

How Can Case Managers Help Girls?

For too long, female juvenile offenders have been virtually forgotten. The growing numbers of delinquent girls, however, demonstrate that our juvenile justice system can not afford either to neglect their needs or to treat female juvenile offenders as an afterthought.

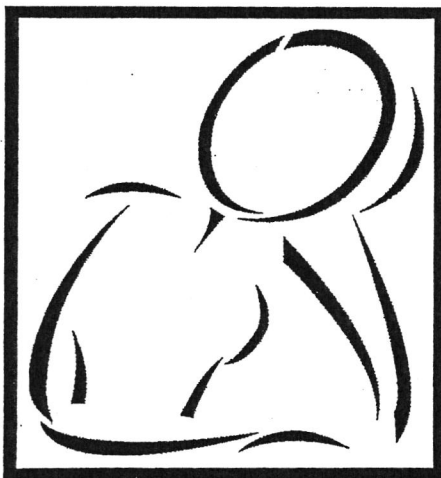
Case managers can contribute to young women's success by learning about how to better address their unique needs. You can help set the tone for positive change in the lives of your female clients by:

- Understanding they are part of a continuum of services that meet the complex needs of female juvenile offenders
- Modeling positive and appropriate behavior
- Respecting the central importance of relationships in girls' lives

Use a Team Approach

- Advocate for comprehensive strengths/needs assessment tools such as one developed by Girls Link in Cook County, IL.
- Develop holistic individual plans that address her complex needs in as supportive and least-restrictive way as possible. Include your client in the planning/scheduling process to ensure her success.
- Work with health providers, schools, and community agencies that promote positive attitudes toward females and offer female role models.

"I recognize that I need to see girls not just as social problems but as individuals with a lot of things going on."



Helping Girls Dream Again

"Having worked in detention units with boys and not dealing with girls had me blind to the different issues girls face. Now as a probation officer, I deal with girls and I have to be prepared."

- Support treatment and counseling that address abuse issues in a safe, supportive and empowering environment. Most girls in the criminal justice systems have first been victims of physical and/or sexual abuse.
- Develop cooperative relationships with families or primary caregivers.
- Advocate for accessible child-care. Many girls are also parents.
- Consider gender-specific case-management, such as the Female Intervention Team in Baltimore, MD.

Model Positive Behavior

- Develop a positive relationship with your client. Studies show that healthy relationships with adults can make a difference in girls' lives.
- Model positive behaviors in your interactions. Girls need to see examples of positive male and female role models.
- Support positive change. Girls are more likely to respond to encouragement than criticism.

OJJDP

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention