, Children's Comprehensive Services 2000

Creating a Gender Responsive Juvenile Detention System

Project Plan:

- ▣ Determine the extent to which each detention center is or is not gender-specific
- ▣ Create a culture that supports gender-specific philosophy and practice principles
- ▣ Implement new systems, programs and practices that are gender-specific
- ▣ Sustain change over time with program and systems-level quality assurance

Washington Street Outcomes

- ❑ Eliminated mechanical restraints;
 - From 4 per month to 0
- ❑ Eliminated room time
 - From 200 hours per month to 27 hours per month to 0
- ❑ Improvement in staff and client safety
 - Use of force incidents; from 15 to 1
 - Reductions in worker compensation claims
 - 73% reduction in girls returned to state detention for behavioral issues
 - Improvements in perceived safety

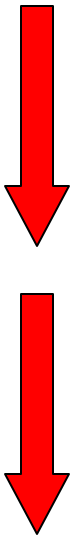
Detention Admissions

	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Total</u>	
<u>05/06</u>	510	1412	1922	
<u>06/07</u>	474	1236	1710	-11%
<u>07/08</u>	369	1075	1444	-16%

% change from 05/06 to 07/08:

-27.6% for girls;

-23.8% for boys



The CARE Program

The Center For Assessment, Respite and Enrichment

- 6 bed programs
- Voluntary, temporary (2-week) respite for status offenders
- Stabilization
- Comprehensive assessment
- Connection to home-based and/or community-based services

Operating a CARE Program

- ❑ Program Components
 - Safe, structured and flexible programming
 - Family participation
 - Maintaining relational, strength based staff culture
- ❑ Daily Strengths and Challenges
- ❑ Giving Girls a Voice
- ❑ Collaboration with Stakeholders
 - Referral sources
 - Community providers



CARE Outcomes

- ▣ Successful Completions
- ▣ Runaway Behaviors minimized
- ▣ Detention Diversion
- ▣ Diversion from further Court Involvement

CARE: % Diverted from Court

(n=405; through 12/08)

	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months
Waterbury CT Junior Republic	84%	74%	69%	58%
New Haven St. Francis Home For Children	88%	76%	67%	54%

CARE Girls: % with No Arrests

(n=405; through 12/08)

	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months
Waterbury CT Junior Republic				
New Haven St. Francis Home For Children				

System Impact of CARE

At the Waterbury Site

- Between 2003 - 2005, 30% decrease in girls admissions to detention from Waterbury court and a 40% decrease in girls sent to detention with a prior FWSN referral from Waterbury court
- In 2003, 28% of girls who went to detention from Waterbury court had a prior FWSN. In 2005, just 15%.
- In 2003, 51% of girls who were referred as FWSN to Waterbury court had a subsequent delinquency, but that dropped to 44% in 05, despite the fact that FWSN referrals increased

Juvenile Probation

- ▣ In CT, all cases are referred to juvenile probation before handling decisions are made
 - Status offenders are handled through the probation department
 - Low-level delinquents are handled “non-judicially” through the probation department

Female Responsive Probation

GOAL: Increase effectiveness of probation interventions with girls

Objectives:

1. Enhance officer skills to identify risk and needs through root-cause analysis of presenting problems
2. Intervene in the cycle of court involvement utilizing a relational, strengths-based approach
3. Link girls to appropriate programs based on risks, needs AND strengths
4. Advocate for the services girls really need, not just those already available

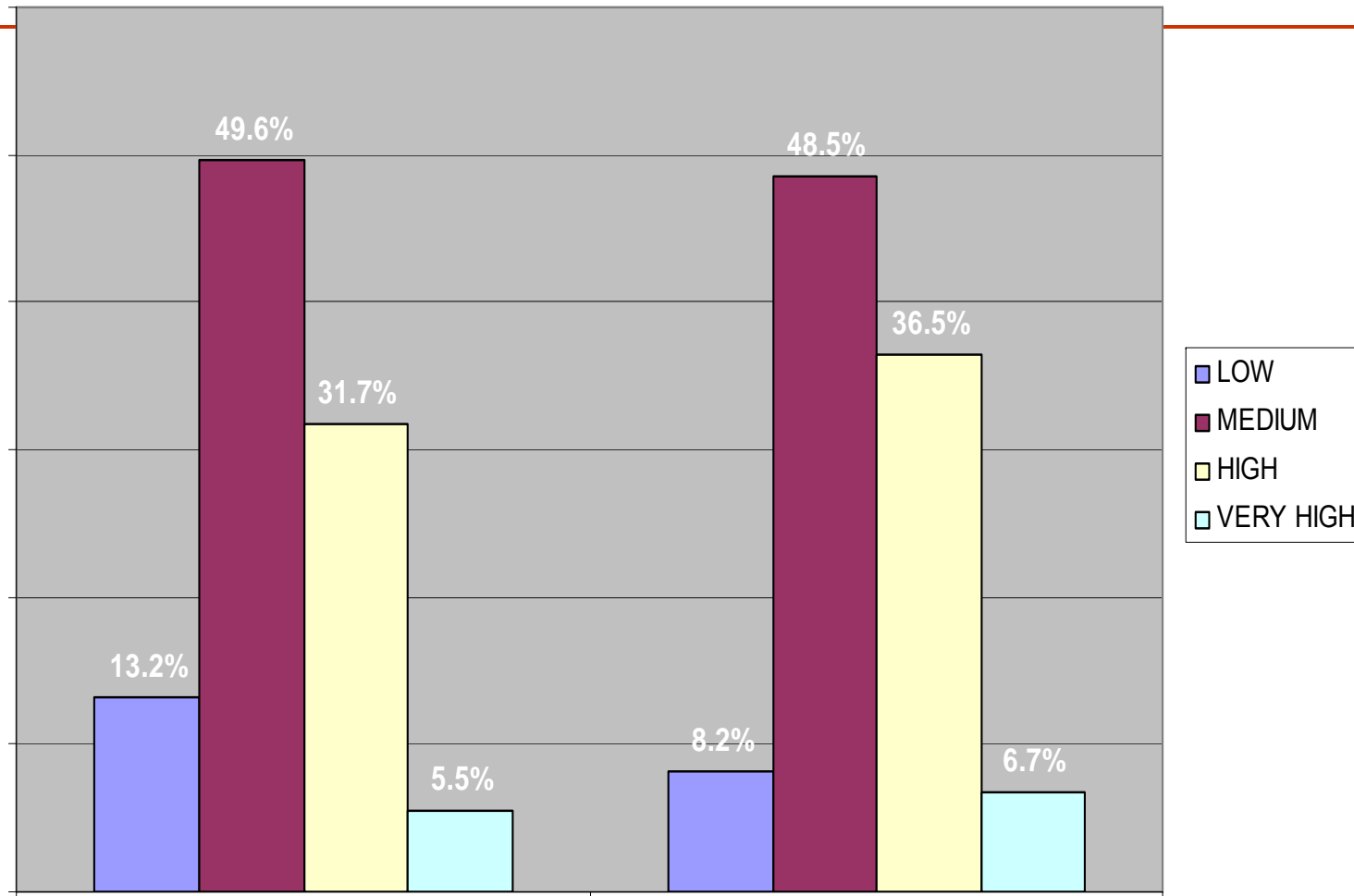
Female Responsive Probation

- Model designed for Connecticut by Connecticut
 - 13 Juvenile Probation Officers statewide
 - Caseloads capped at 25 girls
 - Assignment of cases is based on a random design, in accordance with identified geographic catchments
 - Designated Project Coordinator in place
 - Funds for referrals to non-traditional services and pro-social activities
- TA and QA is integrated into the model
- Evaluation is underway

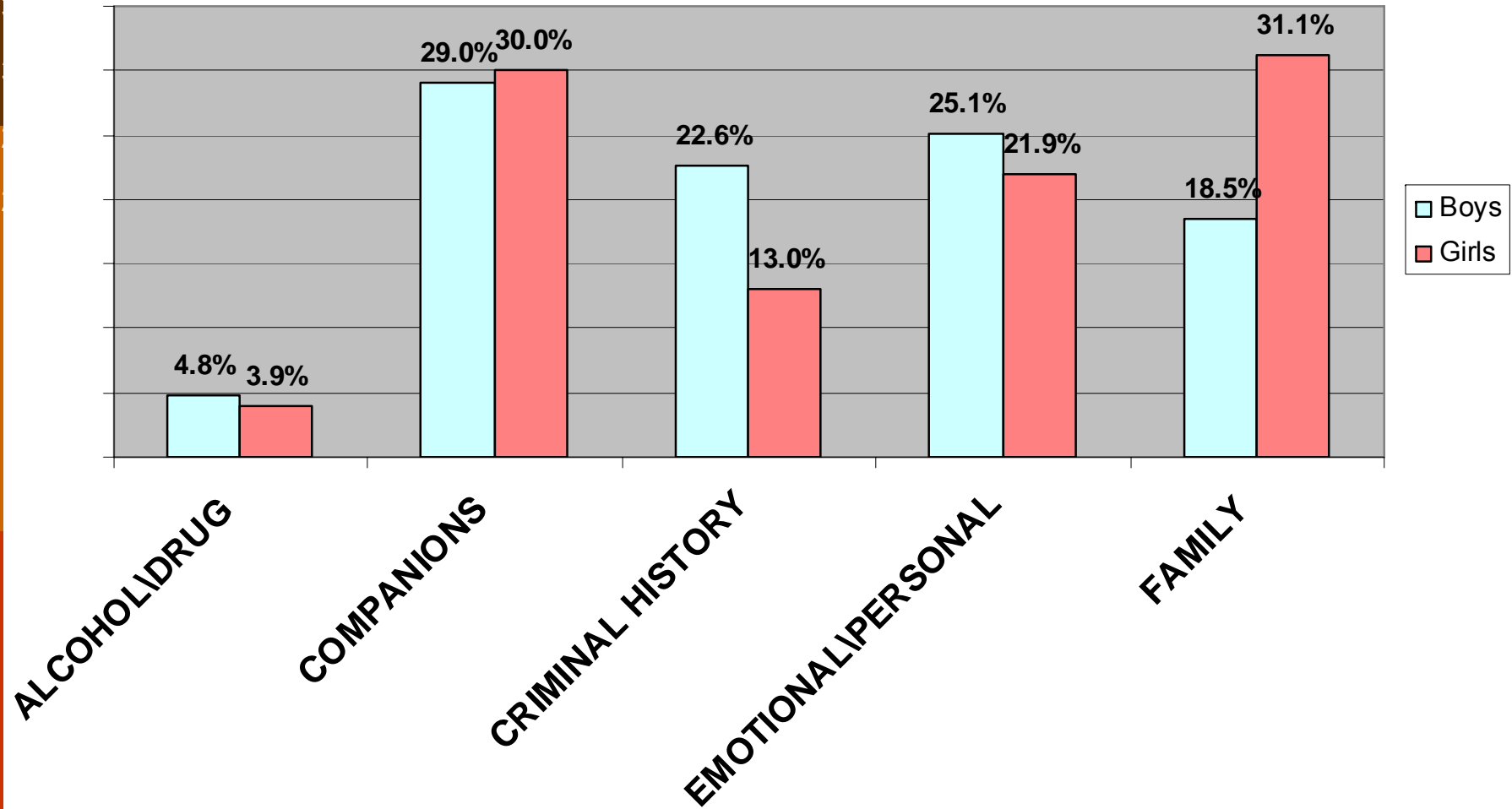
07/08 Intake Data

	Girls	Boys	Total
<u>Delinquency</u>	<u>3209</u>	<u>6519</u>	<u>9728</u>
<u>FWSN</u>	<u>1074</u>	<u>1233</u>	<u>2307</u>
<u>YIC</u>	<u>428</u>	<u>457</u>	<u>885</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>4740</u>	<u>8180</u>	<u>12,920</u>

Supervision Levels by Gender FY 2008

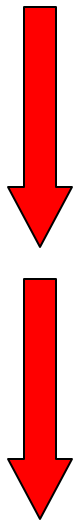


Primary Need by Gender

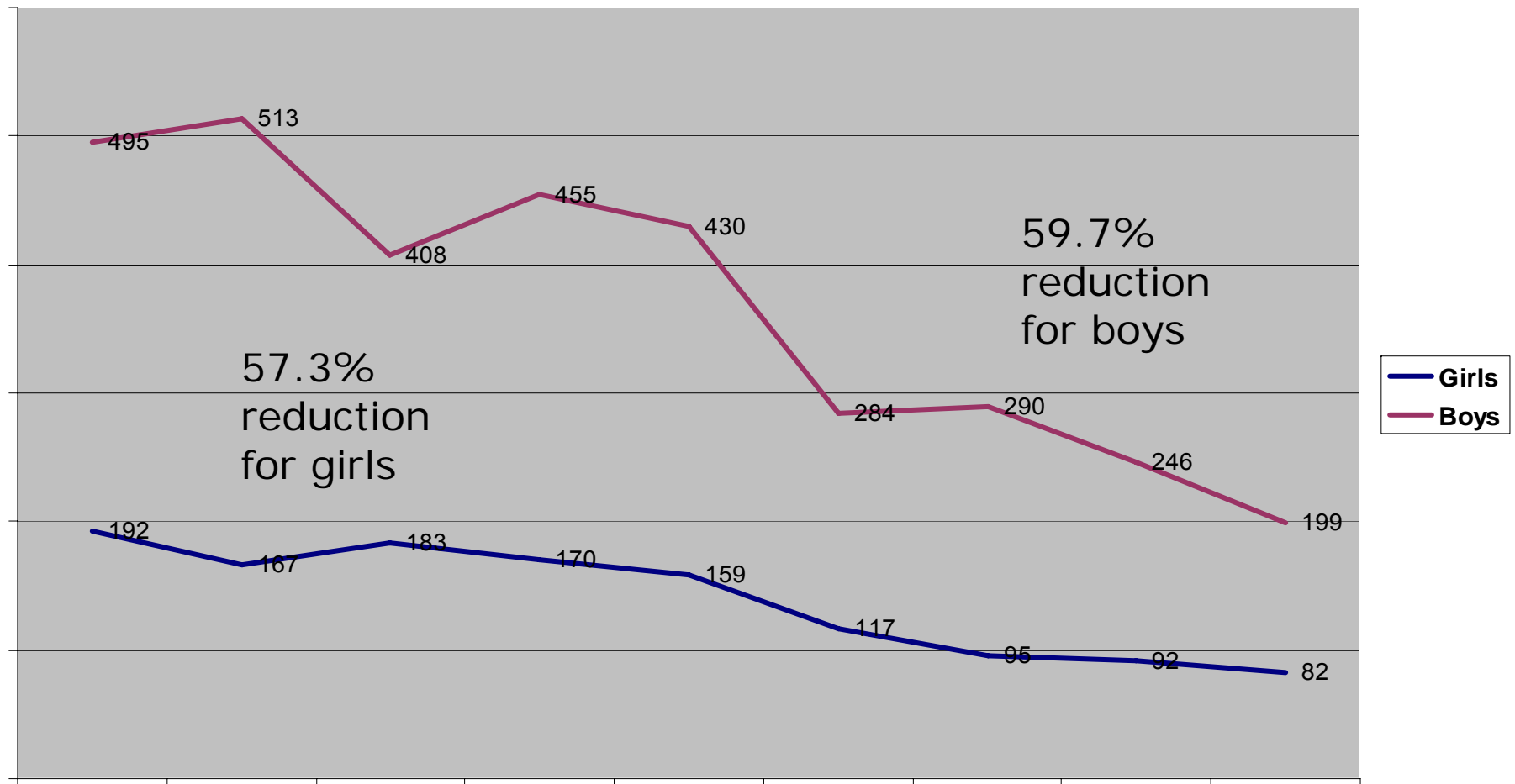


Percentage change from 06/07 to 07/08

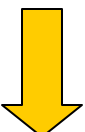
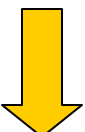
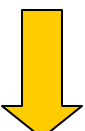
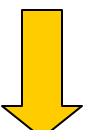
	Girls	Boys
<u>Delinquency</u>	-12.6%	-9.9%
<u>FWSN</u>	-36.6%	-39.5%
<u>YIC</u>	-29%	-25%
<u>Total</u>	-21.1%	-17%



Reduction in Commitments to DCF 1999 - 2007



Recidivism Differences

	12 months after referral		24 months after referral	
Girls 12/05	40.5%		48.1%	
Girls 6/06	38%		45.4%	
Boys 12/05	44.9%		52.4%	
Boys 6/06	41.7%		50.1%	

Building a Gender Responsive Juvenile Justice System: Lessons Learned

System Level

- ▣ Philosophical commitment to strengths-based, relational, trauma sensitive approach
- ▣ Make policy changes that support GS
- ▣ Standardize contractual expectations
- ▣ Provide mandatory training at all levels, across service types
- ▣ Offer technical assistance/ QA and support
- ▣ Prioritize research and evaluation

Building a Gender Responsive Juvenile Justice System

Program/Service Level

- ▣ Providers and service agents must be able to:
 - Operationalize a relational, strengths-based approach
 - Establish a safe, trauma sensitive culture
 - Ensure appropriate training and support for staff
 - Hold staff accountable to these practices
 - Conduct in-house QA

Building a Gender Responsive Juvenile Justice System

Client Level

- ❑ Welcoming, child friendly environment
- ❑ Staff approach with clients is aligned with a relational, strengths-based approach
 - Female responsive assessments & individualized service plans
 - Girls-only groups on a variety of GS topics
 - Female responsive behavior motivation system
- ❑ Positive female role models
- ❑ Opportunity for girls to give feedback/inform practice

Sustainability

- ❑ Create a culture of learning within the program
- ❑ Provide ongoing training opportunities
 - Introduce theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of gender specific programming
 - Effective strategies and interventions
 - Creating a gender specific program culture
 - Gender specific behavior motivation practice
 - Gender specific assessment and service planning processes
- ❑ Get external support
- ❑ Formal quality assurance
- ❑ Ongoing data collection/ outcome measurements

Outcome Measurements

- ❑ Decreased court involvement/ Court diversion
- ❑ Detention Diversion
- ❑ Improved family functioning
- ❑ Increased self-efficacy/resiliency
- ❑ Decreased stress/emotional distress
- ❑ Improved community access
- ❑ Improved school attendance
- ❑ Improved school performance/behavior
- ❑ Reduced running away

Girls Delinquency Prevention and Intervention Resources

Upcoming Bulletins

Published

- The Girls Study Group—Charting the Way to Delinquency Prevention for Girls
- Violence by Teenage Girls: Trends and Contexts
- Resilient Girls—Factors That Protect Against Delinquency

Forthcoming:

- Causes and Correlates of Girls' Delinquency.
- Suitability of Assessment Instruments for Delinquent Girls
- Developmental Sequences of Girls' Delinquent Behavior
- Girls' Delinquency Programs—An Evidence Based Review

Get copies of the bulletins on OJJDP's website: www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov



Get more details on OJJDP's girls' delinquency page



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Girls' Delinquency

Research

Publications

Training and
Technical
Assistance

Programs

Resources



Bulletins Feature Girls Study Group Research

Few studies have examined which girls become delinquent or why; and little is known about how well girls respond to interventions that have been traditionally designed with boys in mind. [The Girls Study Group—Charting the Way to Delinquency Prevention for Girls](#) describes the founding of OJJDP's Girls Study Group and the series of bulletins that OJJDP is in the process of publishing drawing on its research findings.

[more](#)

According to data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, from 1991 to 2000, arrests of girls increased more, or decreased less, than those of boys for the same offenses. By 2004, girls accounted for 30 percent of juvenile arrests. This apparent trend raises a number of questions, including whether it reflects an increase in girls' delinquency or changes in society's responses to girls' behavior. To research such issues and provide a sound foundation to guide the development, testing, and implementation of strategies designed to prevent girls' delinquency, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) convened its Girls Study Group

<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/girlsdelinquency.html>

OJJDP's [Girls Study Group](#) is a team of [multidisciplinary experts](#) with theoretical and practical expertise related to female development, delinquency, and the juvenile justice system.

At its inaugural meeting, the Study Group identified the research questions it would address:

- Who is the delinquent girl, including the patterns and trends of female delinquency?
- Why is she delinquent?
- How and why do patterns of girls' delinquency differ from boys?
- What is the juvenile justice system's (and other systems') response to girls' delinquency?
- What are the life consequences for delinquent girls?

In 2005, the Study Group compiled a searchable [Girls' Delinquency Bibliographic Database](#) on girls'

What Else?

OJJDP needs to hear from you!

Please share ideas, suggestions, questions with us on what else OJJDP should be doing regarding Girls Delinquency Prevention and Intervention

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